

QUICK MARINATE PORK CHOPS



Prep time: 5-10 minutes

Serves: 4

Pairs well with: seasonal sides like grilled veggies or salads in warmer months, and Kaiserschmarrn or mashed potatoes with apple sauce in colder months

Ingredients:

- 3/4 Cup lightly packed dark brown sugar
- 1/2 Cup kosher salt (or 1/4 Cup table salt)
- 3 Heaping Tbsp. pre-chopped garlic (jars usually in produce area or spice aisle) or 10 medium fresh garlic cloves, crushed
- 4 bay leaves, crumbled
- 8 whole cloves
- 3 Tbsp. whole black peppercorns, crushed
- 4-1 inch thick bone-in rib loin pork chops (about 2 pounds total) or 4 boneless chops (reduce cook time)
- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Ground black pepper

Method:

1. Using a gallon-size ziplock bag sitting inside a medium-large bowl, carefully pour 2 cups hot water on top of sugar and salt. Seal the bag very well and swirl the water mix around until everything is dissolved.
2. Put the bag back in the bowl, open and add the garlic, bay leaves, cloves, peppercorns, and 4 cups cold water; cool the mixture to room temperature. Add the pork chops, then seal bag, pressing out as much air as possible and lightly turn the bag a few times to distribute spices.
3. Place bowl in refrigerator for 1/2 hour, then turn the bag over making sure spices are redistributed for another 1/2 hour (or until the chops are fully seasoned). Adjust brining time depending on thickness of pork.
4. Remove the chops from the brine, rinse quickly, and dry thoroughly with paper towels.
5. Pre-heat your grill with all burners on high with the lid closed for about 15 minutes then reduce heat to medium just before grilling.
6. Rub the chops with oil and sprinkle with pepper to taste.
7. Grill the chops about 3 minutes on each side, while loosely covered with foil or an aluminum pan, over the hottest part of the grill until browned, about 3 minutes on each side. Move the chops to the cooler part of the grill (either reduce heat for side sections or place in your grill's naturally cooler side/back areas). Continue grilling, covered, turning once, until an instant-read thermometer inserted through the side of a chop and away from the bone registers 130-135 degrees, 5 to 7 minutes longer.
8. Transfer the chops to a platter; cover loosely with foil (do not wrap foil tightly around meat), and let rest about 5 minutes. Internal temperature should rise to 145 degrees while resting. Serve immediately.

Notes:

- A must have item for any kitchen is a great thermometer. I've tried around 10 different ones (high and low end) and I swear by **Taylor Precision Products Digital Turbo Read Thermocouple Thermometer with Folding Probe**. Get it and throw the rest away!
- Every grill is a bit different so the key is to adjust in order to achieve the resting temp of 145 degrees. In almost all cases, sear 3 minutes per side regardless of thickness or bone-in/bone-out and instead adjust the timing for the off-center grilling/ not high heat cook time.
- Boneless chops work well too, although they're not quite as flavorful; note they're often not 1" thick so key to remember to reduce the total brining time as well in the ratio of 1" = 1 hour as well as the cook time.
- Buying spices in bulk grocery store area is best for saving money and keeping spices fresh since you avoid having excess sitting for months.
- You may opt to use only sugar and salt in the brine and skip the other flavorings if you are using a different spice rub or if serving with a bold sauce, but I've found that the spice combo above works well with many different dish combos and is less overpowering than most spice rubs.
- Winter menu suggestion (yes, we still gas grill in Winter but oven broiling is an option if you can't): Homemade apple sauce is a major win - so easy and so much tastier than store bought plus using a hand blender creates a perfectly smooth sauce! A shortcut is warming good organic, lower sugar apple sauce in a jar on the stove and then blending it. Also, a German au pair introduced us to Kaiserschmarrn as a starchy side for pork chops along with homemade apple sauce is heavenly! I've yet to find the Kaiserschmarrn recipe as good as her mental recipe, but there are lots to choose from on the internet so try a few to suit your taste. And yes, it sounds weird to have a dessert type side but trust me that it's beyond delicious! Try mashed potatoes instead of Kaiserschmarrn too.
- Summer menu suggestion: fruit salsas or pico de gallo pair so well with this marinade, as do grilled veggies and summer salads.
- Leftover suggestion: freeze remaining pork for use in this delicious fried rice recipe.

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