



### **Sage Stuffed Pork Chops with Cranberry Glaze**

*The blend of flavors in this stuffed pork chop dish reminds us of Thanksgiving dinner without all the fuss. Why wait for a holiday when you can easily prepare this dish year-round? Don't go light on the sage, as it is perfectly paired with the contrasting fruity flavors of the cranberries and apple cider. Serve with a side of roasted vegetables for a delicious meal.*

*4 servings*

### **Ingredients**

#### *For the cranberry glaze:*

¼ cup apple cider

½ cup cranberry juice

½ cup dried cranberries, chopped

2 teaspoons red wine vinegar

2 teaspoons arrowroot or cornstarch, mixed with equal amounts of water to form a slurry

#### *For the pork chops:*

4 thick center-cut pork chops (about an 1½-2 inches thick)

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons butter, cut into small pieces

½ cup celery, chopped

¼ cup onion, chopped

2 cups panko bread crumbs

10 - 20 fresh sage leaves, roughly chopped (more or less, to taste)

½ teaspoon fresh thyme

salt and pepper to taste

### **Equipment**

Medium saucepan

Large, ovenproof sauté pan

Wire whisk

Chef's knife

Paring or 4" utility knife

Instant-read thermometer

### **Preparation**

#### *Prepare the cranberry glaze:*

Mix the apple cider and cranberry juice in a medium saucepan. Place over medium-high heat and bring to a boil. When the mixture is boiling reduce the heat and simmer until reduced by half, about 20 - 30 minutes. Once reduced, the juices should be somewhat syrupy. At this point, add the dried cranberries and simmer gently until they are softened. Add the vinegar. If the glaze does not appear thick enough, mix the arrowroot or cornstarch with the water and mix well. Add a little bit at a time, whisking continuously, until the glaze reaches the desired consistency. Set aside and keep warm until service.

#### *Prepare the pork chops:*

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Place a pork chop on your cutting board with the longest side facing you. Take a sharp paring knife or 4" utility knife and place the tip of the knife about half an inch from the side edge. Push the knife into the chop almost to the back of the chop but not all the way through. Continue to move the knife gently down

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to the other side of the chop, creating a pocket, making sure you don't cut through the back. Set aside and cut pockets in the other 3 chops in the same manner. Season the chops well with salt and pepper and set aside.

Melt the butter in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. When the butter turns slightly brown in color add the celery and onion and sauté until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the panko bread crumbs and continue to stir them in the pan until they are slightly brown.

*[Chef's Note: We use panko crumbs in this dish instead of the usual breadcrumbs as they lend a wonderful texture to the stuffing. In addition, they are not seasoned so they will absorb all the flavor of the sage and mixed vegetables as the pork cooks.]*

Add the sage, thyme, salt and pepper. Stir well and remove from heat to cool.

*[Chef's Note: Be sure that the stuffing is cooled before adding to the pork. This will ensure the pork cooks properly.]*

When the stuffing has cooled, open a pocket of one of the chops and fill it with the stuffing. You can fill it fairly well, as the stuffing will absorb the moisture of the pork and flatten as it cooks. Continue to stuff the remaining pork chops.

Heat the large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the butter and melt. Add the chops and sear each side for 2 or 3 minutes until nicely browned. Cover the sauté pan with foil and place in the 350°F oven for about 20 minutes. Take the chops from the oven, remove the foil and pour the glaze over the chops. Return to the oven for another 15 - 20 minutes or until the pork is cooked through.

*[Chef's Note: the instant-read thermometer should register 160°F. When taking the temperature be sure to place the tip of the thermometer in the thickest part of the meat, and not into the stuffing.]*

#### Service

Place the pork chops on a serving dish and pour the glaze over. To make a nice presentation for a buffet, you can slice the chops into 1-inch slices and fan them out on a platter.

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