

PORK WITH CLAMS ALENTEJO-STYLE

Porco à Alentejana

This unseemly combination of pork and clams may sound like a new low in surf 'n' turf dinners, but it is in fact a Portuguese classic—and altogether delicious. *Note: Because the pork must marinate overnight, you should begin this recipe the day before you plan to serve it.*

Makes 6 servings

- 2½ pounds boneless pork loin, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons *Massa de Pimentão* (page 90) or, if you prefer, a paste made of 1 peeled and crushed garlic clove, 1 teaspoon kosher salt, 1 tablespoon paprika (preferably the Hungarian sweet rose paprika), and 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 2 large bay leaves, crumbled
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lard (hog lard, not vegetable shortening)
- 1 large yellow onion, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 large garlic clove, peeled and minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 18 small littleneck clams in the shell, scrubbed well and purged of grit. (To do this, cover the clams with cold water, add 1 tablespoon cornmeal, let stand at room temperature 20 to 30 minutes, then drain well.)
- ¼ teaspoon salt (about)
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper (about)

Rub the pieces of pork well all over with the *Massa de Pimentão* and place in a large, shallow nonmetallic bowl; add the wine and bay leaves, cover, and marinate about 24 hours, turning the pork occasionally in the wine.

Next day, heat the olive oil and lard in a large heavy kettle over high heat until ripples appear on the kettle bottom—the fat should *almost* smoke. Lift the pork from the marinade (save the marinade to add to the kettle later) and brown in the three batches, transferring pieces to a large heat-proof bowl as they brown. When all the pork is brown, dump the onion and garlic into the kettle, lower the heat to moderate, and stir-fry 3 to 4 minutes until limp and golden. Turn the heat to low, cover the kettle, and steam the onion and garlic 20 minutes. Blend in the tomato

Add some
Cilantro - stems
to the stew +
chopped leaves
at the end.

Can substitute
mussels

Don't necessarily need
to brown meat, just
add to onions as
uncooked

paste and reserved wine marinade, return the pork to the kettle, adjust the heat so that the wine mixture barely bubbles, then cover and cook 1½ hours until the pork is fork-tender. Now bring the kettle liquid to a gentle boil, lay the clams on top of the pork, distributing them as evenly as possible, re-cover, and cook about 30 minutes—just until the clams open, spilling their juices.

Season to taste with salt and pepper, ladle into large soup plates, and serve with chunks of chewy Portuguese bread (*Pão* or *Pão de Centeio*; pages 224 and 236) and a crisp green salad, sharply dressed. To accompany, open a rich, round Portuguese red wine such as Dão Grão Vasco or Ferreira Barca Velha, if you are lucky enough to find a bottle of it.