

# Slate

FOOD

## Which Recipe Is Best?

*Cook's Illustrated* vs. food52.

### food52 Pork Shoulder

*We think porchetta should become a staple in everyone's kitchen. It's inexpensive, requires little but marinating and oven time and produces a roast that's robustly flavored and goes with most anything. Aliwaks's version is brilliant: she has you toast the spices, and combines them with fresh rosemary, garlic, and orange zest. By the time the roast emerges from the oven, your entire neighborhood smells like an Italian trattoria. The first time around, make the porchetta with ½ tablespoon red-pepper flakes and if that doesn't do it for you, then feel free to increase it to a full tablespoon. And if you can't find pork skin, just substitute nine thin slices of pancetta and lay them over the top of the rolled shoulder (which protects the roast from drying out and makes for delicious crisp pancetta chips to serve with the porchetta).*

—Amanda and Merrill, food52 editors

*I may have mentioned Luciana, the chef I work with. I watch her very closely, her porchetta is fabulous, this is my twist or my interpretation of her recipe, since I have absolutely no idea what really goes in her recipe. This is rather sublime with lovely rich sustainable heirloom pork but equally wonderful with pork from the butcher—butcher, not supermarket plastic wrap, though I've gone that route as well. This is definitely one of the those get-to-know-your-butcher times (though I think you should always get to know your butcher; they are a world of knowledge, and often supernice, and flirty in a good way). I go to Cannuli's pork store in Philly's Italian Market and get a butterflied pork shoulder with a piece of skin. The skin is important.*

—Aliwaks, recipe creator

### Serves 6-8

- 6 pounds Butterflied pork shoulder
- 1 piece pork skin, large enough to cover the shoulder, like a pashmina, or 9 thin slices pancetta
- 1.5 tablespoons coarse salt
- 1.5 tablespoons black peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon fennel seed
- 1 tablespoon coriander
- 1/2 to 1 tablespoon red pepper flakes
- 5 cloves mashed up garlic
- 1 tablespoon chopped rosemary
- 1 tablespoon finely grated orange zest
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 bay leaves
- 1/2 cup good red-wine vinegar

1. Toast spices and salt in small, heavy-bottom pan till fragrant and crush in mortar and pestle or mini chop. It should be rather coarse, not a powder. I am not ashamed to admit I use a Magic Bullet blender that I bought on TV; it grinds beautifully and makes smoothies.
2. Mix spices with chopped rosemary, orange zest, and mashed-up garlic. Add olive oil till it makes a paste.
3. Slather the pork in the spice mix and place in a baggie with the bay leaves overnight or up to three days; remember to smooch it around when you are in the fridge.
4. Preheat oven to 325; bring pork to room temperature.
5. Take pork out of baggie, turn baggie inside out and rub all the spice paste over the inside of the pork skin.
6. Roll pork into a cylindrical shape, tie with butcher twine at 1-inch intervals, stick the bay leaves under the middle strings, and lay skin over top (if using pancetta, lay the slices across the top like fish scales).
7. Place in a roasting pan with a rack, and roast until the internal temperature reaches 150. Remove and let sit until it goes to about 160. Depending on your oven, you may need to rotate it every so often. It should take 3 to 3 1/2 hours.
8. Remove skin, scrape off the fat (if you want), and cut into strips with a sharp set of shears (say that four times fast) to serve. (The pancetta will crisp, so simply break it into small pieces for serving alongside the porchetta.)
9. Deglaze pan with vinegar. Don't reduce too much—just enough to get rid of some off the sharpness. (This is more like a porky vinaigrette.)
10. To serve, slice into 1/4-inch slices, add a strip of skin (or pancetta) to each plate (or pile atop if serving en masse on a platter) and drizzle with sauce.
11. Serve with garlicky bitter greens and roasted or mashed potatoes, or escarole and white beans. The next day make Philly-style roast-pork sandwiches by piling warm pork and greens on a crusty seeded long roll with thin slices of sharp aged provolone.