

Mama Rosita's Beans with Shredded Smoked Pork

My grandmother would prepare beans by cooking them with large pieces of onion and garlic that she would later remove. She used the small red beans common in many Central America, but I like black beans for their more robust flavor – and of course, I like to add pork! I usually serve them with long grain white rice that I have cooked in chicken stock and then mixed with chopped fresh cilantro.

Serves: 4 as a main dish, 6-8 as a side

Supplies: An instant pot or pressure cooker is not strictly necessary, but speeds cooking time

Prep Time: 15 minutes – **Cook Time:** 1 Hour, 15 minutes – **Total Time:** 1.5 hours

What You Need

1 Flight Path Farm Ham Hock
1-2 T apple cider (or other) vinegar
1 1-lb package dried black beans
1 large onion, quartered
4-6 cloves garlic, smashed
2 bay leaves
1-2 tsp cumin
1-2 tsp oregano
1 tsp salt (plus more to taste)
Chopped fresh cilantro (optional)

How To Make It

Prepare the Ham Hock and Beans

Place the ham hock in your instant pot or pressure cooker and cover with water. Add 1-2 T of vinegar. Cook under pressure for 45 minutes (or up to 2 hours – the longer it cooks, the more collagen and bone minerals are released into the water), until the meat is softened. (If using a regular pot, simmer the ham hock for a couple of hours, until the meat is soft.) Using tongs, remove the ham hock from the hot water and allow to cool. Once cool, pull meat off the bone and shred or dice meat. Reserve meat and cooking liquid.

Meanwhile, prepare the beans to soak. In a large pot, bring 6-8 cups of water to a boil. Add the dried black beans to the water and bring to a rolling boil. Boil the beans for about 2 minutes, and then remove from heat. Allow beans to rest in the water for at least 30 minutes, or until ready to cook.

Season and Cook the Beans

Drain black beans from soaking liquid and add to instant pot, pressure cooker, or standard cooking pot. Add cooked pork from the ham hock, and water from boiling the ham hock (just enough to cover the beans). Add oregano, cumin, bay leaves, and salt, and stir to combine. Place quartered onion and smashed garlic cloves on top of the beans.

Cook under high pressure for 20 minutes, until beans are soft. Remove and discard the now soft and smooshy onion (and garlic, if it has not fallen apart) and bay leaves. Taste for seasoning and add more salt or pepper if necessary.

Variations

You can make this with any kind of bean; just skip the cumin and oregano if you don't want Latin American flavors for your final product. For an easy bean soup, use navy beans or a bean blend and cook with more water. For a yummy vegetable bean soup, you can sauté chopped onion, carrots, and celery in a frying pan with 1-2 tsp of Italian herbs; once the beans are done cooking, add vegetables along with 1 can of stewed tomatoes and simmer for 10 minutes to help blend the flavors.

Pasta Puttanesca

Pasta Puttanesca is a robust, spicy, flavorful pasta dish made with tomato sauce, garlic, anchovies, olives, and capers. I have long used Mark Bittman's recipe, but one day wanted to make it even more filling, so I added some sausage, and absolutely LOVED it! I prefer to make this with our chorizo sausage – the paprika and cumin meld beautifully with the tomato and garlic – but our Italian or Polish sausages also work well here. The anchovies may sound weird but they add so much depth and flavor to the dish – if you're reluctant to try them, start with just one or two filets; if you use canned anchovies, you can store the extras for several weeks or months in a clean jar in the fridge.

Serves: 4 as a main

Prep Time: 10 minutes – **Cook Time:** 30 minutes – **Total Time:** 40 minutes

What You Need

2-5 brat-sized links of Flight Path Farm Chorizo (or Italian or Polish Sausage)
3-6 cloves of garlic, peeled, smashed or roughly chopped
3 or more anchovy filets
¼ to ½ tsp crushed red pepper flakes
1 28-ounce can whole plum tomatoes
½ cup pitted black olives, roughly chopped
2 T capers
1 lb linguine or other long pasta
Salt and pepper to taste
Fresh parsley, chopped (optional)

How To Make It

Brown the Sausage

Remove thawed sausage from casings by squeezing out the end. Leave in large chunks or form into meatballs, if desired. Heat a large frying pan over medium to medium-high heat. Place sausage in pan and allow to release fat and brown, tossing a few times. (For a smaller amount of sausage, I like to leave it in larger chunks; for large amounts of sausage, I like to break up the meat a bit with a spatula to get a Bolognese-like sauce). Remove browned sausage to a plate, leaving 2-3 T of oil in pan.

Make the Pasta and Sauce

Bring pot of water to boil and salt it. Warm the remaining oil with garlic, anchovies, and red chili flakes in the frying pan over medium-low heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until garlic is lightly golden.

Drain tomatoes and crush with fork or hands. Add to skillet. Raise heat to medium-high and cook, stirring occasionally, until tomatoes break down and mixture becomes saucy, about 10 minutes. Stir in olives, capers, red pepper flakes, and browned sausage. Continue to simmer.

Cook pasta, stirring occasionally, until it is tender but not mushy. Drain quickly and toss with sauce and remaining tablespoon of oil. Taste and adjust seasonings as necessary, garnish with herbs if you like, and serve.

Pork Steaks (on Chops if Ya Basic)

A pork steak is cut from the Boston Butt, across the grain of the meat; the result is a juicy, flavorful slab that, while a little less tender than a standard chop, more than makes up for it in taste! The technique works just as well for standard chops, boneless loin cutlets, and more – just remember, the less fat in a cut, the more careful you need to be about cooking time and temperature to avoid drying it out. By bringing the meat to room temperature before cooking and using a meat thermometer to check the temperature, you can get a juicy, delicious steak or chop every time! And, despite what you may have heard in the past, 145 degrees is perfectly safe for pork – the USDA recommends that pork be cooked to an internal temperature of 145°F, followed by a few minutes rest time, to enjoy pork that is tender, juicy, and full of flavor.

Serves: 2-4, one steak per big hungry person, or splitting a steak for two lesser appetites

Supplies: A good skillet, tongs, and an accurate meat thermometer

Prep Time: 5 minutes – **Cook Time:** 5-10 minutes – **Total Time:** 25 minutes to 1 hour (depending on how long it takes meat to reach room temperature)

What You Need

2 Flight Path Farm Pork Steaks
Sea salt or kosher salt
Fresh ground black pepper
Spice rub or mix of your choice
(optional)

Variations

Pork steaks cut from the shoulder are an remarkably versatile cut – thanks to their higher fat content, they can be baked, braised, stewed, cooked in a pressure cooker, or grilled. Don't be afraid to substitute them for any preparation where you would use a pork chop! Because they come from the shoulder rather than the loin, they are a little tougher – but they more than make up for it in big, delicious flavor!

How To Make It

Pat thawed chops dry with paper towel and season generously with salt, pepper, and, if you like, a spice rub or mix of your choice. Let them come to room temperature on the counter.

Pre-heat a skillet (cast iron preferred) on medium-high heat. When it's nice and hot, take a steak or chop up in your tongs; hold it so the plane of the chop is perpendicular to the pan, and the fat cap of the steak or chop is touching the pan. Rub the fat side all over the pan until some of the fat renders out and the fat edge starts to brown, leaving enough fat in the pan to sear the chop.

Lay the chop flat in the pan on one of its sides for 90 seconds, allowing it to form a good sear. Flip to other side and repeat. Keep flipping the chop or steak every 90 seconds until it reaches an internal temperature of 145°F (this usually takes about 6 minutes total). Remove chop/steak to plate or chopping block, cover with foil to rest for 5-10 minutes.

Feeling fancy? Deglaze the pan with ½ c of wine, 1 T of balsamic vinegar, and 1 t of honey; add 1 clove of minced garlic. Reduce until it thickens. Add an optional 1-2 T of heavy cream. Drink the rest of the wine with your meal. Yum!

Roasted Splayed Chicken in Cast Iron

I may be biased, but our pasture-raised Bresse chicken is the best dang chicken I've ever eaten! Our favorite way to prepare it is to bake it in hot cast iron, with the legs splayed and against the pan – this helps the breast and the thigh cook at the same rate. By adding vegetables to the pan, you can get a whole meal – and the veggies baste in the delicious chicken drippings. Adjust the timing of both chicken and vegetables as necessary – rely on your thermometer, not just cooking time, for perfectly roasted chicken! Plan on about 10 minutes per pound.

Serves: 3-4 for a nice dinner (depends on the size of the chicken and the skillet)

Supplies: A large cast iron skillet and a meat thermometer (preferably one with a probe that can be left in while cooking)

Prep Time: 45 minutes – **Cook Time:** 45 minutes – **Total Time:** 1.5 hours

What You Need

1 3-4 lb Flight Path Farm Whole Bresse Chicken
Sea salt or kosher salt
Fresh ground black pepper
Spice rub or mix of your choice (optional)
2-4 fist-sized potatoes, cut into 2-inch chunks
2 large carrots, cut into 1-inch long pieces
1 leek, cleaned and cut into 1-inch long rounds
2-3 T lard or vegetable oil

Variations

Substitute the potatoes, carrots, and/or leeks with whatever vegetables you have on hand – just adjust the amount of cooking time (and hence when you would add them to the pan) based on how long they will take to cook. Favorite alternatives for us are Brussels sprouts, parsnips, and sweet potatoes. If you cut up more veggies than can fit in the pan, toss them in a bit of olive oil (or lard) and bake them alongside in a separate dish. If your chicken is done before the vegetables, just remove it to the cutting board to rest while your veggies finish.

How To Make It

Prep the Pan, Chicken, and Veggies

Place the cast iron pan in the oven and turn the temperature to 500°F. Let pan preheat for 30-45 minutes. Meanwhile, season all over with salt and pepper and place breast up on a cutting board. With a sharp knife, cut the skin connecting the legs to the body. Splay the thighs open until you feel the joint pop on each side. Set chicken aside.

Scrub the potatoes and carrots and cut up. To clean the leeks, first cut off the fibrous dark green portion at the top. Starting about 1 inch above the roots at the bottom, slice the leek in half vertically to expose inner layers; then rinse any dirt out under cold running water, pat dry, and cut into rounds.

Roast the Chicken and Vegetables

When the pan is ready, carefully remove it from the oven and swirl lard around to melt. Transfer the chicken, breast-side up, to the hot skillet. Drizzle the bird with another tablespoon of melted lard, and then place potatoes around the chicken; roast for 15 minutes. Add carrots around the chicken and gently toss vegetables; roast 10 more minutes. Add the leeks and gently toss vegetables again; roast for 15 minutes.

Once the vegetables are soft, the chicken skin is golden, and the thigh reaches a temperature of 165°F, remove the pan from the oven and place chicken on a plate or clean cutting board to rest for 10 minutes, then carve and serve with the vegetables and some crusty bread.

Bacon, Spinach, and Mushroom Quiche

This recipe once was the winning entry in the Ark of Taste category of a pie competition put on by the Huron Valley Chapter of Slow Food International. It has three secrets. First, pre-bake the crust slightly to keep it from getting soggy. Second, pre-cook the vegetables so that you do not have water releasing into the custard. And third, use a 1:2 ratio of eggs to milk. If you maintain this ratio, you can easily adjust a recipe to use eggs of any size, from the smaller Icelandic chicken eggs we sell, to large duck or goose eggs. I like to use bacon ends (the bits of bacon cut from the slab by the butcher to ensure that slices come out even) since it yields larger chunks that make a toothsome addition to a quiche.

Serves: 4-6 as a main dish with a side salad

Supplies: Deep dish pie pan and pie crust (we like using this lard crust <https://tinyurl.com/yxn9fdbu>)

Prep Time: 20 minutes – **Cook Time:** 40 minutes – **Total Time:** 1 hour

What You Need

1 pie crust
½ pound of Flight Path Farm bacon ends
1 large shallot, chopped fine
2 cups fresh mushrooms, sliced
2 cups fresh spinach, chopped
½ tsp Herbs de Provence (optional)
1 cup shredded cheese or 1 small log of soft goat cheese cut into small pieces (optional)
4-5 Flight Path Farm Icelandic Chicken Eggs (or enough eggs to reach 6 ounces volume)
1 12-oz can of evaporated milk
¼ tsp nutmeg
½ tsp salt plus additional to taste
½ tsp pepper plus additional to taste

Variations

Quiche is a great way to use up leftover bits of vegetables or meat – you can substitute nearly any vegetable for the spinach and mushroom, and nearly any protein for the bacon. I like to make quiche with evaporated milk, since we are not big milk drinkers and the evaporated milk adds richness without all the fat of heavy cream; however, you could use whole milk, a combination of low fat milk and cream, or even a nut milk.

How To Make It

Preheat oven to 400°F. Roll out your pie crust to fit a deep-dish pie pan and use your thumb and fingers to flute the edges. Prick the crust all over with a fork too keep the crust from puffing up when baking. Bake pie crust for 10-14 minutes (or according to package directions) until it is just barely starting to brown. Remove from oven and allow to cool.

Meanwhile, prepare the filling. Cut up any large pieces of bacon and place in a frying pan over medium heat. Cook until the bacon browns and renders extra fat, tossing occasionally. Remove the bacon pieces to a plate and pour off excess fat, leaving 1-2 T in the pan for cooking the vegetables. Once cool, chop bacon ends up into smaller pieces.

Over medium heat, add chopped shallots and mushrooms to the pan and cook until the shallots start to become translucent and the mushrooms brown and some of their excess moisture starts to evaporate. Add spinach and herbs to pan and continue to sauté until the spinach is wilted and any excess water from the vegetables has cooked off. Season filling gently with salt and pepper.

In a bowl or blender, combine eggs and beat gently. Add remaining ingredients and whisk or blend to combine. If using cheese, place in the bottom of the crust. Spread vegetable mixture over the cheese, and sprinkle bacon over that. Gently pour the egg mixture over it all. Bake for 30-40 minutes, until the center is firm and the filling puffs up slightly.