

Whisper Ranch

Pastured Pork Cooking Tips & Nutrition

- Grass-fed pastured products are very different than factory products. Cooking it is easy but you will need to retrain yourself if you haven't cooked them before. It has considerably more developed muscle structure. This is because our pigs aren't couch potatoes. They are most often out wandering around the pasture rooting and exploring. Commercial pigs spend their life laying on a concrete slat floor so they really don't develop any muscles. Our pork is somewhat more delicate than commercial meat.
- Please do not overcook to a leathery consistency. Pastured meat cooks 20-30% faster than factory meat. You will be disappointed if you overcook it. If you do by accident, braising the meat can salvage it to some degree
- Thaw pork to room temperature before cooking. Do not microwave to thaw.
- Do not wash the pork before cooking
- When cutting meat – cooked or raw – cut against the grain. This will prevent the muscle from shrinking and getting tough
- Do not over trim meat – leave plenty of fat on. This provides flavour, moisture and insulation for the meat
- We highly suggest using a meat thermometer
- Cast iron or French steel pans are best
- An internal temperature of 145° F for pork cuts like steaks, roasts and chops and 160° F for ground and ground cuts like fresh sausage
- Let it rest: Remove the meat from the cooking medium when it is 10° F below the ideal finished temperature as it will continue cooking when removed from the heat. Let it sit for 8 – 10 minutes before serving. This will let the juices redistribute throughout the meat and you'll get a much better end result
- Marinating is a great way to tenderize pastured pork
- Pork Chops and Pork Steaks – Grill them hot and fast. We keep them pink inside. Let rest under foil for 8-10 minutes. Alternately, you can sear and braise these cuts in the oven, but they will not get tender until they are baked for about an hour. If they are still tough after baking, keep cooking!
- Pork Roasts – Cooking Pork Shoulder Roast is very different than Tenderloin or Pork Loin Roast. Shoulder is a more well-used muscle in the pig, so it needs time for the connective tissue to break down. At least 6 hours on low in the crockpot or 2-3 hours in the oven at 300° F but it will be awesomely tender! Tenderloin should be marinated and quickly cooked. It is a very lean, but very tender cut. Don't overcook it, or it will dry out! Pork Loin Roast is NOT the same as tenderloin. It is where pork chops come from, and has a lovely layer of fat across the top
- A few nutritional notes. Antibiotics and hormones aside – as I think we have all heard about these and some of the related problems – we don't use them, end of story. A major problem with the diet of factory farmed pigs is arsenic. Arsenic is a powerful carcinogen to humans, but routinely fed to chickens and pigs to make them grow faster and improve the color of the meat. This ends up in your meat which end up in you. Enough said we think. They also eat a disgusting variety of waste products and whatever else the agricultural industry needs to get rid of. These things include meat judged unfit for human consumption, liquefied puppy chow, manure (did you catch that? They eat their own poop), and even plastic (supposedly to replace natural sources of fiber like grass and leaves). They're also stuffed full of just about anything that might make them grow or gain weight more quickly, no matter how toxic it might be down the line. In pork, a big issue is fat quality. This comes directly from their diet. In nature, pigs eat pretty much anything they can get their snouts into: roots, grass, leaves, grubs, nuts, berries and fruit, and bugs. Omega-3's are found in high concentration in grass and leaves. This leads to very high Omega-3 fat content in pastured pork which is good for you! Contrasted to factory-farmed pig's diets which are largely based on corn and soybean meal, together with all sorts of disgusting chemicals and garbage. This feed is very high in Omega-6, and the more Omega-6 fats in the pig's diet, the more will be in the meat. Too much Omega-6 is not good for you!