

Pork Roast with Prune and Grappa Stuffing

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The scent of roasting meat is always a sign that it's a holiday in Italy. When sliced, this pork roast makes a particularly picturesque and delicious centerpiece to any meal, thanks to the colorful prune-grappa stuffing in the center.

COURSE: Secondo piatto

DIFFICULTY: Medium

PREPARATION TIME: 2 hours

Yield: 8 servings



1 (2-3 pound) boneless pork loin
1¾ cups prunes
¼ cup grappa
Juice of 2 lemons
½ cup plus 3 tablespoons sugar
2 bay leaves
Fresh sage leaves, chopped, to taste
½ to 1 cup red wine
Crushed black peppercorns, to taste
Sea salt & freshly-ground black pepper, to taste

In a large heatproof bowl, combine 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon of the sea salt and 3 tablespoons of the sugar. Add 4 cups of boiling water, and stir until the salt and sugar dissolve. Allow this brine mixture to cool, adding a few ice cubes if necessary.

Set the pork loin in the bowl with the brine, cover, and refrigerate for 1 hour, turning the loin halfway through the process. (An easy alternative method is to place the loin in a gallon-size plastic bag and pour in enough brine to surround it. Seal the bag and place it on a baking sheet. Simply turn the bag over to flip the pork loin.)

Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan, combine the prunes, remaining ½ cup sugar, lemon juice, bay leaves, crushed black peppercorns, and 1½ cups water. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and continue simmering until the prunes just start to break apart, about 20 minutes. Add the grappa, and simmer for 5 additional minutes. Season the mixture with salt, to taste. Drain the prunes, reserving the liquid.

Remove the pork loin, discarding the brine, and pat the loin dry. Combine the sage and freshly-ground black pepper (remember that there is pepper in the reserved prune liquid!), and rub that mixture all over the outside of the loin. Return the pork loin to the refrigerator, and allow it to rest in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour and as long as 4 hours.

When you are ready to roast the pork, preheat the oven to 425°F. Wriggle a thin, sharp knife into each end of the meat in the center, starting a hole that will run lengthwise through the center of the loin. Then, use the handle of a long wooden spoon to force a hole all the way through the meat the long way, making it about ½ inch wide (about the width of your thumb). Stuff the prunes into the roast, working them all the way to the center from each end, using the handle of the wooden spoon.

Place the pork loin in a pan that can transfer to the stovetop until it is browned on the outside, 8 to 10 minutes. Brush the loin all over with the reserved prune liquid. Pour ½ cup wine around it in the pan.

Lower the heat of the oven to 300°F, and continue to roast the pork. When an instant-read thermometer reads 138°F (tip: be sure that the thermometer is testing the temperature of the meat, not the prunes), about 35 additional minutes, remove the roast from the pan, reserving the cooking liquid, and place it on a warm platter.

Let the roast rest at room temperature for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, place the pan on the stove, and simmer the cooking liquid over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring and scraping the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon, until the liquid is reduced to about ½ cup. If the pan seems dry, add up to a ½ cup of wine. When the sauce has reduced, cut the roast into ½-inch slices. To serve, drizzle the sauce on a plate, then top it with a slice of the pork. Serve with a hearty red wine for the perfect secondo.

Buon appetito!

This recipe was first published courtesy of [Eataly Magazine](#) [2].

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