

Lomo de cerdo Ibérico asado en sal con Jamón

Ibérico de Bellota pork loin baked in sea salt with sliced Spanish cured ham



Santiago Martín produces Ibérico ham in one of the most beautiful towns in Spain -- La Alberca, in the province of Salamanca. He was the first person to export Ibérico ham to Japan and the United States. He's also a great host. One day I was visiting his factory and I saw a loin of ham, marbled with its delicious acorn-infused fat, and a big pile of the salt they used for curing. I suggested cooking the loin for his family, baking it over a charcoal fire on a bed of salt. We put the loin on the

salt and covered it with more salt, to protect it from the hot coals. Around 40 minutes later, the loin was perfectly cooked. I sliced it and tucked pieces of cured ham between the cuts of loin. It was delicious – and tasted even better with all the great Spanish wine we drank.

Serves 4 to 6

3 pounds sea salt

4 sprigs fresh rosemary

4 sprigs fresh flat leaf parsley

6 sprigs fresh thyme

1 2-pound Ibérico de Bellota pork loin

4 ounces thinly sliced jamón serrano (Spanish cured ham)

Spanish extra-virgin olive oil

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

In a large bowl, mix the salt with 3 tablespoons of water until the salt is slightly damp. (The salt needs to be moist so it will pack well). Spread half of the salt down the center of a baking sheet and top with 2 rosemary sprigs, 2 parsley sprigs and 3 thyme sprigs. Lay the pork loin on top of the herbs. Place the remaining herbs on top of the pork, then cover the pork completely with the remaining salt, making sure to pack it well around the pork. Bake for 25 minutes.

Let the pork rest for 5 minutes. Using a fork and spoon, crack open the side of the salt crust. The upper half of the crust, now a hard shell, should lift off easily. Transfer the pork to a cutting board and let rest for another 5 minutes. Slice the loin into ½ inch-thick slices and arrange on four plates. Lay slices of the jamón in between the pork slices. Drizzle with some olive oil and serve warm.

Recipe from *Made in Spain: Spanish Dishes for the American Kitchen* (Clarkson Potter)
Photograph by Thomas Schauer