

PORK CHOPS with SUGAR SNAP PEAS

Serves 2; double or triple for larger service.
By Dennis W. Viau; modified from a recipe
found in a restaurant trade journal.

Recipes in restaurant trade journals are often designed to be quickly made in the kitchen. Quicker turnover in a restaurant allows for service to more diners; therefore, more profit. This recipe is no exception. It is quick to make.



Ingredients:

½ cup (120ml) beef broth
About 6 tablespoons bourbon
1 tablespoon, packed, brown sugar
Juice from one lemon (2 to 3 tablespoons)
2 pork loin chops, ¾ inch (2cm) thick
Salt and freshly ground black pepper for seasoning
Ground allspice
1 to 2 tablespoons butter (preferably clarified butter, which has a higher smoke point)
4 ounces (113g) sugar snap peas
2 to 3 tablespoons fresh chopped mint

Directions:

Combine the broth, 3 tablespoons bourbon, sugar, and lemon juice in a bowl and stir to dissolve the sugar. (I used a jar and shook it until the sugar was dissolved—it's easier.)

Season the pork chops on both sides with salt, pepper, and a little ground allspice.

Heat the butter in a skillet until hot. (To raise the smoke point, it can be mixed with a little high-temperature oil, such as peanut oil or safflower oil.) Add the pork chops and sauté until well browned on both sides and cooked nearly through. I prefer to use an instant-read meat thermometer and cook to an internal temperature of 135°F (57°C). The meat should be slightly pink inside. Transfer to a platter and cover well to keep warm. (See Note at end.)

Add the sugar snap peas to the skillet. Cook until crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and wrap to keep warm.

Add 2 to 3 tablespoons bourbon to the pan to deglaze it, then add the beef broth mixture to the skillet, bring to a boil, and simmer rapidly over medium-high heat to reduce to a thin glaze. Transfer to a bowl and add the chopped mint. Stir to mix well.

Arrange the cooked sugar snap peas on two plates. Place a pork chop on the peas, to one side, and garnish with the bourbon glaze.

If available, a generous serving of applesauce to one side is a good accompaniment.

The **Step By Step** guide begins on the following page.

STEP-BY-STEP

1



Here is my *mise en place* for this dish. I hear from people who say they plan to make foods like this, but they'll leave out the liquor because they will be serving children. Alcohol has a lower boiling point than water. When you reduce the liquid, the first substance to boil away is the alcohol. A properly reduced sauce will have virtually no alcohol in it. Therefore, there is no need to worry about contributing to the delinquency of minors when cooking with liquors like brandy, cognac, or bourbon.

2



You can combine the beef broth, 3 tablespoons of bourbon, brown sugar and lemon juice in a bowl and then stir to dissolve the sugar. I find it easier to put everything in a jar and give it a good shake.

3



Season the pork chops top and bottom with salt, freshly ground black pepper, and ground allspice.

4



Heat a skillet with the butter until hot, 350 to 375°F (177 to 191°C). At these temperatures whole butter will likely burn. I prefer to use clarified butter, which has a smoke point around 485°F (252°C). Place the pork chops in the skillet and sauté to an internal temperature of about 135°F (57°C). I provide no cooking time because I prefer always to cook meat by temperature rather than by time. Cooking time will vary with the heat of the pan and the thickness of the meat. (These chops were $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch (about 2 to 2.5cm) thick.) The chops should be well browned. Transfer to a platter and cover well to keep warm. This resting period will allow time for the heat at the surface to migrate inward and increase the final serving temperature by 5 to 10 degrees. (The USDA recommends a serving temperature of at least 145°F (63°C) for all cuts of meat. Ground meats should be cooked to 160°F (71°C). I try to carefully balance temperature and tenderness when cooking meat. A good instant-read digital meat thermometer can be an expensive (about \$100USD) but valuable tool in the kitchen when cooking meats.)

5



Use the same pan to cook the sugar snap peas. These cook in 2 to 3 minutes. They should be tender-crisp.

6



Deglaze the pan with a splash of bourbon (2 to 3 tablespoons) and add the beef broth mixture. Bring to a boil and simmer over medium-high heat to reduce to a thin glaze/sauce.

7



Transfer the sauce to a bowl and stir in the chopped fresh mint.

8



Plate the sugar snap peas with a pork chop. Garnish the meat with the bourbon reduction sauce. For this recipe I made applesauce from scratch.

Conclusion

For a more efficient cooking time, I would thicken the beef broth mixture in advance and set it aside. After cooking the sugar snap peas, deglaze the pan with a splash of bourbon and then add the sauce. Bring to a boil to heat the sauce, remove from the heat, and then add the chopped fresh mint. Plate the pork chops and peas, finishing with a garnish of hot bourbon reduction sauce.

Note:

Pork has a long tradition of being cooked thoroughly because of the risk of trichinosis, an infection of worms carried by pigs and rats. If I remember my facts correctly, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) received no reports of trichinosis from commercially raised pork for several decades. State and federal agencies enforce strict guidelines for raising hogs and other livestock for market. The CDC receives 10 to 15 reports of trichinosis each year from people who raise their own pigs or who eat pork when traveling in other countries. Commercially raised pork is safe in the USA and need not be cooked to a high temperature. The USDA's recommendation of a serving temperature of 145°F (63°C) is more than adequate to assure food safety.