

Pork Chops...Wunderbar!

As a child I used to visit friends in my neighborhood and as I would walk into their house I was engulfed in the amazing fragrances of juicy roasted pork dishes, an absolutely sinful little noodle from Bavaria called Spaetzle and the most incredible “made-from-scratch” apple strudel you could ever imagine. It probably doesn’t surprise anyone that the favorite for a 10-year-old was that homemade strudel still hot from the oven.

The real shocker is that the kitchen I was visiting was not in Germany or Austria; it was on Pinecrest Drive in Morrow, Ohio. Thus began part of my culinary education. I learned rudimentary German in that kitchen along with a lesson in where many of the food traditions of southwestern Ohio actually came from. I’m talking about the rich international heritage of many of the fine people who make up this country. Those brave individuals provide us with a treasure in the form of wonderful foods that were brought along with them as they settled in the United States.

German immigrants helped shape much of what Cincinnati is and if you stand on top of one of our many hills overlooking the Ohio River you get a pretty good idea as to why many settled in this area. The “Over the Rhine” designation for part of our fair city is drawn from the incredible similarity that this area has to parts of Germany. Many people who have had the opportunity to travel to Germany will know exactly what I’m speaking of. For our arriving friends from Germany this area held a strong visual similarity to the home they left behind.

As an adult I still love a great piece of strudel but I’m really drawn to the tremendous pork dishes that Germany is noted for. This pork chop recipe is a real favorite and it is great with an accompaniment of mashed potatoes and a vegetable stir-fry. I’ve heard some comments that sweet potato is a perfect match but haven’t tried it yet.

Bavarian Pork Chops with Lemon & Sour Cream

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(Serves 4)



4 medium-thick pork chops (about 1-inch thick)

Flour for dredging

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 teaspoon bacon grease

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sour cream

Juice of one lemon

Grated rind of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon

1 teaspoon sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon thyme

2 scallions, minced

Salt & pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

Lightly coat the chops on both sides with flour, then brown them slowly on medium heat in a skillet with the vegetable oil and bacon grease combination. Butter a medium sized ovenproof casserole dish with a lid and place the pork chops into it. Combine the remaining ingredients and pour over the chops. Place the covered casserole into a pre-heated 350°F oven and bake for 1 hour.

I warn you to be extra careful when you remove the casserole from the oven and take off the lid. This dish will generate an unusually large amount of steam which helps make it

fork tender when you serve it. It also can easily burn you if you yank off the lid immediately after taking it out of the oven. Please be cautious!

Last year about this time I did an article on the fun of foraging for morel mushrooms and I did want to give you a heads up that some fellow schroom fanatics have already starting finding morels in their favorite locations here in Ohio. As we dry out just a bit from all of this recent rain we should begin to see a lot of action out in the woods. (If you've got a great morel location that you won't be able to cover this year, be sure to let your old buddy, Jerry, know about it and I'll cook up some for both of us.)

If you're going to cook up a nice batch of Bavarian pork chops you'll surely want to accompany it with a delicious German Riesling and I've got a suggestion or two that should make your taste buds happy. The Kurt Darting estate has been at it again and their results have left me a bit weak in the knees the last time I tasted them. The **2004 Darting Durkheimer Nonnengarten Riesling Kabinett** is offered in a 1 liter bottle and it is pure joy to drink. It has a ripe, late harvest nose of concentrated fruit; the classic Pfalz style grapefruit, lemon-blossom and ginger flavor along with great charm and class. I've poured this wine for people who have told me they just don't enjoy wine. Guess what? They enjoy this wine!

The **Darting 2002 Ungsteiner Herrenberg Riesling Spaetlese** is a wine of serious size, length and finish. This means that your first taste, which will be a combination of ultra ripe green apples, passion fruit and subtle ginger, will provide you with one of those "Wow!" reactions and the flavors just keep coming. This wine makes me think of the show that nature is putting on for us right now with all of the dogwood blossoms, popping redbuds and magnificent cherry and crabapple trees. It is bounty in a glass and Kurt Darting has every right to be very proud of this one and everything else I've tasted that he has placed his talented hands on.

I look forward to seeing you at the Taste of Home Cooking School Made Easy at the Roberts Convention Centre on Tuesday, April 25th. I'd love to meet you and maybe swap some favorite recipes.

If you have any questions or comments be sure to call at 888-288-0668 or visit us online at www.winedog.com. We love to hear from you. Cheers.