

Recipe from FormerChef.com

Recipe for Slow Cooked Cuban Pork

4-5 lb fresh ham, bone in
2 each fresh oranges (juiced)
3 each limes (juiced)
2 each lemon (juiced)
6-7 garlic cloves
2 Tbsp dried oregano
.25 oz fresh oregano
2 each dried California chilies
2 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp fresh cracked pepper
1 tsp kosher salt
1 oz olive oil
2 each bay leaves
1 yellow onion, sliced

The day before, for the marinade:

Juice the oranges, limes and lemons through a strainer to remove the seeds. Combined you should have about 1.25 cups of juice.

Crush the garlic cloves, fresh and dried oregano and dried chilies together in a mortar and pestle. If you don't have a mortar and pestle, finely mince the garlic, chop the chilies and fresh oregano, and combine with the dried oregano in a small bowl. To that mixture, add the cumin, salt and pepper. Mix with the olive oil to form a paste.

With a sharp knife, score the fat side of the ham with 1" cuts. Rub the seasoning paste all over the fresh ham.

Cut the onion in half and slice crosswise into thin strips.

Place the pork in a large zip lock bag, or a container in which it fits snugly and can be covered. I put mine in a 1 gallon zip lock bag and was able to fit the pork in there by cutting it in half. Add the sliced onions and the citrus juice and make sure it is well covered in the marinade. If you have it in another container, make sure it is covered with plastic wrap and not exposed to the air.

Marinate overnight in the refrigerator or at least 8 hours. I put mine in the marinade mid-afternoon the day before and turned the bag over once before I went to bed.

To cook the pork:

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In a large heavy bottomed sauté pan, heat 1 Tbsp of oil. Remove the meat from the marinade, shaking off any excess. Reserve the marinade.

Cut the ham in half if that will make cooking it any easier. Remember, it's going to be shredded anyway. Sear the meat on all sides. Yes, you can put meat into the crock pot without searing it first, but I like the extra flavor you get from browning the meat. The goal here is to render off a little of the fat and get some of the flavor you would get from roasting in the oven that you don't get in a slow cooker.

Set the slow cooker on high and put the piece with the most fat, fat side down into the cooker. Pour over half the reserved marinade, including the onions. Put the other piece on top and pour over the rest of the marinade. Put the lid on and don't worry about it for the rest of the day, that's the beauty of a slow cooker. Try to resist the temptation to lift the lid and pull off a piece "just to check it." Needless to say, I failed miserably at this.

I put mine in, on high at 8am and then turned it down to low at 11am. It was probably ready to serve mid-afternoon, but I kept it in there until 6pm with no problem.

When ready to serve, remove the meat and shred into small pieces or chunks with a fork. Spoon some of the sauce from the pot over the top. Serve with black beans and rice or tortillas. If you want to serve in tacos, have some shredded cabbage, fresh cilantro, and sliced green onions for garnish.

Because I don't always have time to cook every component of every meal from scratch, I sometimes I have my own version of "semi-homemade." With this meal I wanted to serve black beans but didn't have time to make them from dried beans. Below is my quick recipe for black beans which turned out to be one of the hits of the dinner party (besides the pork, of course).

Bonus Recipe: Easy Black Beans

- 1 large can (29 oz) cooked black beans, not drained
- 1 medium can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes with green chilies (jalapenos)
- 1/2 yellow onion, diced
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp dried oregano

In a 2 quart pot, heat the teaspoon of olive oil. Add the diced onion and sauté until soft. Add the oregano and cumin and stir, and then add the can of diced tomatoes with green chilies. Add the beans (undrained) and bring to a simmer. Cook on low for about 20 minutes and that's it!