

The Sunday Food Ritual Recipes

Three-in-One Slow Cooker Pork Recipe

Makes three dinners for four people

Slow Cooker Pork Roast and Veggies, Pozole (Mexican Pork Stew), and Carnitas Tacos or Taco Salad

Day One – Slow Cooker Pork Roast and Veggies

I highly recommend a slow cooker, but you don't need to use a slow cooker to make any of these meals. They can really make life easier, but don't wait until you find the perfect model to start your Sunday ritual.

Slow cookers allow you to set the food to cook and then go about your day without stirring, prodding, and checking. If you don't have a slow cooker, any large, covered pot will work, you'll just have to stick around to monitor your progress.

You will need a pretty large slow cooker for this, but today's slow cookers are inexpensive. I recently purchased an 8-quart slow cooker at Target for about \$35, but I've seen good ones as low as \$20. I generally recommend that you get a 6- or 8-quart slow cooker, so you can make enough food for several meals at once.

Of the three, this is the only meal that you have to start well ahead of time. Cooking in a slow cooker is hands off after you start it, but it does take time. Meals two and three will be much faster, after the slow work is done.

Ingredients

- 4–5 pound pork roast (blade, butt, shoulder, etc.) or substitute chicken thighs and breasts
- 1 ½ pounds fingerling potatoes (fingerling or tiny red or white potatoes hold together better when slow cooking)
- 1 medium onion, cut into wedges
- 1 pound carrots, cut into large pieces
- 4 garlic cloves, minced or pressed
- 4 bay leaves
- 2 tbsp ground cumin
- 2 tbsp ground coriander
- 2 tbsp paprika
- 1 tbsp salt
- Water

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Directions

Place the meat in the slow cooker, and nestle the vegetables around the sides. Sprinkle the herbs and spices over top. Add enough water to cover the vegetables and meat.

Cook on high for six to seven hours or nine to ten hours on low. Times will vary based on the size of your roast and the size and model of your slow cooker.

Remove the meat to a platter or large bowl to rest for a few minutes before cutting it up. The roast, when done, will likely be tender enough to fall apart, so if having it whole is important to you, be careful lifting and transferring it.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer the vegetables to tonight's dinner plates. If desired, leave some or all of the onions in the broth for the pozole that you'll be making later in the week.

Remember that this is enough meat for three meals, so divide the meat into three portions.

Refrigerate one portion in a container to save for carnitas tacos.

Refrigerate a second portion and all of your broth to save for the pozole.

The remaining third is for tonight, so cut that up and transfer to tonight's dinner plates.

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Day Two – Pozole (Mexican Pork Stew)

Pozole is a brothy soup or stew, traditionally made with dried hominy in a huge caldron. You probably don't have a caldron, and dried hominy is almost impossible to find in this country, so just use a soup pot and canned hominy, which is available in most supermarkets in the canned vegetable section or the Hispanic foods section. If you can't find hominy, you can still make a delicious version of this soup with fresh or frozen yellow corn.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- Reserved pork and broth (or chicken)
- 8 medium yellow summer squash and/or zucchini (mix and match), cut into circles
- 4 medium carrots, cut into thin circles
- 2 small cans hominy, drained or a 16oz bag of frozen corn
- Salt to taste
- 1 tbsp dried oregano (Mexican oregano preferred, but not required)
- Green salsa (optional)
- Hot sauce (optional)

Directions

Heat the broth and vegetables in a pot. If using canned hominy, add it now. If using corn, add it at the end so it doesn't overcook and lose its sweetness.

Add additional water, if necessary, to make sure you have enough broth to go around. I prefer it closer to soup than stew, but there's no right or wrong here. Bring the pot to a simmer and let the vegetables cook for about 15 minutes.

While the soup is simmering, cut or shred the pork into bite size pieces.

When the vegetables are getting tender, stir in the meat. If using frozen corn, add it now. Bring it back to a simmer and let it cook for another 5–10 minutes until the corn and meat are heated through.

Salt to taste.

Just before serving, rub the oregano between your palms over the pot of soup, then ladle the soup into bowls.

Serve with green salsa and hot sauce on the side.

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Day Three – Carnitas Tacos and Chopped Salad

Carnitas is slowly braised pork that is later pan fried and shredded. Carnitas makes great tacos, but if you don't want the carbs or calories of the tortillas, a bag of mixed greens turns carnitas tacos into a taco salad pretty easily!

Ingredients

- 3–4 ripe tomatoes, chopped or 1 pint cherry tomatoes, chopped
- 1 yellow, orange, or red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 cucumber, peeled and chopped or 3–4 Persian cucumbers, chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt to taste
- 2 ripe avocados
- Reserved pork (or chicken)
- 1 tbsp fat (lard, bacon fat, butter, ghee) or oil (olive, coconut, or palm oil)
- 2–4 tortillas per person
- Red or green jarred salsa
- Sour cream (optional)
- Shredded cheddar or jack cheese (optional)
- 1 bag mixed greens (optional)

Directions

Make the chopped salad by stirring the tomatoes, peppers, and cucumber together. Stir in the olive oil, salt to taste, and set aside.

Mash the avocados and set them aside.

Shred or cut the pork into bite size pieces. Heat the fat or oil over medium high heat, and add the pork, stirring and flipping periodically to heat it through and produce a few crispy bits, if desired. Remove from heat, set aside, and start cooking the tortillas.

Note – lettuce cup tacos are becoming more and more popular. Feel free to skip the tortillas and make cups from leaves of iceberg lettuce or heads of green cabbage.

I learned a special method for heating corn tortillas when I was in Mexico, and although it's a little more work, they hold together a lot better than steamed ones. If you're short for time, you can simply wrap them in a damp towel and steam them, but I hope you'll try my method at least once.

Get a bowl that's big enough for dipping a tortilla, fill it with water, and set it near the stove. Heat a large non-stick skillet over medium-high to high heat. When the skillet is very hot, dip the tortilla in the water, and put it on the skillet. Let it sit and sizzle until it can be *easily* lifted with a spatula (about 30–60 seconds). Gently turn the tortilla and cook until side two can also easily be lifted with the spatula.

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Repeat with the rest of the tortillas, overlapping them on a large plate rather than making one tall stack (which can soften and steam them too much).

If you don't have a non-stick pan, you can get good results with well-seasoned, recently oiled cast iron skillets, but your mileage may vary.

Smear each tortilla with some mashed avocado, and top with some hot carnitas. Serve with sour cream, shredded cheese, and salsa, if desired.

Serve the chopped salad in individual bowls.

Carnitas Taco Salad

If you want to make Carnitas Taco Salad instead of tacos, skip the tortillas, and stir some of the mashed avocado into a juicy serving of chopped salad to make a nice dressing for your greens. Toss your chopped salad 'dressing' with your salad greens and carnitas, and if desired, top it with salsa, sour cream, and cheese.

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Day Four (Bonus) – Carnitas Bowls

You'd have to be blind to not notice that bowls are everywhere. It started with either one of those teriyaki chicken bowls or Chipotle's burrito bowl. I'm not sure. Now we're seeing taco bowls, poke* bowls, mole** bowls, rice bowls, chicken bowls. Anything goes in a bowl.

So what's the attraction? Well, they're easy to eat, easy to serve, and they don't have to follow any rules because 'bowls' as we know them are new!

To be honest, this isn't as much a recipe as an idea. What's the idea? Use your leftovers when you have them, and supplement with a few quick and easy ingredients you probably have around the house already. Have some leftover carnitas (or chicken, steak, fish)? If not, make more next time and make up a bowl or two from simple leftovers and staples you've got in the fridge and pantry.

Ingredients (per bowl)

Protein

- 3-5 ounces of leftover cooked carnitas, chicken, beef, fish, shrimp
- 3-5 ounces of a quick cooking, handy protein like frozen chicken tenderloins, frozen burger patties, frozen shrimp, or ready to reheat chicken sausages (such as Adele's or Trader Joe's)

Base

- 1-2 servings of leftover starchy veggies, like potatoes, sweet potatoes, or even rice or beans
- 1-2 servings of mixed salad greens or shredded cabbage

Vegetables – 3-5 (or more) servings of mix and match veggies

- 1-3 servings of leftover cooked veggies (what a good reason to save even a tiny bit of leftovers)
- 1-3 servings of raw veggies, such as tomatoes, zucchini, summer squash, cucumber, bell peppers, shredded cabbage, green onions, chopped or shredded carrots, mixed greens or lettuce, etc.
- 1-3 servings of quick to cook veggies, such as zucchini, summer squash, cucumber, bell peppers, shredded cabbage, green onions, etc.
- 1-3 servings of frozen vegetables, cooked per package directions.

Sauces and dressings

- Low calorie or healthy dressings, olive oil and vinegar dressings
- Low calories sauces such as hot sauce, salsas, mustard, soy sauce, bbq sauce
- If you use higher calorie sauces and dressings, limit the dose!

Extras

- A pinch or two of chopped, fresh herbs
- Guacamole or avocado
- Limited amounts of higher calorie toppings like shredded cheese or sour cream

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Directions

Get out a big eating bowl. One per person.

Heat or cook or your protein sources. Leftover protein sources can be eaten hot or cold, depending. It's up to you.

If you need to cook or heat any veggies, now is the time. Steaming or sautéing are quick and easy methods, and frozen veggies have instructions right on the bag.

Place your base in the bottom of the bowl and top with the veggies of your choice. Add your protein source and then your sauces.

Toss like a salad, if desired.

Salt to taste, and add any extras you like.

Eat.

* Poke is a Hawaiian raw, marinated fish dish. Maybe I'll have to write that recipe next?

** Mole is not a rodent, in this case, but an amazing Mexican sauce made from chocolate, chilis, fruit, and spices. Mmmmm, mole...

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Three-in-One Chicken

Makes three dinners for four people

Chicken Tortilla Soup, Chinese White Chicken Salad, Shredded Chicken Tacos or Salad

Day One – Chicken Tortilla Soup

A really big, covered pot works great for this soup. Chicken doesn't take as long to cook as a roast, so you can start it simmering while you do all the other things for the three meals.

There is no right or wrong tortilla soup, so feel free to play around with ingredients every time you make it. My kids don't even like the tortillas for their tortilla soup, so for them I guess it's just chicken soup.

Since you'll be making enough chicken for days two and three worth of dinners, it will seem like a lot of chicken. The bonus here is that the broth will be even more chickeny! I suggest boneless chicken breasts and thighs, but you can use bone-in chicken or even whole chickens for these recipes. Be sure to reserve at least two chicken breasts for use in the Chinese White Chicken Salad, but other than that, any combination works.

Oh, if you decide to use whole chickens, then be sure to check out the bonus broth recipe at the end of this document, too!

Ingredients

- 4–5 pounds of boneless chicken breasts and thighs (or 6-7 ½ pounds of bone-in breasts and thighs OR a couple of fryer chickens totaling 7-8 pounds)
- 16 cups water
- 6 bay leaves
- 1 medium onion, peeled and quartered into wedges
- 4 carrots, cut into bite size pieces
- 2 stalks celery, cut into bite size pieces
- 10 allspice berries, cracked (optional, because no one ever has these)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp cumin, ground
- 1 tbsp coriander, ground
- 4 yellow summer squash or zucchini, cut into bite size pieces
- 1 tbsp paprika or any mild, powdered chili
- 1 tbsp oregano

Condiments, extras, and options

- corn tortilla chips
- red or green salsa

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- lime wedges
- sliced avocado
- sour cream
- shredded cheese
- hot sauce

Directions

Rinse the chicken and place it in a large pot or slow cooker. Cover with the water and bring it to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and skim off any foam that collects on the surface. Return to a slow boil and add the bay leaves through the coriander. Simmer for about 45 minutes, until the chicken is falling from the bone.

Carefully remove the chicken from the broth and allow it to cool long enough to handle. If using whole chicken, remove the skin and bones and save them for making broth if you like. There's even a recipe at the end of this document.

Remember that this is enough meat for three meals, so divide the meat into three portions.

Take about one third of the chicken (breast meat) for Chinese White Chicken Salad. This recipe works best with chicken breast, so two breasts worth of chicken should do it. The chicken is easier to shred while it's warm, so before you put it away, tear the breast meat into long shreds. Cover it and refrigerate until Chinese White Chicken Salad night!

Take another third of the chicken for the tacos later this week. You will be reheating the chicken for the tacos, so you can just cover it and refrigerate.

OK, back to the soup! The remaining third is for tonight! Tear or cut the chicken into bite size pieces, and return it to the broth. Add in the cut yellow summer squash or zucchini, and simmer for another 15-20 minutes, just until the squash is just tender. Remove from heat, remove the bay leaves, and stir in the oregano and paprika.

Serve with a variety of **condiments, extras, and options** at the table.

If using chips, you can stir them in, crumble them, or put them on the bottom of the bowls before adding the soup. Let them soak in the soup for a few minutes before eating. Top with cheese or some avocado cubes, and maybe stir in some salsa.

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Day Two – Chinese White Chicken Salad

This is one of my favorite recipes from my first few years living on my own. It's simple to make, and people like the combination of shredded chicken, crunchy iceberg lettuce, and a mildly spicy peanut dressing. Today, with the popularity of grocery store rotisserie chickens, I find it even easier to make. Whether you make it from scratch or from leftovers, it always tastes best with breast meat, but don't limit yourself!

Iceberg lettuce gets a bad rap for lack of nutrition, yet it's one of the most eaten veggies in America. From a nutrition standpoint, it's pretty lightweight, so I get why nutritionists look down on it. From a taste and satisfaction perspective, it's a lettuce that's hard to beat. It's crunchy, versatile, and tastes good. Should you eat mostly iceberg? No, but there's no reason to avoid it, either.

To give it a nutrition boost from the original 80's era recipe (which was just chicken, iceberg, and peanut dressing), I've added a bed of mixed, bagged salad greens and some strips of zucchini and peppers!

Some of the ingredients are optional. I recommend them highly, but I don't want you to NOT make the dish just because you don't have access to something like sesame oil or water chestnuts. Make the salad anyway. It will be delicious, either way.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- Reserved shredded chicken (or about 1 lb cooked breast meat, torn into long shreds)
- 1 bag of mixed salad greens
- 1 red, yellow, or orange bell pepper
- 1-2 yellow or green zucchini or summer squash
- 2-3 cups of iceberg lettuce, shredded
- 1 can water chestnuts, drained (optional)
- 1 green onion, whites and greens, chopped (optional)
- 1 ½ tbsp peanut, almond, or cashew butter
- 2 ½ tbsp light olive or avocado oil
- 2 tbsp white or rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp soy sauce or tamari (gluten free soy sauce)
- ¼ or more cayenne pepper or a few dashes hot sauce (optional)
- ½ tsp sesame oil (optional)
- ½ tsp ginger, ground (optional)
- Salt to taste (careful, because the soy sauce is already salty!)
- 4 tbsp cilantro, chopped

Directions

This salad is great cold, so don't feel the need to reheat the chicken. If you made the chicken from scratch or are using rotisserie chicken, pull the meat into long shreds and just serve it warm!

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Make the salad by starting with a bed of mixed greens on the bottoms of four large plates or bowls.

Cut the yellow or green zucchini or summer squash into long strips, then cut across to make them bitesized. Distribute the strips on top of the mixed greens.

Seed the bell pepper and cut it into bite sized strips. Add the peppers to the salad, too.

Arrange a mound of shredded iceberg lettuce in the center of the greens and veggies, and then add the water chestnuts and the chopped green onions, if using.

Arrange the shredded chicken over the top.

Make the dressing by stirring together the peanut, almond, or cashew butter and oil. When it's smooth, add in the vinegar, soy sauce, and the cayenne pepper or hot sauce, sesame oil, and ground ginger if using. Salt the dressing to taste, but be careful, because the soy sauce is already salty! Taste it first. If the dressing is too thick to pour, thin with tiny amounts of water until you get the consistency you like.

Drizzle dressing over the salads, and set the bowl at the table in case you want more.

Sprinkle the chopped cilantro over the salads and serve.

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Day Three – Chicken Soft Tacos or Chicken Lettuce Cups

Leftover chicken cooks up really quick with half a jar of salsa and a saucepan. A few tortillas or iceberg lettuce cups and you have a meal!

Tacos can't hold many vegetables, so we're going to do a simple chopped salad, too.

Ingredients

- 3–4 ripe tomatoes, chopped or 1 pint cherry tomatoes, chopped
- 1 yellow, orange, or red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 jalapeno or serrano chili, seeded and chopped (optional)
- 1-2 green onions or 2-4 tbsp white or red onion, chopped
- 2 yellow summer squash or zucchini, chopped
- Salt to taste
- 2 ripe avocados
- Reserved chicken from Day One
- 1 jar of salsa or picante sauce (like Pace or something even fancier)
- 2–4 tortillas per person OR 1 head of butter lettuce or iceberg lettuce (a head of cabbage also works, but it's very chewy)
- Sour cream (optional)
- Shredded cheddar or jack cheese

Directions

Make the salad by stirring the tomatoes, peppers, onions, and zucchini together. Salt to taste, and set aside.

Mash the avocados. Add ¼ of the mash to the salad and stir well. Set the salad aside.

Make guacamole by adding 1-2 tbsp of the jarred salsa to the avocado mash. Stir well, salt to taste, and set aside.

Add the chicken to a covered saucepan along with about half the jar of salsa. Heat over low heat, stirring occasionally. When the chicken warms up, you should be able to shred it using two forks. Bring the shredded chicken and salsa to bubbling and then remove it from heat.

If you're having lettuce cup tacos, separate the head of the lettuce or cabbage into leaves.

If you're having tortillas, then we'll use the same method as with the carnitas tacos, above.

Get a bowl that's big enough for dipping a tortilla, fill it with water, and set it near the stove. Heat a large non-stick skillet over medium-high to high heat. When the skillet is very hot, dip the tortilla in the water, and put it on the skillet. Let it sit and sizzle until it can be *easily* lifted with a spatula (about 30–60 seconds). Gently turn the tortilla and cook until side two can also easily be lifted with the spatula.

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If you don't have a non-stick pan, you can get good results with well-seasoned, recently oiled cast iron skillets, but your mileage may vary.

Repeat with the rest of the tortillas, overlapping them on a large plate rather than making one tall stack (which can soften and steam them too much).

Make tacos! Tortilla or lettuce cup, chicken, then guacamole, cheese, and sour cream. More salsa, if desired!

Serve alongside bowls of the chopped salad.

Chicken Taco Salad

Like with the Carnitas Taco Salad, you can totally skip the tortillas, and toss it all with some mixed greens. The guacamole and salsa will make for a great dressing!

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Bone Broth Bonus!

Chicken bone broth is simply broth that's been allowed to simmer long enough to break down the minerals and other amazing nutrients in the bones, skin, and cartilage of the chicken. It has many healthful qualities, and unlike many other bone broths, it actually tastes like normal broth, so you can use it in soups and stews as-is.

If you used whole chickens earlier, you might already have enough chicken bones and skin to make a big batch of broth. If not, freeze them in a zipper bag until you have enough to fill a small stock pot or crockpot. They will be safe in the freezer for quite some time. I have a large crock pot, and find that 2-3 chickens, or a mix of parts, will give me enough for a good size pot of broth.

Below you'll find the simple bone broth recipe that I use at home. You'll find a similar recipe in the book, as we have a chapter all about soups and broth.

Ingredients

- A pot full of bones, skin, and parts (usually about 3-5 pounds of bones and skin or 2-3 chickens worth)
- Warm water to cover
- 2 tbsp vinegar (you won't taste it, but it helps to break things down and release the minerals)

Directions

In the slow cooker – Put the bones in the slow cooker with enough warm water (from a kettle or pot) to cover, and then add the vinegar. Set the slow cooker to low (not warm) and allow it to slowly simmer for at least 8-12 hours or up to 24.

Frozen bones? – If the bones are frozen, it's important that you bring the bones and the water to a simmer before putting them in the slow cooker. Slow cookers heat cold food too slowly, and frozen bones will be at dangerous temperatures for too long, allowing bacteria can grow.

On the stovetop – You can also just simmer a big pot very slowly on the stove, too, but you have to hang around for that, so I typically use the slow cooker. If you do go the stovetop route, put the bones in the pot with enough water to cover, and then add the vinegar. Bring to a slow boil and then reduce the heat to a very low simmer. Cover and allow to slowly simmer for at least 8-12 hours or up to 24.

Strain the broth and store in jars or heatproof containers in the refrigerator. When the broth has cooled, you can skim the fat from the surface before using it.