



Chinese Braised Pork Belly

This dish is called red-cooked pork, or hong shao rou in Mandarin. It's delicious served on steamed buns or over rice. Caramelized sugar, star anise, and sherry give the braising liquid a complex flavor, and a combination of soy sauce and molasses gives the finished sauce its rich, mahogany color. Serve on steamed buns (such as Andrea's Steamed Buns on this site).

By **Andrea Nguyen** |  Tested by **Allrecipes Test Kitchen**

Prep Time: 15 mins

Cook Time: 2 hrs 25 mins

Total Time: 2 hrs 40 mins

Servings: 12

Yield: 24 pieces

Ingredients

- 3 pounds skinless pork belly
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- ⅓ cup white sugar
- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- 4 cups water, or more if needed
- 5 large green onions, diagonally cut into 2-inch pieces
- 8 cloves garlic, smashed
- ½ cup fino dry sherry
- ½ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons dark molasses
- 8 whole star anise
- 1 cucumber, thinly sliced
- 1 green onion, thinly sliced

Directions

Step 1

Cut pork into eight 2x3-inch pieces.

Step 2

Heat oil in a 6-quart Dutch oven over high heat. In 2 batches, sear pork, fat sides first, until light golden, 30 to 60 seconds per side. Transfer to a plate. Pour out all but 1 to 2 tablespoons of the drippings.

Step 3

Add 1/3 cup sugar to pot; melt, stirring if needed, over medium-high heat. Cook until a light caramel color, about 1 minute. Reduce heat to medium, then return pork to pot, turning pieces to coat. When sugar darkens to an orange color, after about 1 minute, add water; stir to loosen any sugar stuck to the bottom.

Step 4

Add green onions, garlic, sherry, soy sauce, molasses, star anise, and remaining 2 tablespoons sugar. If needed, add up to 1/2 cup additional water to nearly cover pork. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer, covered, turning occasionally, until a knife inserted 1/4 inch into the fat layer meets little resistance, about 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Step 5

Transfer pork to a plate with a slotted spoon; loosely cover. Skim fat and drain solids from cooking liquid. Return 4 cups liquid to pot and bring to a boil; simmer over medium-high heat until reduced to about 1 cup, about 30 minutes. Sauce will thicken more as it cools.

Step 6

Slice pork into twenty-four 1/2-inch-thick pieces. Working in batches, warm pork with half the sauce in a large nonstick skillet over medium to medium-high heat. Turn pork frequently to coat and, if desired, let sear slightly. Garnish with cucumber slices and sliced green onion.

Cook's Notes:

Look for pork belly at Asian markets or specialty butchers. If you can't find it, you can use pork shoulder as a substitute; just shred it and discard the fat after braising.

Pork and sauce can be made up to 3 days ahead and chilled separately in airtight containers.

Nutrition Facts

Per serving: 279 calories; total fat 17g; saturated fat 5g; cholesterol 41mg; sodium 1285mg; total carbohydrate 16g; dietary fiber 1g; total sugars 10g; protein 15g; vitamin c 4mg; calcium 35mg; iron 2mg; potassium 361mg