Sticky Sweet-Savory Honey Garlic Pork with a Rich Caramelized Finish

1 1/2 pounds pork tenderloin or boneless pork chops, sliced into bite-sized pieces

TIME	PRINT	SAVE	SOURCE
10 min	Recipe Card	PDF	ChefManiac

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 pounds pork tenderloin or boneless pork chops, sliced into bite-sized pieces
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, optional
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch mixed with 1 tablespoon water, for thickening if needed
- Sliced green onions and sesame seeds, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

1. Prep the pork. Pat the pork dry, then toss it with 1 tablespoon cornstarch, salt, and black pepper. This helps create a light crust and gives the sauce something to cling to.
2. Sear the meat. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the pork in a single layer and cook for 2 to 3 minutes per side until browned. Work in batches if needed so the meat sears instead of steams.
3. Build the sauce. Lower the heat slightly and add the garlic to the skillet. Stir for about 30 seconds until fragrant. Add the honey, soy sauce, brown sugar, rice vinegar, sesame oil, and red pepper flakes.
4. Simmer and caramelize. Stir well and let the sauce bubble gently for 4 to 6 minutes. As it reduces, it will become glossy and start coating the pork.
5. Thicken if needed. If you want an even stickier finish, stir in the cornstarch slurry and cook for another minute until the sauce thickens.
6. Finish and serve. Remove from the heat and garnish with green onions and sesame seeds. Serve hot over rice, noodles, or alongside steamed vegetables.

SWAPS & NOTES

Pork tenderloin is ideal because it stays tender and cooks quickly, but boneless pork chops also work well.

If you want a deeper savory note, add a small splash of oyster sauce.

For a little brightness, a squeeze of lime at the end can help balance the sweetness.

You can reduce the honey slightly if you prefer a less sweet glaze, or add more red pepper flakes if you want some heat.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

The biggest tip is not to overcrowd the pan.

Browning the pork properly adds a lot of the final flavor, and you will not get that rich caramelized finish if the meat releases too much moisture at once.

Also, watch the sauce closely in the last few minutes.

Honey can go from beautifully sticky to overly dark pretty fast, so keep the heat moderate and stir often once it starts reducing.

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