

Mexican / Michoacán

Main Courses

Authentic Michoacán

Crispy Pork Carnitas

⌚ Prep: 20m

🔥 Cook: 150m

Σ Total: 170m

👤 8 servings



Video ref: Views on the Road (Stephanie & Cloud)

MISE EN PLACE / INGREDIENTS

[12]

- ☐ 4 lbs Bone-in or boneless pork shoulder (Boston butt), cut into 3-inch chunks
- ☐ 1 lb (450g) Pure rendered pork lard (manteca) (Armour Lard or fresh carnicería lard)
- ☐ 2 tbsp Kosher salt
- ☐ 1 unit Fresh orange, halved (juice and orange halves)
- ☐ 0.5 cup Mexican Coca-Cola made with real cane sugar
- ☐ 2 leaves Whole dried bay leaves
- ☐ 1.5 lbs Pork country-style ribs or spare ribs in chunks
- ☐ 2 cups Water (for initial salt-water dissolve and braise)
- ☐ 1 whole, halved White onion, halved
- ☐ 0.5 cup Evaporated milk (Carnation Evaporated Milk)
- ☐ 1 tbsp Mexican dried oregano
- ☐ 6 cloves, smashed Whole garlic cloves, peeled and smashed

🛒 US SUPERMARKET BRAND GUIDE

Pure Pork Lard: Armour Pure Lard Block

Provides authentic confit medium that prevents dry meat stringiness. • 📍 Baking oil or Hispanic meat section.

Evaporated Milk: Carnation Evaporated Milk

Concentrated milk sugars caramelize slowly on the meat surface for that signature copper sheen. • 📍 Baking aisle.

COOKING SEQUENCE & CHECKPOINTS

- 1

Melt Lard & Brown Pork

⌚ 12 min

Melt lard in Dutch oven over medium heat. Season pork chunks generously with coarse salt and place into melted fat to lightly sear for 10 minutes.

✓ Checkpoint: Pork submerged in clear melted fat.
- 2

Add Aromatics & Sweetness

⌚ 5 min

Squeeze orange juice into pot and drop in the squeezed peel halves. Add smashed garlic, bay leaves, Mexican oregano, evaporated milk, and Mexican Coke.

✓ Checkpoint: Fragrant, bubbling citrus-scented fat bath.
- 3

Gentle Confit Simmer

⌚ 1.5h (90m)

Lower heat to low, partially cover, and simmer for 90 minutes until water completely evaporates and only shimmering lard remains.

✓ Checkpoint: Pork chunks fork-tender through to the bone.
- 4

Crisp Exterior in Fat

⌚ 10 min

Raise heat to medium for 10 minutes, allowing the pork chunks to fry and caramelize in their own fat until deep golden. Transfer to a wooden cutting board, roughly chop, and assemble tacos.

✓ Checkpoint: Crispy, crackling mahogany pork carnitas.

🛡️ **FOOD SAFETY & INTERNAL TEMPERATURE: 145°F (63°C) USDA SAFE MINIMUM FOR WHOLE-CUT BEEF AND PORK (WITH A 3-MINUTE REST)**

USDA Food Safety Minimum (≥145°F / 63°C) vs Culinary Collagen Target (195°F–205°F / 90°C–96°C): While whole-cut beef and pork are pathogen-safe at 145°F (63°C), slow-braised and roasted cuts must reach 195°F–205°F (90°C–96°C) so tough connective collagen melts into silky, fork-shreddable gelatin.

👁️ **MASTER DONENESS CHECKPOINT:**

Pork so tender it shreds under fingertip pressure, coated in crisp, mahogany crackling edges while the inside remains meltingly moist.

🔬 **WHY IT WORKS:**

Low-Temperature Fat Confit:
Submerging seasoned pork in lard at a gentle 220°F transforms tough connective tissues into gelatin without boiling out the natural meat juices.

⚠️ **TROUBLESHOOTING:**

Meat turned dry and tough like pot roast: Keep heat at the absolute lowest setting where gentle lazy bubbles break the surface.