



# British FOOD HEROES:

## — Lavinton Lamb —



Lavinton Lamb wowed the judges in our *Great British Food Awards 2019*, scooping the top prize to be crowned Britain's Best Meat. Here shepherdess **Sophie Arlott** tells us what makes her flock extra special

Lavinton Lamb is native breed lamb produced by Sophie Arlott in rural Lincolnshire. Sophie's small flock of sheep, including traditional British breeds such as the Hebridean, Romney, Cheviot and Southdown, is farmed extensively, feeding naturally on rich pastureland. As an artisan, Sophie's mission is to produce lamb for flavour, not size. Proof of her success is shown by the six Michelin-starred chefs who serve her lamb in their restaurants, as well as many other acclaimed eateries in the Midlands and London. Nathan Outlaw, who judged the meat category in the Great British Food awards, even described it as 'faultless'.

### What's the key to producing really delicious lamb?

I pay particular attention to which breeds of sheep produce the best flavoured lamb. I've spent years carefully selecting and cross breeding different native breeds for the perfect combination and have now hit on the perfect formula. This lamb is completely unique to Lavinton.

Taking into account the above, careful



stockmanship and high welfare are hugely important factors, too. I am hands on all the way through the process, from lambing to taking the lambs to the abattoir; I ensure they have a low stress, high quality of life. They graze on rich pastures around the farm as well as on The Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust's wildflower meadows and grasslands, eating a high diversity of grasses and wildflowers. You don't get this with mass produced lamb and that ensures a fabulous flavour.

### What are your favourite cuts and how do you like to cook them?

It has to be shoulder of lamb; slow cooked at a low temperature for 4-6 hours is just wonderful. The fat that runs throughout the shoulder melts as you cook it, making the meat incredibly sweet and succulent. Studding the shoulder with garlic, rosemary or thyme and even anchovies makes for added deliciousness!

### How should GBF readers make use of lamb at Christmas?

A crown or rack of lamb makes a special centerpiece at Christmas. An added benefit is that there isn't loads of leftovers for months to come! Delicious served with dauphinoise potatoes.

Or for a really relaxed and easy Christmas Day, slow-roast a shoulder of lamb. Pop it in the oven and go for a walk, open presents, play games or watch films. Then serve with crunchy roast potatoes and seasonal veg.

**For more information or to buy online visit [lavinton.com](http://lavinton.com)**