



Healthy roast for the holidays? With pork, easily

December 1, 2014 By: Melissa d'Arabian

Winter calls for savory roasts that fill our homes with luscious aromas that promise a comforting meal to bring the family together. The problem for the healthy eater is that most roasts get their flavor from silky (and so very saturated) fat marbling. Yes, we can roast chickens and turkeys, but sometimes we crave thick slices of pork or beef.

I have a solution: the pork tenderloin (not to be confused with a simple pork loin). As the name suggests, this is one of the most tender cuts of pork, making it perfect for roasted slice-and-serve bliss.

The pork tenderloin is a small roast (about 1 to 2 pounds per roast), which also means it cooks quickly, adding to its weekday convenience. As a bonus, the pork tenderloin is incredibly low in fat, making it comparable to a boneless, skinless chicken breast. A 4-ounce serving of pork tenderloin offers up over 20 grams of protein and less than 3 grams of fat! That's the good news.

The bad news is that this lowered fat can make the tenderloin extremely mild in flavor (read as bland) and prone to overcooking (read as dry). But I have solutions for both of these problems, and as long as you follow my two tips you will be on your way to mastering this healthy comfort meal.

First, let the roast sit in a dry or wet rub in the refrigerator for a day or two. Two days in a mustard and herb mixture works magic on the tenderloin's flavor! Try my 48-hour mustard-marinated pork tenderloin roast as proof. Second, don't overcook the roast. Many of us grew up thinking pork should be cooked until the pink is gone. Nope!

Bring the pink back! A light shade of pink says that the roast is cooked, but still juicy. Aim for an internal temperature of 150 F, then allow the roast to rest for 5 to 10 minutes. The result will be a perfectly-cooked and flavorful roast worthy of company and a holiday meal.

MUSTARD-MARINATED PORK TENDERLOIN ROAST

Start to finish: 35 minutes, plus marinating Servings: 6

1/4 cup Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons grated orange zest
1 teaspoon sweet paprika
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 pork tenderloin roasts (about 1 1/2 pounds each)



In a small bowl, whisk together the mustard, orange zest, paprika, thyme, rosemary, cumin, olive oil, salt and pepper. Rub into the flesh of both pork tenderloins. Place the tenderloins in a large zip-close plastic bag, pressing to remove excess air before closing. Refrigerate for 48 hours. When ready to cook, heat the oven to 400 F. Let the tenderloin rest at room temperature for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, arrange the roasts on a rack set into a rimmed baking sheet or roasting pan. Roast until the pork reaches 155 F to 160 F, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove the roasts from the oven, cover with foil, and let rest for 10 minutes. Slice and serve.

Nutrition information per serving: 160 calories; 45 calories from fat (28 percent of total calories); 5 g fat (1 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 75 mg cholesterol; 3 g carbohydrate; 0 g fiber; 0 g sugar; 24 g protein; 780 mg sodium.