

Flavorful Family Favorites with Pork

(NAPSA)—For noted chef Bruce Aidells, author of the new book, “Bruce Aidells’s Complete Book of Pork,” pork is the perfect place to start when building a flavorful family meal. Pork’s mild flavor and slightly sweet undertones pair well with ingredients ranging from sweet and subtle to bold and forceful.

Aidells offers these tips to help you make the most of flavorful feasts with pork:

• **Select the appropriate cut.** “Tender cuts, such as roasts and chops from the loin, sirloin, leg or tenderloin, are well suited to dry heat cooking methods, including frying, grilling, broiling and roasting. Moist heat cooking methods like braising, stewing or slow-cooking are more effective for tougher cuts with more intramuscular fat, such as shanks, ribs and picnic shoulder,” explains Aidells. A few cuts, such as Boston butt and country spareribs, are versatile enough for either method.

• **Take time to brine.** According to Aidells, soaking pork in salt-water (sometimes with additional flavorings) can help today’s lean pork stay moist and juicy. “You’ll be amazed at what a difference brining makes,” says Aidells. For extra flavor, try a less traditional brine, such as Aidells’s Baked Buttermilk-Brined Pork Chops. Aidells notes that pork labeled as “enhanced” is not good for brining, as it has already been marinated.

• **Give up the guesswork.** “The most important tool for preparing delicious, juicy pork is a good meat thermometer,” says Aidells. “Even the most carefully prepared pork can become dry and



Chef Bruce Aidells offers flavorful tips for preparing the world’s most popular protein—pork.

tasteless if overcooked.” The National Pork Board and U.S. Department of Agriculture recommend cooking pork to medium doneness—an internal temperature of 160° F. Correctly cooked pork is juicy and tender, with a slight blush of pink in the center. “I prefer a little more pink in my pork,” says Aidells, “so most of my recipes recommend removing roasts and chops from the heat at 145° F.” When roasting larger cuts, keep in mind that the internal temperature will generally rise another 5 to 10 degrees after it’s removed from the oven.

Baked Buttermilk-Brined Pork Chops

- 3 cups buttermilk**
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of kosher salt**
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest**
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary**
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh sage or 1 teaspoon dried**

- 4 T-bone or rib pork chops**
($1\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick)
- 2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper**
- Flour for coating**
- 3 tablespoons olive oil**

To brine pork chops, pour buttermilk into plastic storage container or stainless-steel bowl; stir in salt until completely dissolved. Add lemon zest, rosemary and sage. Add chops, making sure they are completely immersed in brine. Cover and refrigerate 3 to 4 hours. Preheat oven to 400° F. Remove chops from brine and rinse off excess. Pat dry, season generously with pepper and dredge each chop in flour, shaking to remove excess. Set chops aside. In a large non-stick ovenproof skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Put chops in pan and cook for 2 to 3 minutes or until nicely browned. Turn and cook 3 minutes more. Transfer skillet to oven and bake chops for about 15 minutes (until they register 145° on an instant-read thermometer inserted into the middle of a chop). Remove chops to platter and let rest 5 minutes before serving. Serves 4.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories: 453; Fat: 29 g; Saturated Fat: 9 g; Cholesterol: 108 mg; Sodium: 572 mg; Carbohydrates: 7 g; Protein: 38 g; Fiber: 0 g.

Recipe adapted from “Bruce Aidells’s Complete Book of Pork,” courtesy of Harper Collins Publishing.