

BERBERE-SPICED PORK CHOP

INGREDIENTS

For the brine (optional)

3 cups cold water, divided

3 tablespoons coarse kosher salt (or 2 1/2 tablespoons table salt)

For the pork chops

1 or 2 pork chops, bone-on, 1- to 1 1/2-inches thick (about 1 pound each)

Olive oil

1 teaspoon per chop of Berbere Spice Mix

(<http://cupofsugarpinchofsalt.com/2015/06/04/berbere-spice-mix/>)

You will also need: a cast iron (ceramic coated or not) or a steel clad skillet. Do not use a pan with a non-stick coating (i.e. Teflon).

DIRECTIONS

Brine the pork chops (optional): Bring 1 cup of the water to a boil, add the salt and stir to dissolve the salt. Add 2 more cups of cold water to bring the temperature of the brine down to room temperature. Place the pork chops in a shallow dish and pour the brine over top. The brine should cover the chops. Cover the dish and refrigerate for 30 minutes or up to 2 hours.

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 400F. Place the skillet in the oven to preheat.

While the oven heats, prepare the pork chops. Remove the chops from the brine; if you didn't brine, remove the chops from their packaging. Pat dry with paper towels. If there is a significant fat cap on the chop, don't remove it (good flavor for cooking; if you adverse to the fat, just don't eat it later), but do score it with a sharp knife every 1/2 inch or so, so that the chop doesn't curl up and "cup". Rub both sides with olive oil, then sprinkle with the berbere spice. Set the chops aside to warm while the oven finishes heating.

Carefully remove the hot skillet from the oven and set it over medium-high heat on the stove top. Be careful as the pan will be very, very hot. Turn down the oven to 350F. Lay the pork chops in the hot skillet. You should hear them immediately begin to sizzle. Sear until the first side of the chops are seared golden, 3 minutes. The chops may start to smoke a little; Turn down the heat if it becomes excessive. Flip the pork chops to the other side and immediately transfer the skillet to the oven. Roast until the pork chops are cooked through and register 140°F to 145°F in the thickest part of the meat with an instant-read thermometer. Cooking time will be 6 to 10 minutes depending on the thickness of the chops. Start checking the chops at 6 minutes and continue checking every minute or two until the chops are cooked through. Transfer the cooked pork chops to a plate and tent loosely with foil and let the chops rest for at least 5 minutes before serving.