

table & TASTE

Dowerin Field Days 2021

Vietnamese Pork Belly & Jalapeno Lime Salsa Soft Tacos

Serves 6

- 2 tablespoons fine salt (not iodised)**
- 1 kg pork belly, boned, skin on**
- 2-3 cups ice**

Palm Sugar Braising Liquid

- 300g palm sugar**
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce**
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce or tamari (gluten free)**
- 2 cups water**

Salsa

- 1 spring onion**
- 1 small clove garlic**
- half long red chilli**
- 1 tablespoon pickled jalapenos**
- juice half lime**
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce**
- 1 dessert spoon sugar**
- 15g mint leaves**
- 15g fresh coriander leaves**
- 8 cherry tomatoes, halved**

To Serve

- 12 mini soft taco tortillas**

Substitute palm sugar with brown sugar, if needed. To make this recipe gluten free use gluten free tamari instead of soy sauce, available at most supermarkets.

UP TO TWO DAYS BEFORE COOKING, prepare the palm sugar braising liquid by placing all the ingredients in a saucepan and stirring over low heat until all the palm sugar is dissolved. Take off the heat, pour into a bowl and keep covered in the fridge until ready to use.

UP TO THE DAY BEFORE make the salsa. Place all the ingredients into a food processor and blitz until finely chopped. Store, covered, in the fridge up to one day.

THREE HOURS BEFORE SERVING, thoroughly pat dry the pork and arrange skin side up in a deep-sided roasting tray. LITTLE TIP: Choose a tray that is only a few cm bigger than the pork on all sides. Allow it to come to room temperature for about 30 minutes, before cooking. About 2 1/2 hours before serving, preheat your oven to 180 degrees Celsius, conventional. Carefully spread the salt over the pork skin, making sure you don't spill it over the edges. You can leave a few millimetres border around all the edges to prevent it from dripping off into the tray. The reason for this is that you will be pouring the braising liquid around the pork, that will form a sauce. If you spill salt into it, it will become too salty. Pour the braising liquid around the pork just until comes to the top of the flesh, taking care not to get it on the skin, then transfer the tray to the top half of the oven to cook for 90 minutes. If the liquid dries out too much, top up with a little water. Take the pork out of the oven and increase the temperature to 240 degrees Celsius, conventional. While it heats, take the pork off the tray and carefully remove the salty coating. You may need to crack it in places and wipe away with a dry piece of paper towel. LITTLE TIP: Don't use any moisture to remove the salt. You want it to remain dry. Place the pork, skin side up on a fresh roasting tray and return to the top half of the oven to cook just until the entire skin surface is bubbled and crispy, but not burnt. It will only take 5-10 minutes.

Meanwhile prepare the tray braising liquid by removing the pork fat from it. Add 2-3 cups of ice into the tray and stir through to solidify all of the pork fat. Once the fat has become solid, remove all the fat and ice and discard. Pour the liquid into a saucepan, reheat and keep warm. LITTLE TIP: You can adjust the flavour and consistency of the braising liquid by either bringing to the boil and reducing, or adding more water if it has thickened too much.

Remove the pork from the oven. To serve, flip over onto a cutting board and portion into 6 even sized pieces. Slice each portion into strips. Pour some of the braising liquid into a serving tray or bowl, then arrange the slices of pork in, skin side up, ensuring the crackling isn't submerged.

TO SERVE, warm the mini soft taco tortillas either in the oven, microwave or by warming each one in a dry saucepan. Serve the tray of pork belly, warmed tortillas and jalapeno salsa for everyone to assemble their own tortillas.

