



Pork Belly- Percy Watley, executive chef at The Ahwahnee in Yosemite Valley, CA

Ingredients:

1/ 2 cup plus 3 tablespoons sugar
1/ 2 cup kosher salt
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
4 star anise, broken into small pieces
12 black peppercorns, cracked
6 whole cloves
1/ 2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
1 pound raw pork belly
1/ 2 cup soy sauce
Peel of 1 orange, colored part only
2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger
4 cups chicken stock

Directions:

To make the pork belly: Start the pork belly a day before making the soup. In a small bowl, combine the 1/ 2 cup sugar, salt, cinnamon, star anise, peppercorns, cloves and nutmeg. Toss with your fingers or a fork to make a uniform mixture. Set the pork belly in a glass dish and cover it with the mixture, turning it once so that it is nearly buried. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

On soup day, preheat the oven to 300 F. Brush the spice mixture off the pork. Set an oven-proof pot that will hold the belly flat over medium heat. Add the soy sauce, 3 tablespoons of sugar, stock, orange peel and ginger and bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves.

Add the pork belly, turn to coat it thoroughly and set in the middle rack of the oven. Cover and cook for 4 hours. Remove the pan from the oven. Transfer the pork belly to a plate or dish; use within an hour or so or cool, refrigerate and return to room temperature before serving. Discard the cooking liquid or refrigerate it to use as a sauce with stir fry; skim the fat before using it.

To serve, cut into 12 to 16 1/ 4-inch thick crosswise slices. Store leftover pork belly wrapped in the refrigerator and use within a few days.