

The Art of Cuisine



Holiday Pork Roast

Could we transform an inexpensive cut of meat usually destined for pulled pork into a roast worthy of the holiday table? Here's what we discovered:

Test Kitchen Discoveries



- Taking a cue from a pork roast recipe from northern Minnesota called porketta—which calls for opening up a pork butt like a book, lavishing it with gutsy seasonings, and then rolling and roasting it—we decided to borrow the seasoning mix but aim for a more substantial filling.
- We settled on a stuffing made with garlic, fennel seeds, red pepper flakes, plenty of onion, and ground pork.
- Adding the ground pork raw makes for a moister stuffing, especially when bound with fresh bread crumbs and egg, which also help hold the stuffing in place.
- Use a hearty white sandwich bread like Arnold's Country Classic or Pepperidge Farm Farmhouse for the bread crumbs.
- To increase the surface area of the pork so that we could pile it high with stuffing, we butterflied the butt, pounded it to an even 3/4-inch thickness, and then cut the meat into two smaller roasts. This created two roasts that were easier to stuff and roll—and that cooked much faster than one big roast.
- To promote browning and to avoid having to sear the meat first, we simply rubbed the raw roast with salt, pepper, and brown sugar.
- Covering the pork with foil as it roasts ensures that it stays moist, but leaving the foil on the entire time prevents flavorful browning. The solution? For the final half hour of cooking, uncover the roast and up the heat.

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STEP BY STEP

Butterflying A Boston Butt

Boston butt roasts have great meaty flavor, but because they're made of several different muscles, they



can be tricky to butterfly. Here's how we do it:

1. Insert a chef's knife into the opening where the bone has been removed. Cut horizontally, stopping at least 1 inch before the edge, and open the meat like a book.



2. Make another cut diagonally into the thicker portion of the roast. Open this flap, smoothing out the butterflied rectangle of meat.



3. Cover the pork with plastic wrap and, using a meat pounder, pound the meat to an even $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thickness. The pork is now ready to be cut in half, stuffed, rolled, and tied.

Holiday Pork Roast

Serves 8

Boneless pork shoulder, often labeled Boston butt, is usually wrapped in netting. If all you can find is a bone-in roast, have the butcher remove the bone. To make the bread crumbs, pulse 1 or 2 pieces of hearty white sandwich bread in a food processor until coarsely ground.

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Stuffing

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 onion , *chopped fine*
- 10 garlic cloves , *minced*
- 8 ounces ground pork
- 1 cup fresh bread crumbs (*see note*)
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon fennel *seeds*
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg , *lightly beaten*

Pork

- 2 tablespoons **brown sugar**
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon pepper
- 1 (4- to 5-pound) boneless pork shoulder roast (*see note*)

1. **For the stuffing:** Heat oil in large nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Cook onion until golden, about 8 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds; transfer to large bowl and let cool. Add ground pork, bread crumbs, parsley, fennel seeds, pepper flakes, salt, and egg to bowl with onion mixture and knead with hands until well combined.
2. **For the pork:** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 300 degrees. Combine sugar, salt, and pepper in small bowl. Butterfly pork and pound to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thickness; you should have rectangle measuring about 15 by 8 inches. With long side facing you, cut pounded pork in half crosswise. Spread stuffing in even layer over each half of pork, leaving a 1-inch border around edges. Roll and tie each half securely with kitchen twine at 1-inch intervals. Rub roasts evenly with sugar mixture and transfer to rimmed baking sheet. Cover baking sheet tightly with foil and roast until meat registers 170 degrees, about 2 hours.
3. Remove foil and increase oven temperature to 400 degrees. Cook until roasts are well browned and meat registers 190 degrees, about 30 minutes. Transfer roasts to cutting board, tent with foil, and let rest 20 minutes. Remove kitchen twine. Slice and serve.

Recipe by Cookscountry.com

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