

Roasted Pork Loin & Cipollini with Grape & Mustard Seed Chutney

A boneless pork loin is easy and good. But a whole bone-in pork loin is just as simple to prepare and even tastier. The bones add flavor to the meat and help it retain moisture as it roasts, and when it comes to drama, there's no contest. The whole roast looks spectacular, and everyone gets their own chop with a bone to gnaw on. Ask your butcher to French and tie the roast for you. Brining it overnight with white wine, salt, sugar, and seasonings draws flavor into the meat and keeps it extra juicy. The rest couldn't be easier. You don't even have to sear the meat before it goes in the oven (especially if you have a convection function). The onions get soft, sweet, and lusciously caramelized in the same pan with the roast. Peeled fresh cipollini, sold in the produce section of some supermarkets, are a great time-saver.

SERVES 8

For the pork roast:

2 qt ice cubes
1 cup medium-bodied white wine (such as Chardonnay)
Kosher salt
6 tablespoons sugar
8 black peppercorns
2 tablespoons fennel seeds
12 fresh thyme sprigs
1-inch piece fresh ginger, sliced
4 cloves garlic, smashed
1 bone-in pork loin, 5 1/2 to 6 1/2 lb, frenched and tied
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Freshly ground black pepper
16 cipollini onions, peeled but left whole
3 fresh rosemary sprigs, plus leaves for garnish

For the grape & mustard seed chutney:

1/3 cup yellow mustard seeds
2 teaspoons rice oil or other neutral-flavored oil
1/2 cup diced yellow onion, cut into small dice
2 lb small-to-medium seedless red grapes
1 cup red verjus
1 star anise pod, finely ground
1 teaspoon ground coriander
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 cup golden raisins
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

To brine the pork roast: Put the ice in a large bowl. In a medium pot, combine 3 cups water, the wine, 2/3 cup salt, the sugar, peppercorns, fennel seeds, thyme, ginger, and garlic and bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring to dissolve the salt and sugar. Remove from the heat and pour over the ice. Let cool to 45°F on an instant-read thermometer. There should be about 8 cups brine. Place the pork loin in a large container or a brining bag, and add the cooled brine, immersing the loin. Refrigerate overnight.

To roast the pork and onions: The following day, preheat the oven to 400°F convection (425°F conventional). Remove the pork from the brine, discarding the liquid. Pat the pork dry using paper towels and let sit at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Rub the pork loin with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and season with 2 tablespoons salt and some black pepper. Place the pork, bone side down, in a roasting pan. Roast for 30 minutes.

In a medium bowl, toss the cipollini onions and rosemary with the remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F and add the onions and rosemary to the roasting pan, scattering them around the pork loin. Return the roasting pan to the oven and roast for about 45 minutes longer, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center, away from the bone, registers 137°F. Remove from the oven, loosely tent with foil, and let rest for 20 minutes before carving.

While the pork is roasting, make the grape & mustard chutney:

In a small, dry skillet, heat the mustard seeds over medium heat, moving the pan occasionally to ensure even toasting, for about 2 minutes, until lightly toasted, fragrant, and just beginning to pop. Set aside.

In a 4-qt pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the yellow onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 1 minute, until soft. Add the grapes, stir to combine, and cover the pot. Cook, stirring often, for 10 to 12 minutes, until the grapes begin to wilt. Add the verjus, star anise, coriander, cinnamon, raisins, salt, and the toasted mustard seeds and stir well. Cook uncovered over medium heat for 10 to 15 minutes, until the liquid has reduced and the mixture is thick. Remove from the heat and serve warm or cold. The chutney will keep in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.

To serve: Snip the twine and carve the loin into chops. Serve each chop with some of the pan juices and roasted onions. Garnish with rosemary leaves. Pass the chutney at the table.