Roast stuffed pork with apples two ways

SERVES 8

Pork with a sage-and-apple stuffing that's flavoured with Italian sausage meat and also served with roasted apples alongside – this is a pairing that goes back to medieval times when cooks discovered that the sweet tartness of apple balances the rich butteriness of pork. Apples were abundant and easy to store through winter – perfect for roasting with meat.

1 x 2 kg (4 lb 6 oz) rolled pork loin
2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for brushing
6 granny smith apples

SAGE & APPLE STUFFING

2 Italian-style sausages, about 250 g (9 oz) total
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, diced
1 celery stalk, chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 granny smith apple, finely diced
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
120 g (1½ cups) fresh breadcrumbs
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
12 sage leaves, roughly chopped

Untie the rolled loin, place it on a flat surface and use a sharp knife to score the skin. Place the pork on a rack over the sink, skin-side-up, and pour boiling water over the skin to open up the score marks. Dry with paper towel, then place the pork in the fridge to dry for at least 3 hours, or overnight.

When you're ready to start cooking, remove the pork from the fridge and leave for 30 minutes to bring it to room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 210°C/410°F (fan-forced).

To make the stuffing, remove the sausages from their casings and chop the meat. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat and fry the sausage meat until cooked, breaking it up with a wooden spoon. Lift out into a bowl.

Reduce the heat to medium and add the onion, celery and garlic to the pan. Cook for about 10 minutes until soft and translucent but not browned, then add to the sausage and leave to cool. Add the remaining stuffing ingredients and mix well.

Lay the pork flat on a board, skin-side-down. Use a sharp knife to partially slice through the thick meaty end of the pork and gently open it up, so that the loin is now longer and flatter, ready for stuffing. Lay the stuffing evenly over a third of the pork at one end, then tightly roll up the rest of the loin, securing it in place with kitchen string at even intervals.

Place the pork in a roasting tin. Rub the olive oil over the skin, then season generously with salt flakes. Roast in the oven for 30 minutes, then reduce the heat to 160°C/320°F and roast for another 30 minutes.

Rub the whole apples with a splash of olive oil and season with salt and ground black pepper. Add the apples to the roasting tin and roast for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven, cover loosely with foil and set aside to rest for 15-20 minutes before carving.



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