Costa Rican Pork Carnitas

Make-ahead · Serves a crowd · Spicy · Serves 6–8

Ken's note: TBD

Pork shoulder in big chunks, rubbed with cumin, chipotle, and cinnamon and braised in the oven with Salsa Lizano, then crisped under the broiler. Salsa Lizano is a bottled Costa Rican condiment, and it is the point; it keeps its place here like fish sauce does elsewhere. Look for it in the Latin foods aisle or online.

This is the oven-braised, chunky cousin of Tacos de Carnitas in this chapter, which confits the pork in lard.

Ingredients

- 3–4 lb boneless pork shoulder (Boston butt), in 2-inch chunks
- 1 Tbsp kosher salt
- 1 Tbsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp chipotle powder
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 Tbsp avocado oil or lard
- 3 Tbsp Salsa Lizano
- ½ white or yellow onion, roughly chopped
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- ½ red bell pepper, roughly chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 carrot, roughly chopped
- 1 celery stalk, roughly chopped
- 2 cups water or low-sodium chicken broth

To serve

- Warm corn tortillas, lime wedges, cilantro, diced onion

Method

1. Heat the oven to 275°F. Mix the salt, cumin, chipotle powder, and cinnamon and rub it all over the pork.
2. Brown the pork in the oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat, in batches. Return it all to the pot with the Salsa Lizano, onion, cilantro, bell pepper, garlic, carrot, celery, and water. Bring to a simmer, cover, and cook in the oven 3–3½ hours, until the pork is very tender and falls apart when prodded.
3. Lift the pork out with a slotted spoon onto a sheet pan, leaving the vegetables and liquid behind. Broil a few minutes to crisp the edges, watching closely. Taste and salt at the end.
4. Serve with tortillas, lime, cilantro, and diced onion.