

Spicy Cochinita Pibil (Yucatan Slow Roasted Pork)

Cochinita Pibil is a slow roasted pork dish that originated in the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico. The original version is not spicy, but is loaded with flavor. The pork is marinated in a mixture of achiote paste and bitter orange juice. This is then wrapped in banana leaves, and slowly cooked in an earthen pit (the term *pibil* refers to the method of cooking). For this version, I added a blend of several dried chilis to yield a deeply satisfying mild warmth to the dish. If you prefer the traditional, simply omit the chilis to the marinade. *Cochinita Pibil* (*cochinita* means baby pig) can be made with any cut of pork including premium cuts like Boston butt (which actually comes from the upper part of the animal's front shoulder), but also works well with much less expensive cuts. This provides a great opportunity to purchase high quality, humanely and organically raised heritage breed pork. The richly flavorful meat from such animals yields not only a sumptuously satisfying *cochinita pibil*, but a truly more healthful version as well.



Cochinita pibil pork in marinade

Ingredients:

- 2-2.5 kg (approximately 4 to 5 pounds) of pork
- 200 g of [achiote paste \(see separate recipe\)](#)
- 15 g (approximately 2) hot New Mexico chilis
- 20 g (approximately 2) ancho chilis
- 20 g (approximately 4) guajillo chilis
- 15 g (approximately 3) pasilla chilis
- 1 g (approximately 2) chile de arbol
- 50 mL (approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ cup) orange juice
- 450 g (approximately six) Roma type tomatoes
- 70 g (approximately 1) onion
- 12 g (approximately 6 cloves) garlic
- 6 g (approximately 2 teaspoons) ground cumin
- 3 g (approximately 1 tablespoon) Mexican oregano
- 3 bay leaves



Spicy Cochinita Pibil (Yucatan Slow Roasted Pork) taco

Directions:

Trim the pork of any excess fat, and place in a large container. De-stem and de-seed all the dried chilis. Warm a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the dried chilis and gently heat until the skins start to become pliable, about three minutes. Add the orange juice to the pan, allow to further warm, and remove from the heat. The dried chilis should be quite supple. In a food processor or blender, add the achiote paste, tomatoes, onion, garlic, and spices. Add the chilis with the orange juice. Process until finally puréed and blended. Pour the marinade over the pork and with your hands thoroughly combined. Place bay leaves on top. Cover and set the pork aside in a refrigerator to marinate for up to 24 hours.

To cook the meat, preheat the oven to 225°. For an even more authentic flavor, you can prepare this dish in a smoker. Transfer the pork to an oven proof dish large enough to accommodate the meat and marinade. Cook the meat for 4 to 6

hours until it is supremely tender and pulls easily apart or off the bone.

To serve, pile the meat on a fresh tortilla and serve with shredded cabbage, salsa, pickled red onions, and a squeeze of lime.

