

Carnitas (Slow Cooker Pulled Pork)

Adapted from <https://www.recipetineats.com/pork-carnitas-mexican-slow-cooker-pulled-pork/>

Ingredients

Main Dish

- 4 lb pork shoulder (pork butt), skinless, boneless (or another pork cut; tenderloin does work fine)
- 2 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 jalapeno, deseeded, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 3/4 cup juice from orange (2 oranges if using fresh)

Rub

- 1 tbsp dried oregano
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp olive oil

Instructions

1. Rinse and dry the pork shoulder, rub all over with salt and pepper.
2. Combine the Rub ingredients then rub all over the pork.
3. Place the pork in a slow cooker (fat cap up), top with the onion, jalapeño, minced garlic (don't worry about spreading it) and squeeze over the juice of the oranges.
4. Slow Cook on low for 10 hours or on high for 7 hours. (Note 2 for other cook methods)
5. Pork should be tender enough to shred. Remove from slow cooker and let cool slightly. Then shred using two forks.
6. Optional: Skim off the fat from the juices remaining in the slow cooker and discard.
7. If you have a lot more than 2 cups of juice, then reduce it down to about 2 cups. The liquid will be salty, it is the seasoning for the pork. Set liquid aside – don't bother straining onion etc, it's super soft.

To Crisp

1. Heat 1 tbsp of oil in a large non stick pan or well seasoned skillet over high heat. Spread pork in the pan, drizzle over some juices. Wait until the juices evaporate and the bottom side is golden brown and crusty. Turn and just briefly sear the other side – you don't want to make it brown all over because then it's too crispy, need tender juicy bits.
2. Remove pork from skillet. Repeat in batches (takes me 4 batches) – don't crowd the pan.
3. Just before serving, drizzle over more juices and serve hot, stuffed in tacos (see notes for sides, other serving suggestion and storage/make ahead).

Notes

1. **The Pork:** Use pork with the skin removed but leaving some of the fat cap on. The fat adds juiciness to the carnitas – and excess fat can be skimmed off later.

Different sizes: Recipe fine as is for 1.7 – 2.5kg / 3.5 – 5 lb pork. If larger / smaller, scale recipe using recipe scaler (hover/click on servings and slide) and the other ingredients will change. These are boneless pork weights (add 0.5kg/1lb for bone):

1 – 1.5 kg / 2 – 3 lb: 8 hours on low.

1.5 – 3 kg / 3 – 6 lb: Cook time per recipe.

3 – 4 kg / 6 – 8 lb: Use large oval slow cooker, 12 hours on low.

2. Other cooking methods:

Electric pressure cooker or Instant Pot: 1 h 30 minutes on high. Let pressure release naturally. Proceed with Step 5 of recipe.

Stove pressure cooker: use a rack or balls of scrunched up foil to elevate it from the base OR add 3/4 cup of water. Cook 1 h 30 minutes. Proceed with Step 5 of recipe.

Oven: Follow recipe but put pork in roasting pan. Add 2 cups water around pork. Cover tightly with foil, roast in 325F/160C oven for 2 hours, then roast for a further 1 to 1.5 hours uncovered. Add more water if the liquid dries out too much. You should end up with 1 1/2 to 2 cups of liquid when it finishes cooking, and you can skip the pan frying step because you will get a nice brown crust on your pork. Shred pork then drizzled with juices.

Revision #2

Created 2 February 2025 00:20:41 by Shark

Updated 5 February 2025 16:13:09 by Shark