

Pork Chops

SWEET TEA-BRINED PORK CHOPS WITH PEPPER RELISH

ACTIVE: 45 min | TOTAL: 2 hr 35 min (plus 8-hr brining)
SERVES: 4 to 8

- 4 orange pekoe tea bags
- 1 cup sugar
- Kosher salt
- 6 bay leaves (preferably fresh)
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 4 bone-in center-cut pork chops (2 inches thick; about 5 pounds total)
- 2 red bell peppers, chopped
- ½ onion, diced
- 2 Fresno chile peppers, seeded and chopped
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup apricot preserves
- Freshly ground pepper
- Vegetable oil, for the grill

1. Make the brine: Bring 6 cups water to a boil in a large pot. Turn off the heat, add the tea bags and let steep 10 minutes. Discard the tea bags. Stir in ¾ cup sugar, ½ cup salt, the bay leaves and coriander seeds. Cook over low heat, stirring, until the sugar and salt are dissolved, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat, pour into a large heatproof pitcher (reserve the pot) and let cool to room temperature, about 30 minutes. Refrigerate the brine until very cold, at least 1 hour. Pour the brine into the reserved pot and add the pork chops. Cover and refrigerate 8 hours or overnight.

2. Meanwhile, make the pepper relish: Put the bell peppers, onion and chiles in a food processor and pulse 2 or 3 times until slightly broken down but not pureed. Transfer to a small saucepan and add the vinegar, preserves, remaining ¼ cup sugar and ¼ teaspoon salt. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer until slightly reduced but still juicy, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat, transfer to a serving bowl and refrigerate until ready to serve. (You can make the relish up to 1 day ahead.)

3. Preheat a grill to medium. Oil the grill grates. Remove the pork chops from the brine and pat dry. Season the chops with salt and pepper. Grill, covered, until well marked, 14 to 16 minutes (rotate the chops 90 degrees if they get too dark). Flip the chops and cook, covered, until well marked on the other side and a thermometer inserted sideways into the center registers 145°, 14 to 16 more minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and let rest about 10 minutes. Serve with the relish.

