

## Slow Cooker Pork and Sauerkraut

You eat first with your eyes, but maybe make an exception with this dish. What it lacks in looks in it's monochromatic glory, it makes up for in flavor. It also delivers a side order of good luck, making it a New Year's Day staple in German and Pennsylvania Dutch households. Pigs "root forward," and the idea of that kind of progress is appealing when the calendar is so fresh. Cabbage in any form is a perfect complement to pork and preserved kraut makes sense in cold months.

### **ingredients**

4 ounces bacon, cut crosswise into 1-inch pieces  
1 (3-pound) boneless pork butt roast (a.k.a. Boston butt), large fat cap removed and trimmed of excess fat, not tied  
2 ½ teaspoons kosher salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
1 medium onion, sliced  
4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced  
2 large bay leaves  
1 teaspoon caraway seeds  
8 fresh thyme sprigs  
1 (1-pound) bag sauerkraut  
1 (12-ounce) bottle beer  
1 to 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

**Special equipment:** large (5- to 7-quart) slow cooker with a browning insert (or conventional slow cooker and Dutch oven), tongs

### **directions**

Put the bacon in the slow cooker browning insert (or a Dutch oven) and set over medium heat. Cook, stirring from time to time, until the fat has rendered and the bacon is crisp, about 10 minutes. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon to some paper towels on a plate, leaving the fat in the pan.

Increase the heat to medium-high. Sprinkle all sides of the pork with the salt and as much pepper as you like. Using tongs, place it in the hot fat and sear all sides to brown nicely, 10 to 12 minutes total. (Lower the heat if the fat smokes or begins to burn.)

Remove the pork to a plate and lower the heat to medium. Add the onion, garlic, bay leaves, caraway seeds and thyme and cook, stirring until softened, about 3 minutes. Turn off the heat and add the sauerkraut and beer, stirring up any brown bits on the bottom of the pan.

Place the insert into the slow cooker (or transfer from the Dutch oven to the slow cooker), set the pork on top, cover and cook on low heat for 6 hours. You want the internal temperature of the pork to be at least 200 degrees in order for it to pull apart nicely. Remove the pork to a cutting board and adjust slow cooker to warm setting. Slice the meat against the grain into 1/2-inch or 3/4-inch thick slices. Add 1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar to the slow cooker. Remove and discard bay leaves. Taste and adjust seasonings, adding more cider vinegar if desired. Lay the sauerkraut mixture on a platter, top with sliced pork and the reserved bacon pieces. Serve warm.

**total time:** 6 hours 45 minutes

**active prep:** 45 minutes

**serves:** 4 to 6

**difficulty:** easy