



Louisiana Collard Greens with Smoked Pork Belly

YIELD: Makes 4 to 6 servings

COOKING TIME: **Prep** 30 minutes **Cook** 7 hours – (allow 2 days to make)

WINE SUGGESTION: 2018 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley

Smoked Pork Belly (day 1 prep)

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds pork belly
2 tablespoons Kosher salt
½ cup packed brown sugar

1 tablespoon smoked paprika
1 tablespoon dark chili powder
½ tablespoon ground black pepper

PREPARATION

In a small bowl, mix all dry rub ingredients together using a fork or a whisk. Prep the pork by removing the skin (if it's still attached). With a very sharp knife, slice scores through the fat but not through the flesh to make a one-inch cross-hatch throughout the whole skin. (Tip – this is much easier to do when the pork belly is cold.) Place the pork belly on a sheet pan or baking dish and sprinkle a liberal amount rub on the belly, rubbing it into all the crevices. Cover and refrigerate for 24 hours.

Remove the pork belly from the refrigerator at least 1 hour prior to smoking to bring it to room temperature. Follow your smoker's instructions and bring the temperature up to 225° F degrees. Add wood chips to start the smoke and place an aluminum drip pan with a few inches of water under the grates to catch drippings.

Place the pork belly fat side up on the grates and smoke until it reaches an internal temperature of 165° F degrees, which will take from 3 to 4 hours. Remove the pork belly from the smoker and let rest on a wire rack for at least 15 minutes. It can be sliced and eaten right away, or it can be chilled, sliced and crisped up on the grilled/pan fried for a few minutes on each side.

Collard Greens

INGREDIENTS

2 bunches collard greens	1 cup chopped smoked pork belly
3 tablespoons olive / bacon fat	2 quarts chicken broth, warm
1 onion, sliced	2 tablespoons cider vinegar
2 -3 garlic cloves, smashed	1 teaspoon sugar
2 bay leaves	salt & freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons cider vinegar	dash of hot pepper sauce to taste
1 teaspoon sugar	

PREPARATION

To prepare greens, cut away the tough stalks and remove all stems from the collards. Discard any leaves that are bruised or yellow. Wash the collards thoroughly to remove the grit, 2 or 3 times, until the water runs clear. Dry thoroughly by rolling them up in a clean dish towel. (tip – in a pinch, use two bags of pre-cut and prewashed collard green pieces from the produce section, breaking off any large pieces of stem as they tend to be tough even after cooking.)

Place a large pot or cast-iron Dutch oven over medium heat and add the olive oil (or olive oil / bacon fat mixture). When it is heated, add the onion, bay leaves and chopped pork belly. Cook the mixture until the onions are soft and are starting to brown, about 8-10 minutes. To prevent the garlic from burning, add it just a few minutes before the onions are done.

Pack in greens, pushing them down into the pot. Add the broth, vinegar and sugar. Bring up to a boil, turning the greens over occasionally with a wooden spoon as they wilt. Lower to a simmer, cover the pot and cook for 1 hour. Taste the "pot liquor" (broth) and check the seasoning, adding salt and pepper as desired. Cover again and let cook for an additional 2 to 2 1/2 hours. Some recipes use a lot less cooking time, but this additional time really helps all the flavors come together. (Tip – if using the bagged pre-cut collard greens, they may only require an additional 1 to 2 hours.) Remove the bay leaves before serving.

To serve, place a 1 inch wide slice of pork belly in a bowl and ladle a hearty portion of the collard green mixture over the top. Add a dash of hot pepper sauce to taste.