

Slow Cooker BBQ Pulled Pork
(with Pressure Cooker directions included)
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Yield: 6 to 8 servings

Total Time: 8 to 10 hours, plus refrigeration

Ingredients

1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon onion powder
2 teaspoons hot or sweet smoked paprika
2 teaspoons salt, plus more to taste
1 teaspoon black pepper, plus more to taste
3 to 4 pound boneless pork shoulder or pork butt, trimmed of most of its excess fat
2 tablespoons vegetable oil, plus additional for greasing
1 yellow onion, chopped (optional)
1 (12-ounce) can dark soda, like Dr Pepper, root beer, cola or birch beer
½ to 1½ cups homemade or store-bought barbecue sauce
Hot sauce (optional)

PREPARATION

1. In a small bowl, combine the garlic and onion powders, smoked paprika, salt and black pepper. Rub the spice mixture all over the pork. If you have time, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 2 hours or up to overnight. If you don't, no worries; proceed to Step 2.
2. Lightly grease the crock of a slow cooker. Heat 2 tablespoons vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Sear the pork until golden brown on all sides, about 2 minutes each side. Add onion, if using, to the slow cooker. Add the pork on top of the onion. Pour soda over the pork and set the slow cooker to low for 6 to 8 hours, until the meat has collapsed and shreds easily.
3. Drain most of the liquid from the slow cooker and shred the meat directly in the pot. Add about ½ cup of the barbecue sauce and stir to combine. (At this point, if you like crisp bits in your pulled pork, you can spread the shredded pork on a sheet pan and place under a broiler for a couple minutes then return to the slow cooker.) Taste and add more barbecue sauce, hot sauce, salt or pepper, if desired. Serve with soft rolls and extra sauce on the side.

Directions for Pressure Cooker

1. Mix the garlic and onion powders, smoked paprika, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Add the pork and turn to coat in the spice mix. Put the oil in a 6- or 8-quart electric pressure cooker and turn on the sauté setting to warm the oil. (Use the "normal" heat setting if your pressure cooker has that option.) Working in batches, add the pork and brown on two sides, about 2 minutes per side. If the bottom of the pan gets too dark or you get a "hot" or "burn" warning, turn the heat down to "less," if your pot has that option, or turn it off entirely and allow the pork to continue searing. Turn it back on if the pot cools too much.

2. Add the onion to the pot. Add the soda and stir to thoroughly scrape up the browned bits at the bottom of the pot. Close the lid and cook on high pressure for one hour. Turn off the pressure cooker and allow the pressure to release naturally for 15 minutes. Open the lid. Using tongs or a slotted spoon, remove the pork and onion bits to a large serving bowl. Using two forks, coarsely shred the meat. Add ½ cup barbecue sauce and a few spoonfuls of the cooking liquid to moisten. (Discard remaining cooking liquid.) Taste and add salt, pepper, hot sauce, and more barbecue sauce as you like. Serve with soft rolls and extra sauce on the side.