

Braised Pork Belly with Black Mission Figs and Pickled Mustard Seeds paired with Phase V Petite Sirah

INGREDIENTS:

Braised Pork Belly

3-4 pounds pork belly, skin off
½ cup sugar
½ cup kosher salt
10 cups chicken stock
2 shallots, peeled and cut in half
8 cloves garlic, crushed
1 bay leaf
5 sprigs thyme
1 cinnamon stick
2 star anise
2 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
2 tablespoons vegetable oil

SERVES: 8

Black Mission Figs

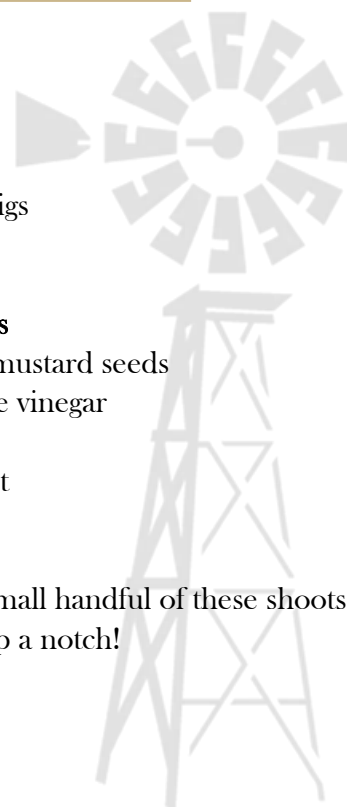
12- 15 black mission figs
½ cup sugar

Pickled mustard Seeds

2 tablespoons yellow mustard seeds
¼ cup unseasoned rice vinegar
1 tablespoon sugar
¾ teaspoon kosher salt

Optional Garnish

Sunflower Shoots, a small handful of these shoots really kicks the dish up a notch!



METHOD:

Braised Pork Belly

- Cure the pork belly -
 - In a Ziploc bag, add your pork belly, salt and sugar then rub to coat the pork belly evenly. Place in the fridge to cure overnight.
 - The next day, Rinse the salt/ sugar mix off the belly and pat dry.
- Cook the pork belly -
 - Preheat your oven to 325°F and place the belly in a heavy roasting pan or Dutch oven.
 - Add the stock, shallots, garlic, bay, thyme, cinnamon, star anise, honey and vinegar. Make sure the belly is completely submerged. If you need to, add a little water.
 - Cover with parchment and foil and bake at 325°F for 3 hours until the pork is very tender.
 - Let the pork cool in the liquid until it reaches room temperature. While it's cooling make sure you have a decent amount of space cleared in your fridge for the next step.
- Press the pork belly -
 - Carefully remove the pork from the liquid and place it on a parchment lined sheet tray or pan.
 - Place a second piece of parchment over the top and then place a second sheet tray or pan of the same size on top of the parchment.
 - Place something heavy on the top tray (a few cans of tomatoes or canned beans work great, just make sure the weight is distributed evenly). This will compress the belly and make it much easier to work with the next day.
 - Place in the fridge for 12 hours.

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- Portion and Sear the pork belly
 - Remove the pork belly from the fridge and peel off the parchment paper.
 - Portion the belly into large cubes or rectangles, 2x2 inches or 2x4 inches.
 - In a large sauté pan on medium high heat, sear the pieces of belly with a little vegetable oil until they are golden brown on all sides. Season with kosher salt.

Black Mission Figs

- Cut the figs in half lengthwise.
- Pour the sugar onto a plate and place the figs face down on the sugar to coat them.
- Heat a non-stick pan over medium heat and add the figs, face down, to the pan.
- Cook over medium heat until the figs are caramelized golden brown only on the open face side 5-6 minutes. Turn the figs over and turn off the heat.

Pickled mustard Seeds

- Place the mustard seeds in a saucepot covered with cold water, bring to a boil, then strain the mustard seeds from the water using a sieve or fine mesh strainer. Repeat this process 3 times.
- Add the mustard seeds to a glass jar.
- Add the salt, sugar, and vinegar to a pot or small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat and let simmer until the salt and sugar have dissolved.
- Pour the liquid over the seeds in the glass jar. Let cool to room temperature or until the jar is cool enough to handle (about 30 minutes) before adding the lid.
- Serve immediately or refrigerate for up to 2 weeks.

To Finish

In a bowl or small plate place 3-4 pieces of caramelized fig face up. Place the pork belly over the figs and garnish with a spoonful of the pickled mustard seeds and sunflower shoots. Serve immediately with a glass of Phase V Petite Sirah.