

Crisp Asian Pork Belly with Yellow Pineapple Curry



Ok, all of my Asian food loving fans are going to be chomping at the bit to make this one! You do not need to be a Masterchef to create beautiful food, you just need a good method and with the risk of sounding like I am talking myself up.....I think I have mastered pork belly.....woohoooo!! Crispy, spiced crackling.....molten, soft meat.....sweet, sour curry.....fresh, punchy aromatic topping. Signature Em's Food fare, make no bones about it.

Prep time: 30 minutes
time) \$\$ Medium Budget

Cooking time: 2 3/4 Hours (15 Minutes resting

Serves 4 (generous portions)

1kg of boned pork belly, scored at 1/2cm intervals (buy free range if you can, makes all the difference)

2 tsp of Chinese Five Spice

1 tsp of sea salt

For the Curry:

Peanut or vegetable oil for frying

1 clove of garlic, finely minced

2cm piece of ginger, finely grated

1 stalk of lemon grass, finely chopped

1 red chilli, finely chopped (seeds removed if you don't like it too hot)

3 kaffir lime leaves

1 small brown onion peeled, halved and sliced top to bottom

1/4 of a fresh pineapple, skin removed and cut into bite sized chunks

2 tbs of yellow curry paste

400ml of coconut cream (set 2 tbs aside for garnish)

1 tbs of fish sauce

1 tbs of brown sugar

Juice of 1/2 a lime

1/2 a bunch of coriander leaves, roughly chopped

Steamed rice to serve

For the Topping:

2 green onions, cut into batons and thinly sliced top to bottom

2 kaffir lime leaves, centre stalk removed, rolled into a tight wad and very finely sliced

1 red chilli halved, seeds removed and sliced thinly

1 cup of coriander leaves

Preheat the oven to 220°C and place the grill on high*. Pat the pork belly dry all over and then rub a little oil into the skin. Grind the sea salt with the Chinese five spice in a mortar and pestle until the salt is nice and fine. Sprinkle the Five spice mix liberally over the top of the pork and rub it in. Place the pork belly on a rack in an oven tray and pour in enough water to cover the base of the pan. Place the pork in the oven and grill for 20-25 minutes or until the skin is crispy all over. It may look slightly blackened because of the spice mix so be careful not to burn it. Turn the oven down to 180°C and cook for a further 2 hours, keeping the water topped up in the base of the pan. This will keep the pork meat nice and moist.

After 2 hours, remove from the oven and cover loosely with foil. Allow to rest for at least 15 minutes.

Heat a large wok and add a little oil. Fry the onion until just softening and then add the garlic, ginger, chilli, lemon grass and lime leaves, stirring until aromatic. Pop in the pineapple pieces and fry for a minute or two before adding the curry paste and stirring for another minute. Pour in the coconut cream, fish sauce and lime juice and add the sugar, stirring well to combine before bringing to a boil. Reduce to a low simmer and pop on a lid for 15 minutes.

In a small bowl, combine the green onion, lime leaves, chilli and coriander by tossing gently with your finger tips. Cover with cold water and a few ice cubes and place in the fridge for 20 minutes. They will crisp and curl up beautifully.

Place the pork belly on a cutting board and using a large sharp knife, place one hand on the handle and the other on the spine of the knife and using the palm of your hand, press your weight down on the knife to cut the crispy skin nice and cleanly into four equal portions. Using a sawing motion will tear the skin from the meat.

Stir the coriander through the curry sauce. Divide steamed rice between four shallow bowls. Spoon the curry sauce around the rice and place the pork belly on top. Drain the water from the garnish and using your finger tips place a nice pile on top of the pork. Drizzle the remaining coconut cream over the curry sauce. This is an optional step but makes for a very restauranty looking dish!

*If you don't have an oven/grill combo start the pork in the oven and let it cook at 220°C for the same amount of time. If it doesn't look super crispy, then place it under the separate grill, checking every 5 minutes to prevent burning until you have reached the desired crispiness.

