

## Trois façons de Porc - en croute, ballotine et lardons



### Dry cure pork belly lardons

500g belly pork (rind & bones removed)  
Seasalt (3% of meat's weight)  
Brown or demerara sugar (50% of the salt's weight)  
Optional: Herbs de Provence

### For the wet cure or brine

2 tbsp table salt  
2 tbsp white sugar  
Optional aromatics: pink pepper, juniper berries, thyme, bay, rosemary, tarragon

### Porc en croute or Ballotines

Pork tenderloins (filet mignon in France)  
allow 100 g per person  
Dijon mustard  
Fresh spinach leaves  
Slices of dry cured ham  
Frozen puff pastry

### Fermented cabbage

½ white cabbage  
Table salt (2.5% weight of cabbage)  
Optional aromatics: fennel seeds, caraway seeds, diced apple

### For the filling

1 tbsp of butter or oil to fry  
½ leek or 1 shallot, finely chopped  
2 cooked artichoke hearts  
2 pieces of sundried tomato  
½ preserved lemon or lemon zest  
Chopped pistachio or walnuts  
Optional aromatics: crushed pink pepper, chopped sage, tarragon, chopped fresh parsley  
OR ½ leek or 1 shallot, finely chopped  
½ pear or apple, finely chopped  
1 tbsp of cider vinegar as aromatics as above

### Breton Cider Glace

40 ml / 2 tbs cider vinegar  
80 ml / 4 tbs dry cider  
120 ml / 6 tbs light stock (pork, chicken or veal)  
Finely chopped pickled or fresh pear  
2-4 tbs crème fraîche  
25 g chilled butter per person

*Curing and fermenting is the "new black" in food! With renewed interest in gut health, traditional methods such as dry curing, wet brining and fermenting are in vogue. Salt and sugar eat bad bacteria and replace it with good – it's easy, cheap and good for you!*

*Wet cures or brine are little known in the UK, although Americans often brine their turkeys, the French use the method on dryer meats such as pork or chicken.*

*Dry salt and sugar cures are popular in making gravlax and the same method can be used to make bacon or to cure less fatty pieces of meat such as a piece of lean beef or a pork fillet (tenderloin). Check out the French markets for variations on these classic cured meats.*

*Fermented chou-crouste (red or white cabbage) is so simple to make and very flavoursome. Refreshing in summer added to the ever popular "slaws" and equally comforting in winter when cooked tossed with home-made lardons! Serve this with a pickled pear & cider reduction*

### **Method:**

#### **To prepare the pork**

Trim the fillets carefully removing the silver-skin to avoid the meat shrinking, cut any obvious bits of fat away

#### **To make the brine**

Crush the spices lightly in a pan with a cup of the water, salt and sugar. Bring to the boil and steep for 10 minutes or so, longer if you have time. Transfer to a bowl and add a litre of cold water. Immerse the meat, which should be at room temperature and put in the fridge for 1-2 hours. Remove the pork, dry thoroughly with lots of paper towels and do not season! Leave to drain on a rack or wrapped in paper towel in the fridge to chill.

#### **To make the filling**

Melt the butter in a frying pan and gently fry the leek or shallot until soft but not coloured. Deglaze with the vinegar. Add the other ingredients and cook gently to remove as much moisture as possible. **Variations:** we like pear, blue cheese and walnut or artichoke, sundried tomato, pistachio and parsley. It also works well with mixed mushrooms which have been well cooked through to remove moisture.

#### **Porc Ballotine**

Carefully butterfly the brined filets. Season lightly and spoon the cooled filling along the inside of the meat. Gently roll the filet into a cylinder.

Lay out 2 layers of cling film long enough to give you length to tie a knot. Lay out a sheet of thin jambon sec slightly overlapping and place a layer of dry spinach over the ham. Lay the filet over the ham and then use the clingfilm to tightly roll the fillet. Tie off each end and keep in the fridge for no less than 30 minutes. The tight wrap will help form a good shape.

When ready to cook heat a steamer and place the rolled filet onto the steam tray. Steam the filets for 25 minutes depending on their size. Remove from the steamer and allow to cool. Remove the clingfilm and carefully dry on paper towel.

Heat a frying pan on medium heat with a little olive oil and brown the meat turning frequently for about 5 minutes. Serve by slicing each end off and slice the remainder into medallions of about 20mm.

#### **Porc en crouste**

Lay out 2 layers of cling film long enough to give you length to tie a knot. Lay out a sheet of thin jambon sec slightly overlapping and place a layer of dry spinach over the ham. Lay the filet over the ham and spoon the filling over the top of the fillet as a crown. Use the clingfilm to tightly roll the

fillet. Tie off each end and keep in the fridge for no less than 30 minutes. The tight wrap will help form a good shape.

Cut a rectangular pastyr base about 30mm larger than the rolled filet. Place in on baking paper on a tray and place another piece of baking paper on top. Place a tin on top of the astry and bake in the oven at 200C for 20min. Remove the top tin and paper and bake for a further 5 min.

When the pastry is cool, remove the clingfilm from the pork and lay it on the pastry base with the filling upright (place a bay leaf on the top of the filet to indicate the top.

Egg wash the edge of the pastry and cover the fillet with raw pastry, tuck in the sides, seal and brush with lightly beaten egg. Add any decoration you like with the leftover pastry trimmings. Keep in the fridge until you are ready to serve.

Bake at 200C for 20 to 25 minutes or until the pastry is cooked through and the internal temperature of the pork reaches about 55C, remembering that it will continue to cook as you rest the meat. Again remember than the meat will be slightly pink inside.

### **To make the bacon or lardons**

Calculate the weight of the meat. Use 3-5% salt to the weight (we use 3%). The amount of brown or demerara sugar is half the amount of salt you have calculated. Mix the salt and sugar together with any optional aromatics and massage into the meat for a couple of minutes. Place in a container and cover with cling film or a lid.

Turn every 12 hours for 2-3 days. The cure draws out the liquid by osmosis and penetrates the flavours. To check that it is cured, cut it right through the centre - it should be translucent and sweet smelling. Rinse or wipe off the cure then dry thoroughly with paper towel. Add some more dried herbs to decorate the top. Keep loosely wrapped paper towel in the fridge (or cut into lardons or slices and freeze ready to use).

The cure will keep for a month in the fridge and up to 3 months in the freezer. Artisan butchers in France will leave it out uncovered to the air indefinitely - we don't! We prefer to freeze more than we need, as the longer it dries out, the tougher it becomes. (*\*If it comes with bones, cut these out and use to make a quick stock*).

### **To make the chou-croute (fermented white or red cabbage)**

Shred a white cabbage as finely as you can, by hand or in a food processor. Sprinkle with 2.5% fine salt, bash with a rolling pin or pop into a stand mixer and very slowly let it run for a couple of minutes until the cabbage starts to give off some brine.

Place in a wide necked jar, make a lid out of a cabbage leaf, push down and put another jar smaller on top to hold it down, leaving a "moat" for the gases to escape and the brine to bubble up and cover the cabbage. Hold down the jar with film as **in the photo**.

You can use it within a few days but the longer you leave it, the more developed the flavour will be. To stop the fermentation if it becomes too strong, keep in the fridge for up to a year, using your senses to check for any spoilage. Serve warm or cold with fried lardons for a sweet and sour taste sensation!

This recipe works well with white or red cabbage, add different flavours such as a little grated apple, garlic, fennel seed, ginger, lemon zest – experiment!

### ***Breton Cider Glace***

Add the vinegar and reduce by 2/3rds

Add the cider and reduce again by 2/3rds

Add the stock and reduce by 1/2 until you have a syrupy sauce

Add 2 tbs of cream to emulsify the butter

When you are ready to serve simply warm the sauce and whisk in small chunks (1cm) of frozen butter. The amount of butter depends on how much sauce you want - 100g is adequate for 6 people.

***Garnish: crispy sage leaves*** – microwave young sage leaves on a plate for 2m 20 seconds and serve as a garnish.