



Savings for the Holidays

The holiday season is quickly approaching and calendars are starting to fill up with festive party invitations. Food is often a focal point of holiday gatherings regardless of whether it is a simple cocktail party or a full-blown holiday feast, and both can easily take a toll on pocket books and precious time.

We all know there's more than one way to trim a tree – which means there are also countless ways to trim expenses and excess time spent in the kitchen. If you find yourself hosting a holiday event, don't be afraid to ask guests to bring along their favourite dish or appetizer to reduce your own stress and food costs.

Save Money

Breaking tradition can also help trim food expenses and increase the selection of dishes that you enjoy serving. The traditional holiday meal featuring a turkey with all the trimmings can be substituted with pork, which is easy to prepare and an economical choice. When incorporating pork into a holiday meal, think beyond the traditional 'holiday ham' and try serving a roast of pork. If you don't want to skip on the traditional trimmings, stuffing can easily be added by filling boned or rolled roasts. "Preparing pork can be as simple or as complicated as you like, but it is always a crowd pleaser," says Kimberly Green, registered dietitian with Pork Marketing Canada. "Pork is a simple, healthy versatile meat that makes a tasty addition to any holiday meal."

While shopping for ingredients for your holiday feast consider purchasing locally produced foods. Foods produced close to home are often fresher and help support the local economy. Fortunately, a new label is making it easier to identify and choose Canadian pork – fresh pork is now labeled and easily identified as "Canadian Pork" at participating grocery stores across Canada.

Save Time

When planning for your holiday dinners and parties, select dishes that are healthy and easy to prepare such as Roast Pork Loin with Portobello Mushrooms and Tarragon. Save yourself some time by slicing vegetables and preparing side dishes ahead of time. Just like a traditional turkey, pork loin makes great leftovers and can be used for sandwiches or casseroles. Serve herb roasted potatoes, asparagus and root vegetables to accompany the roast pork loin complemented by a traditional trifle to top off your holiday meal. For more recipe ideas visit www.putporkonyourfork.com.

Roast Pork Loin with Portobello Mushrooms and Tarragon



Yield: Serves 6

Cooking Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 Canadian pork loin, centre roast, boneless, about 2 1/2 lbs/1.25 kg
- 1 large clove garlic, cut into slivers
- 1 tsp each: salt and pepper
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) canola or other vegetable oil
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) butter
- 2 tsp (10 mL) minced shallots
- 1 tsp (5 mL) minced garlic
- 4 Portobello mushrooms, stems removed, caps halved and sliced
- 1 cup (250 mL) dry red wine
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) tarragon leaves, roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) whipping cream

Cooking Instructions

1. Pre-heat oven to 325°F (160°C). Using a small, sharp knife, make deep slits all over fat surface of roast and insert garlic slivers. Season with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large, oven-proof skillet over medium-high heat and brown pork on fat-covered side. Turn roast over and place in oven.

2. Roast pork until the internal temperature reaches 155°F (68°C), about 1 hour. Set roast aside and tent with foil; allow to rest for 15 minutes. Pour off fat from skillet.

3. To make the sauce: place skillet over medium-high heat and add butter. When butter starts to foam, add shallots and minced garlic; sauté for about 1 minute. Add mushrooms and sauté 2 minutes. Add wine and bring to a rolling boil. Add cream, reduce heat and simmer for 1 to 2 minutes. Add tarragon and any juices that have collected around the resting roast. Continue to simmer until sauce begins to thicken. Check seasoning and add salt and pepper if necessary.

Slice roast thinly and serve with sauce.

Tips:

- This recipe can be applied to any pork roast, bone-in or boneless.
- Shallots add a milder, sweeter note to dishes than regular onions, but if you don't have any shallots onions will do.
- Searing a roast as described here is one extra step, but it adds flavour and improves colour.
- Leftover cooked pork should be cooled, uncovered at room temperature, then covered tightly and refrigerated or placed in a freezer within an hour after cooking.

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