

Ultimate Southern-Style Smothered Pork Knuckles: Fall-Off-The-Bone Comfort

The Ultimate Southern-Style Smothered Pork Knuckles



OVEN
350°F

TIME
10 min

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INGREDIENTS

For the Pork:

Pork Knuckles (Shanks): 2-3 large pieces (roughly 2-3 lbs each). Look for meaty ones with a good amount of skin and fat.

Oil: 1 Tbsp vegetable or olive oil for searing.

Seasoning: Salt, black pepper, and your favorite all-purpose seasoning (Cajun seasoning or a poultry rub works great here).

For the Smothering Gravy:

Onion: 1 large onion, thinly sliced.

Flour: 4-6 Tbsp all-purpose flour for the roux.

Stock: 4 cups chicken or pork stock (unsalted or low-sodium is best so you can control the salt).

Garlic: 2 cloves, minced.

Fat: 1 Tbsp butter or bacon grease (this adds a smoky depth to the gravy).

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Prep and Brown the Pork:** Preheat your oven to 350°F. Rinse the knuckles (some prefer a vinegar rinse) and pat them completely dry. This is crucial-dry meat sears, wet meat steams. Season heavily on all sides. Heat your oil in a heavy skillet or Dutch oven and sear the pork until a deep golden crust forms. This "Maillard reaction" is where the flavor begins. Set the meat aside.
- 2. SautØ the Aromatics:** In the same pan, let the onions soak up those pork drippings. SautØ until soft and caramelized. Add the garlic at the very end so it doesn't burn. Place these onions over your pork in your roasting pan.
- 3. Build the Roux:** This is the secret to great gravy. Melt your butter or bacon grease in the skillet. Whisk in the flour. Keep whisking! You want a "peanut butter" colored roux. If you like a darker, nuttier gravy, keep going until it looks like milk chocolate.
- 4. Finish the Gravy:** Slowly pour in your stock while whisking constantly. This prevents lumps. Bring it to a simmer until it thickens slightly. Pour this liquid gold over the pork knuckles.
- 5. The Slow Smother:** Cover the pan tightly with foil or a heavy lid. This traps the steam, allowing the meat to become tender. Bake for 2 to 3 hours. You'll know it's done when the meat pulls away from the bone with just a fork.

SWAPS & NOTES

The Meat: If you can't find pork knuckles, you can substitute with pork neck bones or even thick-cut pork chops, though the cooking time for chops will be significantly shorter.

The Liquid: For a deeper flavor, replace 1 cup of the stock with a dark lager or a splash of dry white wine.

Vegetables: Feel free to toss in sliced bell peppers or celery with the onions if you want a "Holy Trinity" flavor profile similar to my Tomato Skillet with Okra and Sausage.

Prep and Brown the Pork Preheat your oven to 350°F .

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Rush the Roux: The color of your roux determines the color and depth of your gravy.

Keep it Covered: If the liquid evaporates too fast, the meat will toughen.

Ensure a tight seal on your roasting pan.

Rest the Meat: Let the knuckles sit in the gravy for 10 minutes after pulling them out of the oven to reabsorb the juices.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/ultimate-southern-style-smothered-pork-knuckles-fall-off-the-bone-comfort/>