

Pork Tenderloin Sandwiches with Sauerkraut Relish and Pear Chutney

Ingredients

3 Tbs extra virgin olive oil
2 ripe Bartlett pears peeled and halved, cored and thinly sliced
1/2 cup light brown sugar
1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
3/4 teaspoon mustard seeds
3/4 teaspoon minced ginger
1/2 cup cooked, chopped bacon -see note
1 medium onion finely diced
1 pound drained sauerkraut (1 1/2 cups)
3/4 cup pear puree -see note
1 teaspoons caraway seeds
2 pounds cooked and cooled pork tenderloin, sliced
Kosher Salt and freshly ground pepper
2 baguettes, sliced lengthwise then cut into 6 inch pieces.
2 Tbs butter
2 cups baby spinach

Method

In a medium saucepan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Add pear slices and cook over high heat, surfing occasionally, until golden, about 5 minutes.

Add the brown sugar, vinegar, mustard seeds and ginger. Simmer over medium low heat until slightly reduced and jam like, about 30 minutes. Let the chutney cool.

Note, It might be tempting to buy store bought chutney. Don't ! This step is worth making this recipe.

Meanwhile, warm your chopped bacon in a skillet until crispy. Remove from pan and set aside. Add the onion to the skillet and cook over medium heat until softened, about 5 minutes.

Add sauerkraut and cook, stirring, until slightly dry, about 3 minutes. Add the pear puree, caraway seeds and chopped bacon and cook 1 minute longer. Transfer relish to a cowl and let cool.

Add butter to a hot heavy iron skillet. Add baguette pieces sliced side down to toast/ grill the bread. Spread the relish on the bottom halves of the baguettes and cover with pork slices, season with salt and pepper. Top with chutney and spinach. Add the top of the baguette.

Serve

Note: You can cook the bacon ahead of time and chop it into pieces then brown it just before use. OR even easier, you can buy pre-cooked fresh bacon in the salad bar at Heinen's.

Note: To make pear puree, simply add one 15-ounce can of drained pears to a blender and puree until smooth. About 10 seconds.

Did you know that eating pork and Sauerkraut at the New Year

are good luck. "Pork's on the menu because pigs root forward -- the same direction most people hope to go in the new year. Conversely, serving chicken on New Year's Day is unwise because chickens scratch backward -- not a direction anyone wants to go.

Having good supplies of pork and sauerkraut for winter also made early Pennsylvania Dutch families feel rich because they knew they wouldn't go hungry in winter's bleakest months."

William Woys Weaver, Pennsylvania's leading culinary historian, explains:

"Pork and sauerkraut didn't start out as the fixed dish connected with New Year's Day. Instead, it was an outgrowth of the mid-winter feasting associated with butchering the family hogs. At that time, usually near Christmas, families invited relatives and hosted big dinners. When home butchering declined in the later 1800s, the big pork dinner tradition simply continued, either for Christmas or New Year's." This tradition has spread and is popular across the midwest.

My father made his own Sauerkraut when I was young. I grew up loving anything pickled or fermented so cooking with sauerkraut is common in our house.

Today I'm making a recipe I came across when my kids were small. They enjoy it because the pear puree cuts the biting sour that can accompany sauerkraut. This sandwich is not only a way to bring good fortune to your new year but a way to have your family and guests singing your praises. This is a dish that fills your home with amazing smells that will bring everyone to your kitchen. The fresh ginger adds a bright freshness and the chutney will have you licking spoons.

Knowing this sandwich will be the meal that follows a pork tenderloin dinner we always make extra pork tenderloin so we are assured to have left overs. I hope you like it as much as we do. I also hope it brings you and yours good fortune in the coming year.