

Easy-to-prepare meals and accompanying drinks

Pork, Potatoes & Peas

BY RACHEL WALKER



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PORK, POTATOES AND PEAS...it sounds like a cafeteria meal, right? Wrong! This recipe goes to show the magic of herbs when it comes to enlivening a dish.

It's a particularly good one to keep up your sleeve for a summer barbecue. The "potatoes, peas and pesto" is a riff on a potato salad, and pork loin chops can be cooked on the hob, under the oven grill—or on a charcoal one.

Serves 6

- 1tbsp herbs de provence
- 6tbsps olive oil
- ½tsp freshly ground pepper
- 2tbsps Dijon mustard
- 6 pork loin chops
- 25g basil leaves
- 55g Parmesan, finely grated
- 55g pine nuts
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 150ml olive or rapeseed oil
- Lemon

For the peas and potatoes

- 800g Jersey Royal potatoes
- 180g frozen peas
- Optional serve: dressed watercress salad

1. Start by preparing the pork marinade. Use a fork to mix the olive oil and herbs de provence, then add the ground pepper, Dijon mustard and a dash of salt. Coat the pork chops in the marinade, cover and refrigerate.
2. Cook the potatoes in a pan of boiling water.



3. Meanwhile put the basil leaves, Parmesan, pine nuts and garlic into a blender, with a tablespoon of oil to loosen. Blitz into a paste. Slowly drizzle in the rest of the oil and continue to blend to a rough paste.

4. After 12 minutes, the potatoes should be near "done" and tender enough to poke a fork into them without much resistance. Add the peas into the pan and cook for 2 more minutes. Drain, and then return the peas and potatoes to the pan.

5. Use a spatula to scoop the pesto into the pan with the peas and potatoes. Put the lid back on and rattle

it until all the warm potatoes and peas are well-coated in the pesto. Tip the warm salad into a serving bowl and set to one side.

6. The key with cooking pork loin chops is to do it quickly and at a high temperature—ideally hot enough that the outside takes on a bit of

colour, without cooking them so long that the meat dries out. Usually 2–3 minutes on each side is about right, but it depends on thickness.

7. Put the cooked pork chops on a board and serve them along with the warm potato salad. It's ideal as part of a barbecue, or as a quick and nutritious dinner.

TIP...

Butchers usually offer far better quality meat than supermarkets. Look for a thick cut of pork with a fatty rind—that's where all the flavour is!

PHOTOGRAPHED BY TIM & ZOË HILL

How Low Can You Go?



AS LONG AFTERNOON barbecues roll on into the evening, it's worth putting some thought into the ABV ("Alcohol by Volume") of the wine you'll be drinking. After a few glasses on a hot summer's day, the small difference between 12% and 14% can have a big impact how you're going to feel the next morning.

Broadly speaking, the alcohol level of wine is linked to the amount of sugar the grapes contain when they're harvested. The higher the sugar, the higher the potential for alcohol—which is why warm climates such as Argentina and Australia are often associated with high-alcohol reds (13.5%–16%).

A counter-trend towards low-ABV wines is bubbling away though, driven by people wanting to rein

back the units they consume for health or weight reasons (the higher the alcohol, the higher the calories). One in four people now cite ABV as an influence in the wine they choose and, as a result, companies are producing low-ABV spin-off ranges, such as First Cape's "Cafe" Collection (5.5%) or Jacob's Creek's "Cool Harvest" (9.5%–11%).

ANOTHER OPTION is to look for wine that's naturally lower in alcohol, and it tends to be the more northern and higher altitude regions where there's a long tradition of low-ABV bottles. While global trends have seen the percentage of alcohol creep up, a wine such as Moscato d'Asti—a sparkling white produced in Northern Italy—has doggedly remained around 5.5%–7%. Then there are the German Reislings creeping back into fashion and light Beaujolais. Even Lambrusco, which was written-off in the Eighties for being sickly sweet—has had a 21st-century makeover. Crisp, refined bottles (around 11%) are on wine lists at smart restaurant group Ottolenghi.

Of course, there are a growing number of British vineyards too (see p76). Our mild climate means our home-grown vino has a pleasantly low ABV—which could help prevent that morning-after headache...



LOW-ALCOHOL WINES

■ **The Society's Vinho Verde (11.5%)** £5.95, *The Wine Society* My pick of the bunch (and it's nothing to do with the price!). Crisp and clean with a gentle effervescence, which makes each glass feel like an occasion.

■ **Asti Spumante (7.5%)** £9, *Marks & Spencer* Super-dry fizz fans may find this unnervingly sweet—but it's not remotely cloying. Sherberty, aromatic and very drinkable.

■ **Chapel Down Bacchus (11%)** £12.99, *Waitrose* Crisp, dry and great with food, this has been billed as "England's answer to Sauvignon Blanc".

■ **Dr L Riesling 2014 (8.5%)** £7, *Asda* Its elegance and apple-crispness is sure to convert Risenling doubters. A good match for spicy food.

■ **Cuvée des Vignerons, Beaujolais (12%)** £6.99, *Waitrose* A light red—the antithesis of those that turn your mouth purple—that can be chilled for summertime drinking.

■ **Cantina Cleto Chiarli, Vecchia Modena Lambrusco di Sorbara (11%)** £13.95, *Great Western Wine* Hot pink, with rose and wild-strawberry notes, this is proof that Lambrusco has changed since the sweetened plonk of 30 years ago.



BOOK



Fresh India, Figtree, £13.60. Even if the weather fails, this will guarantee a bit of heat.

BARGAIN



Pork loin cutlets, Turner & George, £11.90. Top restaurant quality at a fraction of the price.

BLOW OUT



Seed Pantry grow pod + seed kit, £35. Entry-level hydroponics kit for fresh herbs all year round.



Baked Nectarines

This is such an easy pudding and it's scalable—so perfect for feeding a crowd. Pop by a local fruit and vegetable market to find softer nectarines (rather than “ripen at home”) and pick up a bargain too.

Serves 12

- 12 ripe nectarines
 - 100g amaretti biscuits
 - 200g mascarpone
 - 1tsp cinnamon
 - 2tbsps runny honey
- Optional serve: crème fraîche, blueberries

1. Preheat the oven to 180C. Wash and then halve the nectarines. Remove the stones and arrange them in a baking tray, flat side up.
2. Put the amaretti biscuits in a sandwich bag and gently pound with a rolling pin to break them into chunks (not so small that they turn to crumbs).
3. Mix the crushed amaretti biscuits, mascarpone and cinnamon. Then use a teaspoon to divide the mixture between the nectarines.
4. Drizzle honey over the nectarines and then bake for 20–25 minutes, until soft.
5. Serve with crème fraîche and blueberries. ■