

Puerto Rican Pernil

Authentic Puerto Rican Pernil recipe with slow-roasted pork shoulder marinated in garlic, citrus and spices. Perfect for holidays and celebrations.

25h

PREP

5h

COOK

30h

TOTAL

8

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Puerto Rican Pernil

Ingredients

- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 10 clove garlic
- 1 tbsp vinegar
- 1 tbsp oregano
- 1 tbsp paprika
- 1 tbsp cumin
- 1 tbsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 2 lime juice
- 2 orange juice

Instructions

- 1 Make the sofrito marinade**

Crush 10 cloves garlic with 1 teaspoon salt in a mortar and pestle until it forms a paste, or mince garlic finely and mash with the flat side of your knife. Transfer to a bowl and mix with 4 tablespoons olive oil, 1 tablespoon white vinegar, 1 tablespoon dried oregano, 1 tablespoon smoked paprika, 1 tablespoon ground cumin, and juice from 2 limes and 2 oranges until well combined.
- 2 Score the pork skin**

Pat the pork shoulder completely dry with paper towels. Using a sharp knife, score the skin in a diamond pattern, making cuts 1 inch apart and ¼ inch deep through the skin and fat but not into the meat.
- 3 Marinate the pork**

Rub the sofrito marinade all over the pork shoulder, working it deep into the scored cuts and coating all surfaces thoroughly. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 12 hours, preferably 24 hours.
- 4 Prepare for roasting**

Remove pork from refrigerator 1 hour before cooking to bring to room temperature. Preheat oven to 175°C (350°F).
- 5 Start roasting**

Place pork skin-side up in a large roasting pan and cover tightly with aluminum foil. Roast for 4 hours, basting with pan juices every hour.

- 6 Check internal temperature with a meat thermometer inserted into the thickest part - it should read 88°C (190°F). If not ready, continue roasting covered, checking every 30 minutes.
- 7 **Crisp the skin**
Remove foil and increase oven temperature to 230°C (450°F). Roast uncovered for 15-20 minutes until skin is golden brown and crackling.
- 8 **Rest and serve**
Remove from oven and let rest for 20 minutes to allow juices to redistribute. Carve or pull apart with two forks and serve with the accumulated pan juices.

Tips

Score the skin in a crosshatch pattern about 1/4 inch deep to help the marinade penetrate and ensure maximum crispiness.

Make extra marinade to use as a basting liquid during cooking and as a serving sauce on the side.

Use a meat thermometer to monitor internal temperature - aim for 190°F for the most tender, fall-apart texture.

Save and strain the pan drippings to make an incredible gravy or use as a base for rice and beans.

Let the pernil rest for at least 20 minutes after cooking to allow juices to redistribute throughout the meat.

If the skin isn't crisping properly during the high-heat phase, move the pan to a higher oven rack closer to the broiler.

Marinate for the full 24-48 hours for maximum flavor penetration - this is not a dish to rush.

Keep leftover marinade refrigerated for up to one week to use as a flavor base for other pork dishes or as a salad dressing.