

Slow Cooker Chipotle Carnitas



This Slow Cooker Chipotle Carnitas are smoky, juicy, tasty, and totally irresistible! Perfect for Family Style Taco Bar Night.

Course dinner, Main Course

Cuisine Mexican

Prep Time 15 minutes

Cook Time 8 hours 15 minutes

Total Time 8 hours 30 minutes

Servings 10

Calories 507kcal

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Ingredients

- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup (60 ml) lime juice (about 2 limes)
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons oregano
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 2 – 3 individual chipotle peppers from a can of Chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
- 2 tablespoons of the adobo sauce from a can of chipotles in adobo
- 3 - 4 lbs. (1.3 - 1.8 kg) skinless boneless pork shoulder (excess fat trimmed)
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) orange juice (about 1 orange)
- 1 cup (240 ml) chicken broth
- 2 bay leaves
- Fresh cilantro, chopped to garnish

For the Taco Bar:

- Flour tortillas and/or corn tortillas
- Sliced avocado
- Finely sliced red onions
- Sliced jalapeño
- Diced pineapple
- Diced tomatoes
- Charred corn

- Crumbed queso fresco
- Sour cream
- Salsa verde
- Lime wedges

Instructions

Chipotle Carnitas:

1. Place garlic, lime juice, oil, salt, black pepper, oregano, onion powder, cumin, peppers, and adobo sauce in a small food processor. Pulse until well combined, and a paste is formed.
2. Rub the pork shoulder with the chipotle paste, rubbing it thoroughly on all sides. I used gloves to rub the pork, but if you don't have gloves available, wash hands with soap and water after handling raw pork.
3. Place orange juice, chicken broth, bay leaves, and seasoned pork shoulder into a slow cooker. Cook for 8 hours on low or 4 hours on high, until internal temperature reaches 145 °F on a food thermometer. The pork should be so tender that meat falls apart easily.
4. Remove pork from slow cooker and shred the meat using two forks, removing excess fat. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed.
5. Heat oven to broil. Line one baking sheet with foil and spray with cooking oil.
6. Place carnitas onto a baking sheet with a cup or so of the juices and broil until most pork looks golden, crisp, and crusted, about 4 minutes. Remove from oven.
7. Garnish carnitas with chopped cilantro, if desired.

Taco Bar:

1. Just before serving, heat your tortillas. Stack warm tortillas in a dish towel to keep them hot for longer.
2. Place chipotle carnitas on a big serving plate.
3. Arrange all toppings in various small bowls so that each person can make their own tacos. Serve.

Notes

STORE: If you have leftovers carnitas, store them in the extra cooking liquid to keep them moist and juicy.

FREEZE: This chipotle carnitas recipe is freezer-friendly. Once the pork has cooled, transfer the crispy shredded pork to an airtight freezer-safe container or bag. I suggest freezing it in portions so you can pull out just the carnitas you need. Freeze for up to 3 months.

THAW: Thaw in the fridge the night before and reheat until heated through.

QUICK TIPS:

- **Don't have a slow cooker?** Make this chipotle carnitas recipe in an Instant Pot. Simply add all the ingredients to the Instant Pot and pressure cook for 30 minutes on high pressure. Natural pressure release for 10 minutes before quick releasing and shredding the pork. Continue to crisp up the carnitas as instructed.
- This recipe only calls for 2 to 3 chipotle peppers and 2 tablespoons of the sauce. If you do not have immediate plans to use the rest of the can, it is freezer-friendly! Freeze the leftover peppers and adobo sauce for the next time you plan on making this carnitas recipe.
- Be sure not to open your slow cooker while it is cooking. Opening the slow cooker will release the steam that your slow cooker worked long and hard to build up. With the steam released, you'll have to increase the time spent cooking as it has to rebuild all that lost steam!
- When crisping up the shredded pork in the oven, I suggest trying to get the meat in a single layer as evenly as possible, so each piece of pork can crisp up evenly. Crisp up the carnitas in two batches if necessary. When ready to crisp up the carnitas, do not forget to add the liquid; this helps prevent the carnitas from drying out.

You can also crisp up the carnitas on the stove: Heat about 1 tablespoon of oil in a nonstick pan or cast-iron skillet over high heat. When the oil is hot, add pork in batches and sear until just crisp. Add about 1/4 cup of the cooking liquid and continue cooking until the liquid reduces down and the meat is nice and crispy.

Check out these food safety tips, provided by the Partnership for Food Safety Education (PFSE), to help improve food safety practices.

FOOD SAFETY TIPS:

- Wash hands with soap and water before you start to cook.
- Gently rub produce under cold running water.
- Don't rinse meat or poultry. It is not a safe step and can spread germs around your kitchen.

If you're going to make this recipe, please read the whole post content to get lots of tips, tricks, and variations.

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- Instant Pot Crispy Pork Carnitas
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- Easy Sheet Pan Beef Fajitas
- Easy Honey Chipotle Grilled Shrimp

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Please note that nutritional information is a rough estimate, and it can vary depending on the products used.