

# Pimentón Porchetta

The Spanish answer to Italian porchetta — pimentón dulce + picante + garlic + EVOO on the flesh side, scored skin on the outside, slow roast then high blast. Three hours of oven time while you go live your life; one plate that stops the room.

Protein Pork Belly (skin-on classic, skinless honey-soy variant)

Serves 8-12 (2.5-4 kg belly)

Difficulty Intermediate

Active 20 min prep + 10 min finish

Total 2.5-3 h oven + 15-20 min blast + 20 min rest (~3.5 h total, mostly hands-off)

## THE STORY

### Spain Claims the Porchetta

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Italian porchetta is rosemary and fennel. This isn't that. This is what happens when a cook who grew up around real pimentón de la Vera looks at the Italian technique and says "yes, but what if it tasted like home?" The rub is pimentón (dulce and picante), garlic, EVOO, salt. The scoring is the same crosshatch — 1 cm, through the skin, not into the flesh. The roll is the same. The slow roast at 160 °C is the same. What changes is the identity: the char smells like a Spanish mountain village, not a Tuscan farmhouse.

The two hours of low-and-slow oven time are a gift. The collagen in the pork shoulder end dissolves into gelatin. The fat layers render gently. The pimentón's capsanthin bleeds into the drippings, staining everything red-orange. You leave the house — hike, kayak, nap — and come back to a kitchen that smells like event food.

The blast at 230 °C is where you decide which porchetta you're serving. Skin-on, the blast crackles the skin into glass — the traditional "bark" that shatters under a knife. Skinless (sometimes the cut is only available this way, as Pablo discovered at the Smokies), the blast gets a lacquer finish instead: a honey-soy glaze brushed on in the last 15 minutes builds a sticky mahogany shell that replaces crackling with a completely different kind of crust. Two porchettas from the same rub, two finishes, one philosophy: slow then fast, the classical rhythm that applies to every great roast.

#### AT A GLANCE

## Specs

<b>YIELD</b> <b>8–12 servings</b> <b>(2.5–4 kg belly)</b>	<b>PROTEIN</b> <b>Pork Belly (skin-on or skinless)</b>	<b>ROAST TEMP</b> <b>160 °C → 230 °C blast</b>	<b>DIFFICULTY</b> <b>Intermediate</b> ●●○○○
<b>ACTIVE TIME</b> <b>~30 min total</b>	<b>PASSIVE TIME</b> <b>2.5–3 h oven, hands-off</b>	<b>MAKE-AHEAD</b> <b>Overnight uncovered fridge dry = better crackling</b>	<b>CUISINE</b> <b>Spanish</b>
<b>COURSE</b> <b>Event main / Family Sunday</b>	<b>PAIRS WITH</b> <b>Rioja Reserva • Ribera del Duero</b>		

#### UMAMI ADAPTATION

## What Changed & Why

This isn't Italian porchetta in Spanish clothing — it's a Spanish roast that happens to share its shape. The rub replaces the Italian fennel-rosemary axis with the real Spanish axis: pimentón de la Vera (dulce + picante), garlic, EVOO. The method adds two tiers: the skin-on classical with crackling finish, and the skinless modernist with honey-soy lacquer (developed after the

Smokies trip when skinless was the only belly Jesse's Butcher Shop had). Both work. Both taste distinctly Spanish. The lacquer version is the surprise-on-the-table option when the butcher couldn't source skin-on.

CHANGE	ORIGINAL	UMAMI VERSION	WHY
<b>SUB</b>	Fennel-rosemary rub (Italian)	Pimentón dulce + picante + garlic + EVOO	Spanish identity — pimentón is the Iberian fat-soluble flavor carrier
<b>TECH</b>	Rub skin side	Rub FLESH side only — skin stays dry	Wet skin = no crackling; dry skin + high-heat blast = shattering glass
<b>ADD</b>	—	Overnight uncovered fridge rest (skin dries further)	The biggest lever on crackling quality — dehydrated skin crackles, moist skin blisters weakly
<b>TECH</b>	One-temp roast	Two-stage: 160 °C / 2.5 h → 230 °C / 15–20 min blast	Low cook renders collagen + fat; high blast crackles skin OR lacquers surface
<b>ELEV</b>	Crackling only (requires skin)	Skinless variant: honey-soy lacquer at blast stage (🔴)	When butcher can't supply skin-on, lacquer replaces crackling — sticky mahogany shell, fusion twist

# What You Need

## ● Everyday

### The Belly

- 2.5–3 kg skin-on pork belly (single slab, rectangular, 4–5 cm thick) — any good butcher; ask for skin-on specifically, many shops default to skinless
- Kitchen twine (butcher's twine) — **non-negotiable**; see Emergency section for the Smokies lesson
- Heavy roasting pan with rack (allows air circulation under the roll)

### The Spanish Rub

- 2 tbsp pimentón dulce (smoked sweet Spanish paprika — Mercadona, La Chinata)
- 1 tbsp pimentón picante (smoked hot Spanish paprika)
- 6 cloves garlic, minced to a paste with 1 tsp kosher salt
- 3 tbsp EVOO (any good cooking EVOO, not the finishing oil)
- 1 tsp fresh-cracked black pepper

### Finishing

- Maldon flaky salt
- More fresh-cracked black pepper
- Pan drippings (reserve — they become the sauce base)

### Substitution Notes

- *No pimentón de la Vera?* McCormick smoked paprika is a stand-in, not an equal — the oak-smoke dimension is the whole point. If pimentón isn't available, this recipe is worth delaying until it is. Amazon / La Tienda / any decent Spanish importer. Pablo's pimentón upgrade is noted in MEMORY.md.
- *No twine?* **Do not attempt this recipe without twine.** Skip to pork shoulder roast or secreto instead. (Smokies lesson, April 8 2026: 12 lb belly bought, no twine available, porchetta abandoned.)
- *Pork shoulder instead of belly?* Works, but the texture shifts from fat-rendered-between-layers to uniformly tender. Slower: 3.5 h at 160 °C. Classical for Italian porchetta, traditional in Spain for similar roasts.

## ● No Limits

### The Belly — Premium Sourcing

- 3–4 kg skin-on heritage pork belly — Snake River Farms Kurobuta or Heritage Foods USA Berkshire. Skin-on is the non-negotiable at this tier; order 14 days ahead from the supplier.
- Alternative when skin-on is unavailable: 3–4 kg **skinless** pork belly → see the ● Honey-Soy Lacquer technique card for the fusion variant

### The Spanish Rub — DO-Tier

- 2 tbsp **Pimentón de la Vera DOP dulce** — La Chinata or Hojiblanca brand, oak-smoked 10–15 days
- 1 tbsp **Pimentón de la Vera DOP picante** — same producer, for heat balance
- 6 cloves Las Pedroñeras purple garlic (nuttier, less sharp than commodity garlic)
- 3 tbsp Arbequina EVOO (Pablo has ✓ — use the good oil in the rub; it's flesh-side, it'll taste)
- 1 tsp Tellicherry black pepper, fresh-cracked
- 1 tsp Maldon salt in the rub (in addition to garlic-paste salt)

### Honey-Soy Lacquer (for skinless belly — ● variant)

- 60 ml soy sauce (Pablo has ✓)
- 60 ml raw honey (Pablo has ✓)
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- 1 tbsp grated ginger
- 1 clove garlic, grated
- Pinch of Pimentón de la Vera picante (bridges the rub back in)

### Infrastructure

- Butcher's twine (verified on hand BEFORE starting — see Emergency)
- Heavy cast-iron roasting pan or French roaster with rack
- Probe thermometer (continuous reading through the 3-hour cook)
- Sharp slicing knife — 10+ inch blade for clean rings at service

## EQUIPMENT

### Your Kit

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- Oven (convection preferred — Pablo's Bosch has this ✓)

- Heavy roasting pan with rack (metal rack elevates the roll for airflow)
- Butcher's twine – verified on hand before starting
- Sharp boning or utility knife (for scoring the skin – 1 cm crosshatch)
- Mortar + pestle or food processor (for garlic-salt paste)
- Probe thermometer (essential – internal temp is the only reliable doneness signal)
- Heavy cutting board + 10+ inch slicing knife for service
- Pastry brush (for the honey-soy lacquer – ● skinless variant only)

#### MISE EN PLACE

## Before You Start

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- Pork belly unwrapped, patted dry, resting on rack in fridge uncovered – ideally 12–24 h ahead for crackling skin
- Twine verified on hand – count the number of ties needed (one every 5 cm along the length)
- Garlic-salt paste made in mortar or processor
- Pimentón + EVOO + pepper measured into bowl
- Oven preheated to 160 °C convection (or 170 °C conventional)
- Probe thermometer calibrated + ready
- Honey-soy lacquer pre-mixed in small bowl (● skinless variant)

#### MAKE-AHEAD

## Timeline

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- T-24 h – **Dry the skin**  
Pat belly bone-dry. Set skin-up on rack over plate. Refrigerate uncovered overnight. The dry skin is the #1 crackling lever.

**T-1 h – Rub + roll + tie**

Score skin crosshatch 1 cm. Flip to flesh side. Apply Spanish rub (NOT to skin). Roll tightly, seam-down. Tie with twine every 5 cm. Refrigerate 30 min to let rub penetrate.

**T-0 – Into the oven**

160 °C convection. Middle rack. Probe in thickest part (avoid twine).

**T+2 h – Check internal**

Target 70 °C internal. At 70: 2 h down, 30 min to go. Below 70: wait.

**T+2:30 – Final internal**

Target 80 °C internal (collagen fully converted). Remove roll, tent loosely with foil. Crank oven to 230 °C.

**T+2:40 – Blast**

(Skin-on): unveil, return to oven 230 °C 15–20 min. Watch skin — when it visibly blisters and cracks, it's done. (Skinless ●): brush with honey-soy lacquer, return 230 °C 8–10 min, brush again, another 5–8 min. Mahogany, sticky.

**T+3:05 – Rest**

Remove. Rest 20 min loosely tented. DO NOT skip — slicing immediately leaks all the rendered fat.

**T+3:25 – Slice + serve**

Slice into 2 cm rings with a sharp knife. Skin-on rings have a glass crackling top that audibly shatters. Skinless rings are mahogany-lacquered. Serve.

## METHOD

# The Cook

### 1 Dry the Skin (T-24 h, the crackling lever)

1. Unwrap pork belly. Pat *bone-dry* with paper towels — both sides, including inside any folds.
2. Set the belly SKIN-UP on a wire rack over a plate or sheet pan. **Do NOT cover.** Refrigerator, 12–24 hours.
3. During this rest, the skin dehydrates. Moisture from deep in the fat layers migrates outward and evaporates into the fridge's dry air. By the 24 h mark, the skin feels almost leathery to the touch — that's the goal.
4. (*Skinless variant*): Still do the overnight dry rest. Dry surface = better Maillard on the blast finish, even without crackling.

#### WHY THIS WORKS

Crackling is the result of moisture escaping the skin rapidly under high heat — it puffs and shatters into the glass-like texture. But the moisture has to be low enough at the start that it CAN escape explosively without steaming. Wet skin under a 230 °C blast creates soggy leather, not crackling. The 24-hour fridge dehydration removes 15–30% of the skin's water content, which is the specific delta between failed and glass-perfect crackling. Reference: Food Science Core §5 (Water Activity and Crust); Protein Encyclopedia §11 (Pork Belly).

## 2 Score + Rub + Roll + Tie

1. Remove belly from fridge. Place skin-up on cutting board.
2. **Score the skin** in a crosshatch pattern, 1 cm apart in both directions. Cut through the skin and into the fat layer, but **NOT into the flesh** (if you cut too deep, the meat juices leak up through the scores during cooking — wet skin, no crackling).
3. Flip the belly so the flesh side faces up.
4. Combine the rub: garlic-salt paste + pimentón dulce + pimentón picante + EVOO + pepper into a wet, red-orange paste.
5. **Rub the FLESH side only** with the paste. Get it into every fold and crevice. The skin stays bare — no oil, no rub, no seasoning yet (it'll be finished with Maldon at service).
6. Roll the belly tightly, starting from a long edge. Keep the roll dense — loose rolls fall apart on slicing.
7. Position seam-down on the rack-in-pan.
8. **Tie with twine every 5 cm** along the length. Each tie should be firm but not so tight it cuts into the roll. For a 30 cm belly, that's 6 ties.
9. Refrigerate 30 min to let the rub set before cooking. (Optional: can go straight to oven if time-pressed.)

### WHY THIS WORKS

The FLESH-SIDE-ONLY rub is a Spanish technique that differentiates this from Italian porchetta. The skin needs to stay dry for crackling. The flesh absorbs the rub's fat-soluble flavors (capsanthin from pimentón, terpenes from garlic, chlorophyll pigments from EVOO) during the 2.5-hour cook. Rolling puts the rub-coated flesh in the interior, where the heat gradient carries the rub's flavors outward through convection of the rendering fat. Reference: Pantry & Staples §6 (Blooming Pimentón); Knife Skills §6 (Scoring).

### 3 Low Roast (T-0 to T+2:30)

1. Preheat oven to **160 °C convection** (170 °C conventional). Middle rack.
2. Insert probe thermometer into the thickest part of the roll. Avoid twine. Avoid the fat layers — you want meat-temperature reading.
3. Place roll seam-down on rack-in-pan.
4. **Walk away.** 2.5 hours. No basting, no peeking, no temperature checks (the probe will tell you).
5. At T+2 h: probe should read ~70 °C internal. At T+2:30: ~80 °C. This is the collagen conversion window — tough connective tissues dissolve into gelatin.
6. At 80 °C internal, remove from oven (keep oven on!). Tent loosely with foil. Rest 5 min while the oven ramps to blast temp.

#### WHY THIS WORKS

At 70–80 °C internal, pork belly's collagen (in the muscle fibers and the fat-layer connective tissue) converts to gelatin. This is the same reaction that makes braised short ribs tender — slow heat over extended time. The 2.5-hour window at 160 °C is enough time for the conversion to happen fully. If you rush (say, 200 °C for 1.5 h), the outside overcooks before the collagen converts. If you drag (130 °C for 4 h), you pasteurize without converting. 160 °C / 2.5 h is the sweet spot calibrated to a 2.5–3 kg belly. Reference: Food Science Core §1 (Protein Denaturation Cascade); Cross-Technique Workflows §2 (Two-Stage Oven).

## 4 The Blast (T+2:40 to T+3:00)

1. Crank oven to **230 °C convection** (240 °C conventional). Fan on.
2. (**Skin-on classic**): Return the unveiled roll to the oven, seam-down. 15–20 min. Watch the skin — it visibly blisters, then puffs, then shatters into the glass crackling texture. When you see audibly bubbling skin turning mahogany with deep cracks, it's done. Do NOT go past 20 min — past that, the crackling burns past bitter into inedible.
3. (● **Skinless fusion variant**): Instead of leaving the skin bare, brush the top and sides of the roll with honey-soy lacquer. Return to oven 230 °C for 8–10 min. Remove. Brush again with lacquer. Return for another 5–8 min until the glaze is mahogany, sticky, and set.
4. Remove from oven. Verify internal temp is at least 80 °C (should be higher at this point — 85–88 °C after blast — which is fine for pork belly; the high-fat cut stays moist well above steak temps).
5. Tent loosely with foil. **Rest 20 minutes.** Non-negotiable.

### WHY THIS WORKS

The blast does one job: it finishes the exterior. At 230 °C, the skin's remaining moisture flash-escapes, creating crackling. For skinless, 230 °C caramelizes the honey sugars via Maillard AND pyrolysis, creating a sticky mahogany lacquer. Either way, the interior is already done at 80 °C — the blast doesn't cook it further, it just transforms the surface. Reference: Food Science Core §4 (Maillard); Kamado Mastery §5 (can also do the blast stage on kamado at 250–280 °C for smoke + crackling).

## 5 Rest, Slice, Serve

1. Rest 20 min. The fat redistributes. The gelatin sets enough to hold slices together.
2. Use a sharp slicing knife (10+ inch). Cut into **2 cm rings**. Each ring should show: skin/lacquer top → rendered fat layer → meat → another fat layer → meat → rolled-spiral cross-section.
3. Skin-on rings: the crackling should audibly shatter under the knife. If it doesn't, the skin wasn't dry enough at the blast or the blast wasn't hot enough — lesson for next time.
4. Transfer to warm platter or individual warm plates.
5. Finish with Maldon flaky salt and fresh-cracked black pepper.
6. (Optional) Strain the pan drippings. Serve alongside as a dip sauce, or deglaze the pan with 100 ml sherry vinegar + reduce to syrup for a proper *salsa de porchetta*.
7. Serve immediately — crackling loses audibility within 30 minutes of slicing.

QUICK REFERENCE

# Timing Cheat Sheet

STEP	TIME	CUE
Dry skin in fridge (overnight)	12–24 h ahead	Skin feels leathery to touch
Score + rub + roll + tie	20 min	Flesh rubbed, skin bare, 6 twine ties
Refrigerate rubbed roll	30 min	Rub sets, no longer wet to touch
Preheat + place	10 min	Oven stable at 160 °C convection
Low roast T-0 to T+2 h	2 h	Probe reads 70 °C internal
Low roast T+2 to T+2:30	30 min	Probe reads 80 °C internal — collagen converted
Oven ramp to 230 °C	5 min	Roll rests tented while oven ramps
Blast (skin-on)	15–20 min	Skin blisters, shatters, mahogany cracks
Blast (● skinless, 2-coat)	13–18 min total	Sticky mahogany lacquer, not burnt
Rest tented	20 min	Fat redistributes, gelatin sets
Slice + Maldon + serve	5 min	Crackling shatters audibly under knife

## Emergency Protocols

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### NO TWINE (THE SMOKIES LESSON)

STOP. Do not start. This happened on April 8 2026 at the Smokies rental — bought 12 lb belly, no twine in the house, porchetta abandoned for the night. Twine is non-negotiable. Alternative plans if this happens: pork belly burnt ends (cube, braise 160 °C / 3 h, toss in BBQ sauce, blast), or butterflied belly flat roast (no roll, still works for flavor, loses presentation). Always verify twine BEFORE buying belly.

### SKIN DIDN'T CRACKLE — LEATHERY, NOT GLASS

Three possible causes: (1) skin wasn't dry enough — next time, 24 h uncovered fridge rest, not 12. (2) Blast wasn't hot enough — convection at 230 °C minimum, 250 °C better. (3) Rub got on skin accidentally — wet skin doesn't crackle. For tonight's rescue: slice the roll, remove the skin, cook the skin separately in a 260 °C oven 5–8 min on a rack — it'll crackle once isolated and uncovered.

### SKIN BURNED BEFORE CRACKLING

Oven was too hot for too long, or the skin was positioned too close to the top heating element. Remove immediately. Scrape off the burnt carbon layer (rescue the rendered fat beneath — still edible). Next time: 230 °C convection for 15 min max, or move rack to middle position.

### ROLL IS FALLING APART ON SLICING

Either ties were too loose, or you didn't rest long enough. Rescue: slice at the ties instead of between them — each "ring" becomes a short log. Or serve "pulled" Cuban-style — shred the pork with two forks, dress with pan drippings + extra pimentón, serve on bread as a sandwich. Lost presentation, gained comfort.

### INTERNAL REACHED 80 °C FASTER THAN 2.5 H

Your roll is thinner than average, or oven runs hot. Not a problem — pull at 80 °C, rest 5 min tented while oven ramps, then blast. The 2.5 h is a guideline; the thermometer is the truth.

#### INTERNAL STUCK AT 60-65 °C AFTER 2.5 H (THE STALL)

The evaporation stall — moisture evaporating from the surface is cooling the roll as fast as the oven heats it. Normal at this mass. Options: (1) wait it out — 30 more min at 160 °C will push past the stall, (2) wrap tightly in foil ("Texas crutch") — stops evaporation, internal rises fast, (3) increase oven to 180 °C for 20 min. All work.

#### HONEY-SOY LACQUER BURNED (● VARIANT)

Sugar at 230 °C is on a knife edge. If you brush too early or leave too long, it burns. Scrape the burnt layer off with a knife, re-brush a thin coat of lacquer, return for 3 min at 210 °C (lower). Next time: first brush should go on at the 8-min mark, not earlier; second brush is shorter (5-8 min, not 8-10).

#### HOSTING KIDS — DO I NEED A KID VERSION?

NO. Per Pablo's rule (MEMORY.md, March 26 lesson): Spanish kids eat everything. Pimentón porchetta with crackling is crowd-pleaser for all ages. Do NOT suggest hotdogs or wagyu burgers as a "kid alternative" — this was specifically called out as an overcorrection. Kids will love it. Serve the same plate to all.

## DEEP DIVES

# Technique Notes

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### FLESH-Side Rub + Dry Skin

SPANISH ROASTING • UNIVERSAL

Two rules that compound. (1) Rub the flesh side only — the skin has to stay bare and dry. Any rub on the skin creates a wet surface that won't crackle. (2) Dry the skin overnight in the fridge uncovered. These two rules are why Spanish porchetta crackles better than Italian porchetta recipes that tell you to rub the skin. The Spanish method separates the flavor layer (flesh) from the texture layer (skin) — each is optimized independently. Reference: Protein Encyclopedia §11 (Pork Belly); Pantry & Staples §6 (Pimentón application).

## ● The 70-80 °C Internal Window

PROTEIN SCIENCE · UNIVERSAL

Pork belly reaches 70 °C internal at around the 2 h mark of a 160 °C cook for a 2.5–3 kg roll. This is the collagen conversion threshold — connective tissue begins its shift to gelatin. Continuing to 80 °C over the next 30 min fully converts the collagen, making the meat fall-apart tender without drying the lean portions. Going past 85 °C doesn't hurt — belly's high fat content makes it forgiving above steak temps. But stopping below 75 °C leaves the connective tissue tough. The probe thermometer is the only reliable signal; time alone lies. Reference: Food Science Core §1 (Protein Denaturation); Sous Vide Mastery §4 (Time vs Temperature).

## ● The Two-Stage Roast

HEAT STAGING · UNIVERSAL TECHNIQUE

Low-then-high is the classical roast rhythm. The low phase (160 °C / 2.5 h) does the internal cooking — converts collagen, renders fat gently, sets the meat. The high phase (230 °C / 15–20 min) does the exterior transformation — crackles skin, Maillards a crust, lacquers a glaze. One temperature cannot do both: too low, no crust; too high, overcooked interior. The two-stage rhythm applies beyond porchetta — it's the correct method for prime rib (reverse sear), rack of lamb, whole chicken at scale, suckling pig, lechón. Learn it once, apply it everywhere. Reference: Cross-Technique Workflows §2; Food Science Core §4 (Maillard Threshold).

## ● No Limits: Honey-Soy Lacquer (Skinless Variant)

FUSION · LACQUER FINISH · SUBSTITUTES CRACKLING BLAST

When the butcher can only supply skinless belly (the Smokies scenario — Jesse's Butcher Shop had no skin-on), the crackling blast can't happen. Instead: brush the top and sides with a honey-soy lacquer (60 ml soy + 60 ml honey + 2 tbsp rice vinegar + 1 tbsp grated ginger + 1 grated garlic clove + pinch of pimentón picante). Two coats during the blast stage — first at 8 min, second at 13 min. The lacquer builds a sticky, mahogany, slightly tangy shell that replaces crackling with an entirely different kind of crust. The pimentón in the lacquer bridges it back to the rub inside the roll, keeping the Spanish identity while introducing a fusion twist. This is the recipe Pablo developed at the Smokies Friday dinner. Reference: Sauces & Condiments §9 (Gastriques + Glazes).

## ● No Limits: Overnight Dry Rest + Morning Refresh

MISE EN PLACE · CRACKLING MASTERY · REFINES DRY THE SKIN

The standard 12–24 h fridge dry gets you to leathery skin. For competition-level crackling: go 48 h. Pat dry at 24 h and 36 h to remove any moisture that migrated to the surface overnight. The skin will be visibly shrunk, papery, almost translucent in spots by 48 h. When that skin hits 230 °C, the crackling is audibly explosive and shatters into sharper, more glass-like shards than the 24 h version. Worth the extra day for an event dinner. Reference: Food Science Core §5 (Water Activity).

## ● No Limits: Pan-Drippings Salsa de Porchetta

SAUCE · BUILT-IN BYPRODUCT · EXTENDS SERVE

The rendered pan drippings from a pimentón porchetta roast are red-orange, intensely flavored, and wasted in most kitchens. Don't waste them. Strain through a fine mesh into a saucepan (discard solids and most of the fat — save 2 tbsp). Add 100 ml sherry vinegar (Vinagre de Jerez Reserva, Pablo has ✓) and 1 tbsp honey. Reduce on medium-high to a syrupy nappé consistency (5–7 min). Mount with 20 g cold butter off heat. Serve alongside the sliced porchetta as a dipping sauce. It's essentially a pimentón-sherry-gastrique made from the roast's own drippings — a sauce that only exists because the roast existed. The closest thing in a Spanish kitchen to the pan sauce from UMAMI-4 #1, but built on porchetta drippings instead of sear fond. Reference: Sauces & Condiments §6 (Pan Sauce Mastery); UMAMI-4 #1 (Pan Sauce from Fond).

### PAIRING

## What to Drink

### 🍷 Wine — Everyday

Rioja Crianza or Reserva (Tempranillo-based)

*Tempranillo's soft tannins and cherry-leather profile wrap around pork fat. Pimentón's smoky-sweet character echoes the oak. Crianza at \$15–20 is accessible; Reserva at \$25–40 is the step up.*

### **Wine — No Limits**

Ribera del Duero Reserva or Priorat (Garnacha-dominant)

*Ribera brings denser fruit and deeper structure — matches the fat richness with more weight. Priorat brings licorella-soil minerality + Garnacha's warmth — a bolder, more modernist pairing. Both handle the pimentón heat better than lighter Rioja.*

### **Alternative**

Sherry — Amontillado or Palo Cortado (not Fino)

*Aged sherries have oxidative nuttiness that parallels pork fat's richness. Amontillado for the skin-on classical version; Palo Cortado (more structure) for the honey-soy skinless variant. Small pours between bites is traditional Andalusian service.*

### **Casual**

Spanish Estrella Galicia or Mahou 5 Estrellas lager

*Cold lager cuts porchetta's fat better than any other non-wine pairing. For a Sunday family lunch or a kamado-side event, this is often the more honest choice than a formal wine pairing.*

## CONTEXT

# Menu Ideas

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### **As Sunday Lunch (family, 8)**

Serve the porchetta as centerpiece with papas bravas, escarole salad with sherry vinaigrette, and pan con tomate. Bread for sopping up drippings. Nothing too ambitious around it — the porchetta is the event.

### **As Dinner Party Main (8–12)**

Starter: swordfish ceviche (UMAMI-2 #1) — acidic and cold to reset the palate. Side: charred leeks with romesco + roasted potatoes. Sauce on side: the pan-drippings salsa (● card).  
Dessert: fresh citrus with honey and Manchego viejo. Wine: Ribera del Duero Reserva.

### As Leftovers (the Pablo move)

Porchetta sandwiches day 2. Slice the leftover roll thin. Layer on grilled crusty bread with pickled red onion, arugula, a smear of alioli. The cold pork + warm bread + pickles + alioli is arguably better than the original dinner plate — texture contrast you can't get fresh.

### Pablo-Specific Integration

Smokies April 8–12 lesson: this recipe was ABANDONED on the trip because twine wasn't available. Mise planning matters as much as the cook itself. The honey-soy lacquer variant (● card) was born from the skinless-belly constraint at Jesse's Butcher Shop — a Pablo original. Both versions belong in rotation.

#### YOUR NOTES

## Cook Log

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### Session Notes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ · Serves: \_\_\_\_ · Rating: \_\_ / 5

*Use this space to record what you changed, what worked, and what you'd do differently next time. Your future self will thank you.*