

**# 122: South of the Border**

**Pierna de Cerdo**

**Melissa Araujo, Saveur Catering**

- 1/2 pound ripe roma tomatoes
- 2 guajillo chiles, stemmed and seeded
- 2 ancho chiles, stemmed and seeded
- 1 bunch cilantro, washed well, including stems
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 garlic clove, roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 6 whole peeled garlic cloves
- 1 pork butt, about 4 to 5 pounds
- 2 teaspoon salt (use more or less according to taste)
- 2 teaspoons black pepper (use more or less according to taste)
- 4 ounces prepared adobo sauce or paste
- 3 bay leaves
- Salt and pepper

Place the tomatoes on a foil-lined baking sheet and place under a broiler until charred and soft, turning once.

Toast the guajillo and ancho chiles in a hot skillet until lightly browned, turning occasionally. Place the chiles in a medium saucepan and cover with water. Simmer about 10 minutes until the chiles are rehydrated. Remove the chiles from the pan, reserving the cooking liquid.

Combine the tomatoes, chiles and 1/2 cup of the reserved cooking liquid in a blender and puree the ingredients. Add additional cooking liquid as needed to make a smooth sauce. Set aside.

Rough chop the cilantro and combine it with the olive oil, lime juice, chopped garlic and bell pepper in a blender. Puree until smooth, adding a little water if necessary to make a sauce. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.

Place the pork butt in a roasting pan. With the tip of a small knife pierce the top of the pork butt, making 6 deep slits. Insert a garlic clove into each of the slits.

Rub the salt on the meat, massaging it in. Do the same with the black pepper. Smear the adobo on the pork, then pour the tomato-chile sauce over the meat. Pour the cilantro sauce over the pork and tuck the bay leaves around it. Cover the pan with aluminum foil

Place the pork butt in the preheated oven and roast for 3 hours or until the meat is tender, basting periodically. Allow about 45 minutes of cooking time per pound. Increase the oven temperature to 375 degrees. Remove the foil from the pan and roast an additional 20 to 30 minutes, basting frequently, until the meat is nicely browned.

Transfer the pork to a cutting board and let rest. Slice or coarsely chop and serve.

Serves 8.