

Pork Chops with Kale and Dates
By Ali Slagle, *NY Times* Cooking
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Time: 30 Minutes

Serves: 2

"A fat and juicy pork chop will always shine on a dinner plate, and these are especially star-worthy. For browned outsides, evenly cooked insides and fewer splatters, cook them over moderate heat and flip often. Use this method for basic pork chops, or continue with the recipe for a tangy and bittersweet tumble of kale, dates, garlic and vinegar inspired by bittersweet meat dishes like suon kho, orange beef or root beer-glazed ham. Instead of kale, use another bitter green like escarole or radicchio, but keep the dates, which contribute a sweetness far more nuanced than straight sugar. Eat with roasted potatoes, grits or on top of a thick piece of toast."

Ingredients

2 (1- to 1½-inch-thick) bone-in pork rib chops (10 to 12 ounces each), patted very dry
Salt and pepper
1 tablespoon neutral oil (such as grapeseed or canola)
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
3 fresh rosemary sprigs or sage leaves (optional)
6 Medjool dates, pitted and sliced
4 garlic cloves, smashed very well and peeled
1 bunch kale, ribs removed, leaves torn
2 teaspoons red wine vinegar or Sherry vinegar

PREPARATION

1. Heat a large cast-iron skillet over medium. Season the pork chops all over with salt and pepper. Add the oil and the pork chops to the skillet. Cook, flipping every 2 minutes, until browned on the outside and the internal temperature in the thickest part is around 130 degrees, 10 to 15 minutes depending on thickness of pork chops. If your chops have a fat cap, using tongs, stack both chops on top of one another, then grab both chops together and hold upright to sear the fat caps until crisp, about 1 minute.
2. Turn off the heat, add the butter and rosemary, if using. Tilt the skillet and baste the pork by spooning the butter and drippings over the pork for about 1 minute. Transfer the pork and rosemary to a plate, leaving the drippings in the skillet.
3. Add the dates and garlic to the skillet, then pile in the kale but don't stir. Return the skillet to medium heat and cook untouched until the dates and bottom layer of kale is charred, 2 to 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, add a tablespoon of water, then cook, stirring often, until the kale is dark green and slightly wilted, another minute or two. Remove from the heat, stir in the vinegar, then season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. To serve, discard the rosemary. Slice the pork away from the bones and thinly slice against the grain. Eat with the kale and any resting juices.