

In German, it's sauerbraten

Sweet-sour pork is a real fall treat

To salute the arrival of fall, gather family and friends to enjoy the fabulous foods of a Porkfest celebration. This table feature pays tribute to the season's harvest with a bountiful spread of meats produced from the land.

Sweet-sour, that unique blend of contrasting flavors that tantalizes the palate and delights the taste buds, is a variety of cuisines around the world. Surely among the masters of combining the sweet with the sour in just the right proportion are the Germans. Their most famous tribute to sweet and sour is sauerbraten or sour roast.

White sauerbraten is traditionally made with a beef roast, its spicy wine and vinegar marinade also works flavor magic on pork. By giving sauerbraten treatment to a boneless pork shoulder roast, you'll find you are giving a meal an intriguing flavor boost and also helping to ease a strained food budget.

The boneless shoulder blade Boston roast called for in this recipe is one of the most economically priced pork roasts available. The blade bone has been removed to facilitate carving, and it is tied with string or placed inside a netting.

PORK SAUERBRATEN
4 to 6-pound boneless pork shoulder
blade Boston roast
1/4 cup red wine
1/4 cup cider vinegar
1/4 cup water
1 large onion, sliced

2 tbsp brown sugar
1/2 tsp salt
6 peppercorns, crushed
6 whole cloves
1/4 tsp ground allspice
1 bay leaf
2 tbsp cooking fat
1/4 cup crushed ginger snaps
1/2 onion, white vinegar, water, onion,
brown sugar, salt, peppercorns, cloves,
allspice and bay leaf in saucepan.
Bring to boil and cook 10 minutes. Cool.

Place meat in bowl or plastic bag, add marinade, turning pork to coat, and cover or tie securely. Marinate in refrigerator 18 to 24 hours, turning several times. Remove pork from marinade to absorbent paper and pat dry. Brown in cooking fat in a large oven of large frying pan. Turn off drip pan. Add remaining marinade to meat, cover tightly and cook slowly 2 1/4 to 3 1/2 hours or until pork is well done. Remove pork to warm platter. Reserve 2

cups cooking liquid, return to pan; bring to a boil. Gradually add ginger snaps and cook, stirring to thicken. Serve gravy with pork.

Germans particularly enjoy sauerbraten with the slice gravy. Buttered Brussels sprouts or steamed cabbage wedges will go nicely with the menu as will applesauce spiced with cinnamon. For a dessert that's as special as the meal, serve cherry cobbler.

Convection ovens are fine but consider before buying

Before you purchase a countertop forced air convection oven, look into the pros and cons of making such a purchase.

Forced air convection ovens cook faster than conventional ovens, says Elaine Glaser, Oakland County Extension Home Economist, because a fan moves heated air around the food. As moisture evaporation is speeded up, food surfaces brown so foods look as if they were baked or roasted in a conventional oven.

Although cooking time is usually shorter and the convection oven uses less energy than a range oven, you may not actually save energy, Glaser says. It depends on your total cooking load. Cooking a full load in a range oven would probably be more economical than cooking the same foods one or two at a time in a small countertop oven.

IF YOU'RE considering a countertop convection oven, be sure that you have enough counter space for it, allowing a 6-inch clearance at the back, both sides and top to disperse the heat. If the oven isn't well insulated or doesn't have an air space between its walls to cook the outer surface, you will have to allow even more clearance, Glaser says.

Some countertop convection models have little or no insulation, so they waste much of the heat they produce and pose a safety hazard to anyone touching them.

Do you the inside of the oven is large enough to hold the pans and other containers you intend to use, with at least 1-inch clearance on all sides so the air can move freely around all surfaces. Also be sure that the instructions in the operating manual are clear and

complete and that you understand them before you buy the oven.

SOME CONSUMERS are selecting a combination forced air convection/microwave oven. This version offers quicker cooking from the microwave mode, energy savings when cooking small amounts of foods, fast defrosting and the added option of browning and crisping foods and getting a crust on baked goods, Glaser says.

The option of cooking in either mode or both in combination in one unit offers convenience and saves counter space. The combination is more expensive than either a microwave or portable convection oven alone, however, and is much heavier.

Because the convection cooking heats the inside cavity, food spills and splatters can bake on, so it's important to wipe the interior clean each time.

A boneless pork roast is robustly flavored with a sweet-sour marinade that's thickened with ginger snaps for a delicious gravy.

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