

Braised Pork Loin with Porcini Mushrooms

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A good dish for a group, it can go in before they get there and be ready just before it's time to serve the main course. Recipe serves four to six, depending on the number of courses and appetites.

- 1 - ~ 2lb center cut pork loin
- 2 - medium yellow onions, peeled cut in half and sliced ¼" thick
- 1 - red bell pepper, cored, seeded and sliced ¼" thick
- 1lb Crimini mushrooms, washed and sliced ¼" thick
- 6 - Garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
- 2 oz dried Porcini mushrooms, soaked in hot water until soft and chopped medium fine
- 1 ½ lb Roma tomatoes, chopped (blanch and peel them, if you like)
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil
- 2 tsp fresh chopped thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 2/3 cup red wine
- Salt and pepper
- Olive oil

Trim the visible silver skin from the pork loin. Season with salt and pepper. Brown in a heavy bottomed skillet or Dutch oven with plenty of olive oil. Set aside.

Clean the pan and saute the onions in more olive oil. When they start to brown, add the bell pepper, mushrooms (including the Porcini) and garlic. Saute for another five minutes. Deglaze the pan with the wine and stir in the tomatoes and herbs. Adjust the seasoning and nestle the pork loin in the pot. Cover and turn down to a simmer. Let this simmer for about 1 ½ hours, or until the pork is very tender. Turn it once or twice during the cooking process. Make sure there isn't too much or not enough liquid. Remove liquid or add a little more wine depending on what you need.

When the pork is done, remove it to a cutting board and let it rest. Bring the sauce to a boil and reduce until it thickens. You can use a little arrowroot and water if you need to.

Slice the pork ¼" thick and give several slices to each person. Top with the sauce. The "Cannelini Beans with Swiss Chard" is a good side dish.

This dish calls for red, red, red. Cabernet and Bordeaux would have a tough time matching the richness and complexity of the dish but just about anything else will work.

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