

Roast Pork Loin with Roasted Apples and Sage and Onion Stuffing



The combination of pork, apples and sage is a trusted classic! For the best crispy cracking it is important not to baste the rind during cooking. Once the joint is cooked, if the crackling still isn't crispy enough for you, snip it into strips with scissors and flash under the grill. For the roasted apples, do make sure to choose a variety that is in season.

Ingredients

- ♦ 75g (3 oz) butter
- ♦ 1 large red onion, peeled and finely chopped
- ♦ 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- ♦ 25g (1 oz) pine nuts
- ♦ 125g (4½ oz) white breadcrumbs (from a a day-old loaf)
- ♦ 2 tsp chopped sage
- ♦ 2 tsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ♦ 1.8kg (4 lb) pork loin, skin scored at 5cm (¼ in) intervals
- ♦ 1 tbsp olive oil
- ♦ 3 eating apples
- ♦ sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ♦ Red Wine sauce, to serve (see below)

Serves 4

To Cook

Melt the butter in a large saucepan and gently fry the onion and garlic for 3-4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened but not browned, then remove from the heat. Meanwhile, heat a separate small frying pan over a medium heat and dry-fry the pine nuts, tossing a little to ensure they brown evenly. Stir the breadcrumbs into the onion mixture along with the sage and parsley. Tip in the toasted pine nuts and season with salt and pepper to taste, mixing to combine. Set aside to cool completely. Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F), gas mark 6. Place the pork joint skin-side down on a board and run a sharp knife between the loin and the streaky part to separate them, Continue to cut under the loin part for about 2.5cm (1 in), releasing it a little from the fat on the bottom. Press the cooled stuffing into a large sausage shape and insert it into the opened-up area of the pork joint, pressing it in to fit snugly. Close the opening and roll up the joint, tying it with string at 2.5cm (1 in) intervals to secure. Place the joint, skin-side up, on a rack set in a large roasting tin and pat the skin dry with kitchen paper. Rub the olive oil into the skin with 1 tablespoon of sea salt. Cover with foil and roast for 20 minutes. Reduce the heat to 180°C (350°F), gas mark 4 and roast the joint for another 15 minutes. Then remove the foil and cook for 1¼ hours or until the pork is tender and the crackling is crisp and golden. When the pork is cooked, transfer it to a warmed serving plate and allow the joint to rest, uncovered, for about 20 minutes. Remove the rack from the roasting tin. Quarter and core the apples, then cut into slices. Quickly toss the apple slices in the cooking juices and fat left in the roasting tin and return the tin to the oven. Roast the apples for 15-20 minutes until tender and lightly caramelised, tossing once or twice to ensure even cooking. Cut the string off the rested pork joint and carve the pork into thick slices. Arrange on warmed plates with the roasted apples and drizzle around the Red Wine sauce to serve.

Red Wine Sauce

Makes about 75ml (3fl oz)

- ♦ 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- ♦ 150ml (¼ pt) red wine
- ♦ 1 heaped tsp light muscovado sugar
- ♦ 150ml (¼ pt) beef stock
- ♦ 1 tsp chopped thyme
- ♦ Salt and fresh-ground black pepper

Heat a small saucepan and pour in the vinegar and red wine. Boil for about 5 minutes or until reduced by half. Add the sugar, stock and thyme and reduce again for another 10-12 minutes or so or until you have achieved a good sauce consistency, stirring occasionally. Leave to cool, then season with salt and pepper to taste, strain into a bowl, cover with cling film and use as required. This will keep for 1 week in the fridge.