

Cleo Coyle's Holiday Pernil

Puerto Rican-Style Roasted Pork Shoulder

Text and photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi who writes [The Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) as [Cleo Coyle](#) with her husband, Marc Cerasini

Impressive to serve yet easy to make, this slow-roasted, crispy-skinned pork shoulder is a beloved treat in many Latin American homes, especially during the Christmas season. Like a stunning holiday turkey, a roasted pork shoulder will wow your dinner guests. (They'll think you worked harder than you did because there's no basting, just pop it in the oven and turn it a few times.) The rich, crispy pork skin is truly a delicacy, and the succulent meat is versatile. Slapped on a fresh roll, it makes a delicious sandwich, including traditional Cubans. Or place the pork slices in a warm tortilla with guacamole and sour cream and you've got an outstanding taco...and now without further ado (or adobo!), here is our version of the Puerto Rican classic... ~ Cleo

Makes about 10 servings

Ingredients:

- 10 garlic cloves, peeled**
- 5 tablespoons kosher salt**
- 6 tablespoons oregano**
- 2 tablespoons Goya brand Adobo seasoning**
- 2 teaspoons coarsely ground black pepper**
- 2 teaspoons cumin**
- 2 teaspoons olive oil**
- 2 tablespoons red, white, or cider vinegar (or red or white wine)**
- 3 lemons or limes, juiced (or mix for lemon-lime juice)**
- 1 bone-in pork shoulder with skin (6 to 8 pounds)**



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Step 1 - Create the rub: If you have a food processor, then take the first 9 ingredients on a quick spin to make a paste. No food processor? Then place the first 6 ingredients on a flat dish. Smash the peeled garlic cloves with the prongs of a fork, crushing the flavor into the dry ingredients. (A mortar and pestle is the traditional method.) When the mix resembles a fine mash, drizzle in your olive oil, vinegar (or wine), and lemon or lime juice. Blend the whole thing into a paste. Set aside.



Step 2 - Score the pork shoulder: After rinsing and drying off the pork shoulder, make six to eight 2-inch long slices around the white skin with a sharp knife. You should slice far enough to penetrate the skin and fat and allow the knife to cut shallowly into the meat under the skin. (See my photo. >>)



Step 3 - Apply the rub: Before you begin, place the pork shoulder in the center of a long strip of plastic wrap. Now massage the fragrant rub ("adobo" in Spanish) all over the surface of the pork, making sure to work the paste into the cuts you made in the skin. Massage the meat well, rubbing the herbs into the flesh on all sides.

Step 4 - Wrap and chill: Draw up the ends of the plastic wrap, on which you set the pork, and continue to wrap the meat tightly (see photo below). Place it in the refrigerator and allow it to marinate for at least 6 hours, although overnight is better. Pork shoulder is a dense meat, so the longer you marinate, the better the flavors will penetrate. Again, marinate at least 6 hours for good results, overnight for the best results.



Step 5 - Prep for cooking: Before roasting, the shoulder must come to room temperature, so allow the wrapped meat to sit outside the fridge for 30 minutes. Preheat your oven to 325 degrees F. Unwrap the pork and discard the plastic wrap. **DO NOT RINSE THE MEAT.** Place the shoulder on a rack over a shallow pan, skin side up. Roast uncovered for about 45 to 50 minutes a pound, depending on your oven, so a 6 pound shoulder would need to slow roast for 4-1/2 to 5 hours, an 8 pound roast 6 to 7 hours, and so on.



Step 6 - Turn the Meat: Every hour during the cooking, flip the meat over. In other words, you will start roasting the pork shoulder with the skin side up. After an hour, flip the shoulder so the skin side is down for the second hour, and so on, every hour of cooking. You are turning it this way so the skin will cook evenly on all sides and the juices will be distributed properly. At the end of the cooking time, the meat should be at an internal temperature of 165 degrees F.

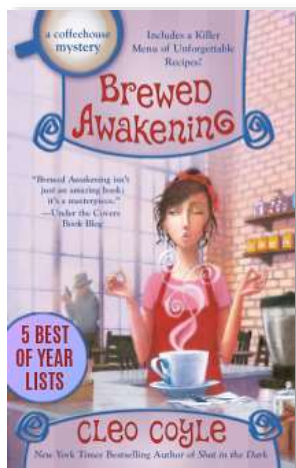


If the thermometer is under that temperature, then place the meat back in the oven for another 20 to 30 minutes and check again. By the end of the roasting process, the skin will be beautifully crispy and delicious. (Yes, we eat the skin!)



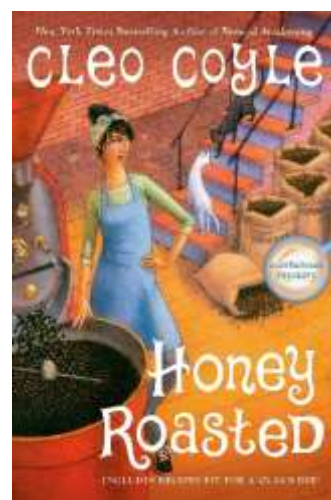
Enjoy slices right off the bone, or serve as roast pork sandwiches, including the traditional Cuban. Tuck slices into a warm flour or corn tortilla with guacamole and sour cream for an outstanding taco. However you choose to serve it, we truly hope you will...

Eat with joy! ~ Cleo



The [Coffeeshouse Mysteries](#) are bestselling culinary mysteries, set in a landmark Greenwich Village coffeeshouse. Each includes the added bonus of recipes.

To learn more and see more recipes, visit Cleo Coyle's online coffeeshouse at www.CoffeeshouseMystery.com And her recipe blog at www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com



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