

Brined Apple Plank Stuffed Pork Chops

4 center-cut pork chops, about 1 1/2 inches thick
1 apple wood plank, soaked in water for two hours

Brine:

4 cups water, divided
4 tablespoons coarse kosher salt
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
10 whole cloves
2 bay leaves
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 teaspoon celery seed
Juice of 1/2 orange (approximately 3 tablespoons)
Zest of 1/2 orange (approximately 1 1/2 teaspoons)

Stuffing:

3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
1/2 cup diced yellow onion
1/2 cup diced celery
1/2 cup chopped apples
1 1/2 cups herbed stuffing mix
1/2 cup Tennessee Gourmet™ Apple & Spice sauce (your choice of flavor)
1/2 cup chicken stock

Prepare the brine:

Bring two cups of water to a boil over medium heat. Add salt, sugar, cloves, bay leaves, oregano, celery seed, orange juice and zest. Reduce heat and simmer five minutes. Remove from heat and add two cups cold water. Refrigerate until brine is below 40° F. Using a non-reactive container or re-sealable food bag, combine chops and brine solution and brine the chops, refrigerated, for two to four hours.

Prepare stuffing:

In a medium sauté pan over medium heat, melt 1 1/2 tablespoons butter. Add onions, celery and apples, sauté until barely tender. Add 1 1/2 tablespoons butter, 1/2 cup water and 1/2 cup apple & spice sauce, bring to simmer. Add stuffing mix, stirring well. Remove from heat and cover. After 10 minutes, fluff stuffing, stirring to combine ingredients. Allow to cool.

Stuff the chops:

Remove chops from brine and cut a horizontal pocket into each chop. Fill with 2 to 3 tablespoons of the stuffing mix and secure with toothpicks. Refrigerate until cooking. (Put remaining stuffing in a buttered casserole dish, cover and refrigerate.)

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Cook the chops:

Prepare grill for medium high indirect cooking. Place drained planks direct heat side of grill and heat until they begin to char. Flip planks over and put two chops on each plank. Move planks to indirect heat side of grill and cook, covered, for one hour, turning once. Cook chops to an internal temperature of 155° F. (Alternately, grill chops over direct heat seven to nine minutes per side or bake in a preheated 350° F. oven for one to 1 1/4 hours.)