

Churston Traditional

FARM SHOP

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CHURSTON FARM SHOP RECIPES JULY 2017

To live 'high on the hog' is a phrase that implies one is in the happy position of being able to enjoy the finer things of life, such as what have traditionally been regarded as the better cuts of pork: the loin and the leg and the much-prized tenderloin – which has actually given its name to a district of San Francisco because in the past it was the cut the local butchers would slip to patrolling policemen to ensure their premises remained properly protected at night.

(Oddly enough the origin of that other phrase, 'to go the whole hog' had nothing whatever to do with pigs. A 'hog' was an old word for a shilling: going the whole hog meant splashing all one's cash on something.)

But modern chefs have rediscovered the fact that some of the best-flavoured pork comes from below the Plimsoll line – from the belly and the hock, which in terms of cost deliver outstanding value. Some recipes this month, then, for transforming humble ham hocks onto something a bit special. Ham hocks are easy to cook: just simmer for a couple of hours in water with the addition of two sticks of celery, two carrots, 10 black peppercorns, one onion and a bouquet garni of thyme, parsley and bay leaves, plus 250ml of cider.

HAM HOCK BEIGNETS

Ingredients. 200g left-over ham hock plus 100ml of the cooking liquor, tablespoon fresh chopped parsley, two tablespoons flour, two eggs, beaten, two Weetabix biscuits, crumbled, sea salt, freshly-ground black pepper, 50g butter and a dash of olive oil.

Method. Place the meat on a board and chop finely then transfer to a bowl. Reduce the cooking liquor by at least half over a medium heat, pour over the meat, add the parsley and season well. Mix and turn into a shallow square or rectangular dish and refrigerate overnight. Turn out onto a board and cut into strips. Heat the butter and oil in a pan. Mix some salt and pepper into the flour. Dip the strips in the flour, the beaten egg and finally the crumbled Weetabix and fry for a couple of minutes each side until lightly browned.

HAM HOCK SOUP

Ingredients for four. Two ham hocks, two large onions, four large carrots, two parsnips, two turnips, quarter of a savoy cabbage, sea salt, freshly-ground black pepper.

Method. Peel and roughly chop all the vegetables apart from the cabbage and place in a pan with the hocks and just enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, skim off any impurities, cover and simmer for an hour and a quarter. Chop the cabbage into large chunks, add to the soup and simmer for another 15 minutes. Lift out the hocks, remove any rind, pull the meat off the bones, break up and return to the pan, check seasoning and serve.

HAM HOCK TERRINE WITH WALNUTS AND GHERKINS

Ingredients. Two large ham hocks, two cloves of garlic, one large onion, one large carrot, one stick of celery, bouquet garni of thyme, bay leaves and parsley, 200ml cider, large double handful of finely-chopped parsley, 120g fresh walnut halves, roughly chopped, about 20 cornichons sliced into quarter-inch rings, sea salt, freshly-ground black pepper.

Method. Place the hocks, vegetables, bouquet garni and cider in a pan, add just enough water to cover the meat, bring to the boil, cover and simmer for two hours. Remove the hocks, cut away the rind, pull the meat off the bones (reserve these for flavouring soups) and chop it coarsely. Transfer to a bowl, add the sliced cornichons and the walnuts and season with plenty of salt and pepper. Take 500ml of the cooking liquid and reduce by half over a high heat, adding the reduction to the meat mixture and stirring well. Line a loaf tin with cling film, allowing a generous overlap, pile in the mixture and press well down making sure there are no air pockets. Wrap the cling film over the top, cover with foil and refrigerate for 24 hours. To serve, stand the tin in hot water for half a minute and either lift the terrine out with the cling film or invert onto a plate. Cut into thick slices and serve with French mustard and crusty bread.

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