



Spicy pork and chilli-pepper goulash

The idea of cooking a tough piece of pork in a lovely pepper stew to make it extremely tender and melt-in-your-mouth is something I find quite exciting. This dish in particular is one of my favourites and, unless you've got a strange aversion to chillies and peppers, I know you'll end up making it again and again. It's a complete classic. It's also one of those dishes which tastes great when reheated the day after it's been made. You've got a whole range of chilli and pepper flavours going on; from smoked paprika to fresh chillies, and fresh peppers to sweet grilled and peeled ones. Delish!

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas 4. Get yourself a deep, ovenproof stew pot with a lid and heat it on the hob. Score the fat on the pork in a criss-cross pattern all the way through to the meat, then season generously with salt and pepper. Pour a good glug of olive oil into the pot and add the pork, fat side down. Cook for about 15 minutes on a medium heat, to render out the fat, then remove the pork from the pot and put it to one side.

Add the onions, chilli, paprika, caraway seeds, marjoram or oregano and a good pinch of salt and pepper to the pot. Turn the heat down and gently cook the onions for 10 minutes, then add the sliced peppers, the grilled peppers and the tomatoes. Put the pork back into the pot, give everything a little shake, then pour in enough water to just cover the meat. Add the vinegar – this will give it a nice little twang. Bring to the boil, put the lid on top, then place in the preheated oven for 3 hours.

You'll know when the meat is cooked as it will be tender and sticky, and it will break up easily when pulled apart with two forks. If it's not quite there yet, put the pot back into the oven and just be patient for a little longer!

When the meat is nearly ready, cook the rice in salted, boiling water for 10 minutes until it's just undercooked, then drain in a colander, reserving some of the cooking water and pouring it back into the pan. Place the colander over the pan on a low heat and put a lid on. Leave to steam dry and cook through for 10 minutes – this will make the rice lovely and fluffy.

Stir the soured cream, lemon zest and most of the parsley together in a little bowl. When the meat is done, take the pot out of the oven and taste the goulash. You're after a balance of sweetness from the peppers and spiciness from the caraway seeds. Tear or break the meat up and serve the goulash in a big dish or bowl, with a bowl of your steaming rice and your flavoured soured cream. Sprinkle with the rest of the chopped parsley and tuck in!

serves 4 to 6

2kg pork shoulder off the bone, in one piece, skin off, fat left on
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
olive oil
2 red onions, peeled and finely sliced
2 fresh red chillies, deseeded and finely chopped
2 generously heaped tablespoons mild smoked paprika, plus a little extra for serving
2 teaspoons ground caraway seeds
a small bunch of fresh marjoram or oregano, leaves picked
5 peppers (use a mixture of colours)
1 x 280g jar of grilled peppers, drained, peeled and chopped
1 x 400g tin of good-quality plum tomatoes
4 tablespoons red wine vinegar
400g basmati or long-grain rice, washed
1 x 142ml pot of soured cream
zest of 1 lemon
a small bunch of fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped