Main dishes / England

Cider-Braised Pork Shoulder with Apples

Pork shoulder browned hard and braised low in dry cider with onions, carrots, and thyme until it slumps apart at a touch, finished with tart apple wedges and a mustard-sharpened, glossy sauce.

Time 210 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 1800 g Pork shoulder (butt), boneless, cut into 4 large pieces
- ☐ 20 g Kosher salt
- ☐ 1 tsp Black pepper, freshly ground
- ☐ 30 ml Neutral oil
- ☐ 400 g Yellow onions, sliced into thick half-moons
- ☐ 300 g Carrots, cut into 4 cm lengths
- ☐ 5 cloves Garlic, smashed
- ☐ 500 ml Dry hard cider
- ☐ 250 ml Chicken stock, low-sodium
- ☐ 6 sprigs Fresh thyme
- ☐ 2 leaves Dried bay leaves
- ☐ 2 whole Firm, tart apples (such as Granny Smith), cored and cut into eighths
- ☐ 30 g Dijon mustard (or wholegrain)
- ☐ 15 ml Apple cider vinegar
- ☐ 0 to taste Flat-leaf parsley, chopped

Let's make it.

01 Season the pork all over with salt and pepper — ideally the night before, uncovered in the fridge. Pat dry. Heat the oven to 300°F (150°C). Heat oil in a heavy 6–7 litre Dutch oven over medium-high heat and brown the pork pieces on all sides, 3–4 minutes per side (about 15 minutes total), in two batches. Set aside and pour off all but 2 tbsp fat.

02 Over medium heat, cook onions and carrots in the pork fat 8–10 minutes until the onions are soft and golden at the edges. Add garlic for 1 minute. Pour in the cider, scraping up all the fond, and boil 3–4 minutes to reduce by about a third.

03 Add stock, thyme, and bay; return the pork and its juices. The liquid should come about halfway up the meat. Bring to a simmer, cover, and braise in the oven 2 hr 30 min–3 hr, turning the pieces once halfway, until fork-tender (around 200°F / 93°C inside). Add the apple wedges for the final 30 minutes, tucking them into the liquid.

04 Transfer pork, apples, and carrots to a platter and tent with foil. Remove herb stems and bay. Skim fat from the liquid, then boil it 6–10 minutes until reduced to about 500 ml and lightly syrupy. Whisk in mustard and vinegar, taste for salt, and spoon over the pork. Scatter with parsley. Serve with mashed potatoes or crusty bread. To freeze: pack pork and vegetables fully covered in the sauce, cool, refrigerate within 2 hours, and freeze up to 3 months. Reheat covered at 325°F (165°C) or on the stove until steaming hot throughout.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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