

Matching grapefruit, pork

My first major grapefruit encounter was when I was still in grade school. Mom used a curved knife to cut around the circumference of my grapefruit half, then loosened the segments so I could easily spoon them up.

One day a classmate invited me home after school. The only thing I now recall about the visit was trying to eat half a grapefruit with a type of spoon I'd never before used. The spoon's tip came to a point, and there were also ridges along the edge.

I surreptitiously watched my friend to see how I was supposed to eat that darn grapefruit, which I finally conquered with the weird spoon. But instead of digging in to savor every last bit of the juicy flesh, we squeezed the rind and finished with spoonfuls of juice.

It was a relief (almost an epiphany) when I finally learned how to get beautiful rind- and membrane-free segments, or "supremes," from larger citrus like oranges and grapefruit.

To "supreme" a grapefruit, cut off the ends with a knife to reach the flesh, then place a now-flat end on the cutting board. Follow the grapefruit's contour and trim off vertical sections of the peel, pith and membrane to reveal the flesh. Cut alongside the membranes to free the segments, squeeze any remaining juice from the membranes, then enjoy your picture-perfect supremes in salads, desserts and this Pork & Grapefruit recipe.

I don't know why grapefruit isn't used more in savory dishes. The sweet-tart character of good grapefruit complements pork, chicken and seafood, and integrates well with herbs and spices.

Pork & Grapefruit combines browned bits of fond from the seared



Craig Lee / Special to The Chronicle; styling by Katie Popoff

Pork & Pink Grapefruit

Serves 4

Pork is a natural with fruit, especially stone fruit. Until summer rolls around, incorporate citrus, which also provides some acidity. Tenderloin is easy to cook, but bone-in loin chops are also good. (After searing, remove the bones and add to the sauce, with the onion, for extra flavor.) Spinach cooks quickly; you can also use Swiss chard or escarole, which will take a bit longer to cook. Serve with mashed or roasted potatoes.

- 1 large pink or ruby red grapefruit
- 2 teaspoons canola oil
- 1½ to 1¾ pounds pork tenderloin (1 or 2 tenderloins)
- Kosher salt and black pepper to taste
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika (optional)
- 1 medium yellow onion finely diced (about 1½ to 2 cups)
- 4 teaspoons minced garlic (about 4 cloves)
- 1 teaspoon peeled grated ginger
- ½ cup Marsala
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 3 teaspoons sweet Asian chile sauce, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon Asian fish sauce (optional)
- 1½ teaspoons cornstarch mixed with 3 teaspoons cool water
- 8 ounces spinach
- Lemon juice, as needed

Instructions: Use a sharp knife to peel and segment the grapefruit; collect all the juice including that squeezed from the membranes. Cut grapefruit into bite-size pieces (reserving 4 whole ones to garnish if desired). Set aside.

Preheat the oven to 400°. Pour oil into a medium-size

non-reactive skillet, and heat to medium-high. Remove silver skin from pork. If the tail end is much thinner than the rest of the tenderloin, turn it under and tie with butcher's string. Season to taste with salt, pepper and smoked paprika, if using.

When the oil in the skillet shimmers, carefully add the tenderloins. Sear on all sides but wait to turn meat until it easily moves without sticking when you shake the pan (about 2 minutes per side).

Move tenderloins to another skillet or sheet pan and place in the oven. Roast until desired doneness; for medium about 140°-142° internal temperature when taken with a meat thermometer. Place pork on cutting board to rest, tenting loosely with foil.

Meanwhile, place the first skillet that contains the dark bits of browned fond onto a burner over medium heat. Add onion. Cook, stirring frequently; the fond should begin to incorporate. When onions are soft, translucent and slightly browned, add the garlic and ginger; cook until aromatic, about 1 minute.

Add the Marsala; bring to a boil and cook, stirring, until the pan is almost dry. Add the chicken broth; lower heat to simmer and cook until liquid reduces by about half.

Stir in chile sauce and fish sauce, if using. Add ¼ cup of

reserved grapefruit juice (or to taste) and salt to taste.

Slowly add two-thirds of the cornstarch mixture to the pan while stirring; reserve remaining cornstarch mixture. Cook briefly until sauce thickens slightly.

Add spinach — a few handfuls at a time — until wilted, along with the pork (if it needs re-warming). If desired, stir in reserved cornstarch mixture for additional thickening. Fold in grapefruit pieces. Taste; add salt, pepper and lemon juice as needed.

Cut pork across the grain into ¾- to ½-inch slices. Portion spinach and grapefruit onto plates, garnish with whole segment if desired, top with sliced pork and spoon the sauce over.

Per serving: 431 calories, 53 g protein, 20 g carbohydrate, 11 g fat (3 g saturated), 134 mg cholesterol, 218 mg sodium, 3 g fiber.

Wine pairing: For everyday, try the 2008 Saint M Pfalz Riesling (\$12; Importer: Chateau Ste. Michelle); the 2008 Bonny Doon Vineyard's Beeswax Vineyard Arroyo Seco Le Cigare Blanc (\$22) for company; and to splurge, the 2007 Tablas Creek Vineyard Paso Robles Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc (\$40).

XNIP code: PT9T