

# Chipotle Sweet Pulled Pork

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## Ingredients

### Mixed Spices

- 4-5 lbs boneless pork shoulder (pork butt) trimmed of excess fat
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 1/2 TBS chili pwdr
- 1 1/2 TBS garlic pwdr
- 1 1/2 - 2 teaspoons chipotle chili powder
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp onion pwdr
- 1 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 1/2 tsp cumin
- 3/4 teaspoon pepper

### Slow Cooker Phase 1

- 3/4 cup Coke, NOT diet
- 1/2 cup mild salsa
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 4 oz. can mild diced green chilies

### Slow Cooker Phase 2

- 3/4 cup mild red enchilada sauce
- 1/2-3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 4 oz. can mild diced green chilies
- All remaining Mixed Spices
- salt to taste
- Hot sauce to taste

## Instructions

1. Mix all of the Mixed Spices together in a resealable container. Set aside. Lightly grease slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Heat 2 tablespoon olive oil in Dutch oven, cast iron or stainless steel skillet (you can use nonstick but it will just take longer) over medium-high heat. Using tongs or 2 forks, sear pork on all sides until lightly browned.
3. Transfer pork to slow cooker. Ladle a spoonful of the pan juices over the meat so the spices will stick. Separate out 1 1/2 tablespoons spices to use after the pork is cooked. Rub all remaining spices evenly over all sides of pork (it will seem like a lot but use all of it).
4. Add all Slow Cooker Phase 1 Ingredients to the pork. Cook on LOW for 6-8 hours or until pork is tender enough to shred. Shred pork into larger sections in crock pot and continue to cook on LOW for 30 minutes.

5. Transfer all of the slow cooker contents to a strainer to drain off excess liquid from pork. Transfer pork to cutting board and shred into smaller pieces and discard any excess fat.
6. Add pork back to slow cooker (along with any accumulated green chiles, etc.) then stir in all of Phase 2 ingredients starting with just 1/2 cup brown sugar. Cook another 15-30 minutes on LOW or until heated through OR just keep on the warm setting if you aren't serving immediately. Taste and add additional brown sugar for sweeter, hot sauce for spicier or more enchilada sauce for saucier.

## Recipe Notes

- Sear Meat: When searing, the pork will naturally release from the pan once it is properly seared. If it is sticking to the bottom of the pan, it is most likely needs more time. It will take 2-5 minutes per side and longer if using a nonstick pan.
  - Do I have to sear the meat? As Gordon Ramsey says, "color - flavor." Searing the meat creates the Maillard reaction resulting in rich, deep, complex flavor which cannot be achieved in any other way. It also helps the inside of the meat from drying out. You can skip this step, and your pork will still be good - just not as good.
- Spice Rub: If you skip searing your pork, you will need to rub it with some olive oil first so the spices stick.
- Cook until tender but not fall apart tender. When your pork is tender enough shred but not fall apart tender, shred it into larger sections in the crock pot and continue to cook on LOW for 30 minutes until it is practically fall apart fork tender. This allows the flavorful slow cooker contents to seep into every pork crevice without it becoming overcooked.
- Drain pork. Once pork is tender, and ready to shred, I place my strainer on top of a large bowl to catch the slow cooker contents so the fat doesn't go directly in my sink, then refrigerate the bowl and skim the fat later and ditch the rest in the sink sans fat.
- Add enchilada sauce and brown sugar to taste. Taste buds vary widely when it comes to how sweet people like their pork. This Cafe Rio is supposed to be sweet - but just how sweet is up to you. I recommend starting with 1/2 cup brown sugar and adding more to taste. You can also add additional chipotle chili powder or hot sauce if you would like it spicier. You also add more or less enchilada sauce depending on how "saucy" you want your pork.