



Fig and Cider Pork Chops

Serves: 4

Roasted pork chops are a healthy and easy weeknight dinner. In the fall, I like to roast them in cider with fresh figs and serve them on a bed of anything creamy—polenta, grits, and especially Parmesan Mashers (page 184). While I love figs, I have also made this recipe using apple butter and Honeycrisp apples. If that's more your thing, go for it! Both fruits are delicious when paired with the cider, and are very fall inspired!

4 bone-in pork chops, about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
18 fresh sage leaves
4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) salted butter
4 garlic cloves
1 cup apple cider
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fig preserves
1 or 2 canned chipotle peppers in adobo, chopped
1 tablespoon chopped
fresh thyme
8 fresh or dried figs, halved

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F.
2. Rub the pork chops all over with the olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Press 3 or 4 sage leaves onto the tops of the pork chops.
3. Heat a large oven-safe skillet over medium-high. When the skillet is hot, but not yet smoking, add the pork chops, working in batches if necessary, and sear until caramelized, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Remove and set aside.
4. In the same skillet, melt the butter over medium-high heat and cook until it has browned, about 1 minute. Add the garlic cloves and cook for 30 seconds to 1 minute, or until lightly golden. Slowly pour in the cider. Add the fig preserves, chipotles (to taste), and thyme. Bring the sauce to a boil and cook for about 2 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat and slide the pork chops back into the sauce. Scatter the figs around the pan.
5. Transfer the skillet to the oven and roast for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the pork is cooked through and the sauce has thickened slightly.
6. To serve, place the pork chops and figs on a serving platter, then spoon the sauce from the pan on top.

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