

Pressuring pork into down-home delectability

Tradition calls for fall meals to be hot, hearty and homey.

Many modern cooks like to follow traditions, yet their busy schedules don't always leave them with enough time to make old-fashion family meals. Fortunately, cooks-on-the-go are becoming skilled in abbreviated meal preparation without sacrificing quality or appetite appeal.

Pressure pan pork hocks 'n hominy is an excellent example of how preparation of a wholesome and delicious meal can be streamlined. The initial cooking time of the smoked pork hocks is reduced considerably when they are cooked under pressure. To give the hocks down-home appeal, tomatoes, hominy, onion and green pepper are added along with a robust seasoning trio of chili power, red pepper and cumin.

While this pork hock entree adds variety to fall menu plans, it also helps to save money on your food bill. Pork hocks are available fresh or smoked and are an economical cut. They are cut from the picnic shoulder and contain two round shank bones exposed at both ends. Since hocks contain considerable bone, you'll need to allow 1 1/2 servings per pound. The recipe given here is for smoked hocks although fresh hocks can be substituted by making a few minor adjustments.

- PRESSURE PAN PORK HOCKS 'N HOMINY**
- 3 pounds smoked pork hocks
 - 3 cups water
 - 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper pods
 - 1 teaspoon chili powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
 - 1 can (16 ounces) tomatoes
 - 2 teaspoon cornstarch
 - 1 can (18 ounces) hominy, drained
 - 1 medium onion, cut into wedges
 - 1 green pepper, cut into strips

(Fresh pork hocks may be substituted. Reduce water to 2 cups and add 1 1/2 teaspoons salt.)

Place hocks, water and red pepper pods in pressure pan. Close cover securely. Place pressure pan regulator on vent pipe and cook on medium high heat until the regulator attains a steady, gentle rocking motion. Reduce to low and cook approximately 45 minutes. Remove from heat, cool cooker.

Pour off cooking liquid, reserve 1/2 cup and add to hocks in pan. Sprinkle chili powder and cumin over hocks. Break up tomatoes and drain, reserving liquid. Stir cornstarch into tomato liquid; pour over hocks. Add tomatoes, hominy, onion and green pepper to pressure pan. Cover, but do not secure, and cook slowly 15 minutes or until onions and green peppers are tender. Serves 4-6.

To complete this entree, serve a green vegetable such as cooked spinach and a simple salad featuring fresh apples. For an old-fashioned dessert, top squares of warm gingerbread with lemon sauce.

Fast and easy

There's a can of tuna on the shelf, some instant rice you've denied using, a few raisins in a bag left over from the succulent bread baking marathon, an onion, a green pepper that hasn't known its parent plant for two weeks, one stalk of celery, and the chicken bouillon cubes you religiously drowned in water in Skillman water diet days. Put them together and what have you got? Dinner.

- 2 cups prepared rice** (substituting chicken broth for water)
- 1 can tuna
 - 2 slices onion diced and browned
 - 2 slices green pepper
 - 1/2 celery stalk, diced
 - raisins
 - walnuts (you found them while rummaging for the tuna)
 - nutmeg or cinnamon (just a hint of)

In the five minutes it takes the rice to fluff, brown the onions in butter or oil. When the rice is cooked, stir in onions, green pepper, celery, raisins and walnuts. Once that mixture is on the plate, fork on the tuna (drainer of its spring water or oil, of course) and sprinkle with nutmeg or cinnamon. Serves you rightly.

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