

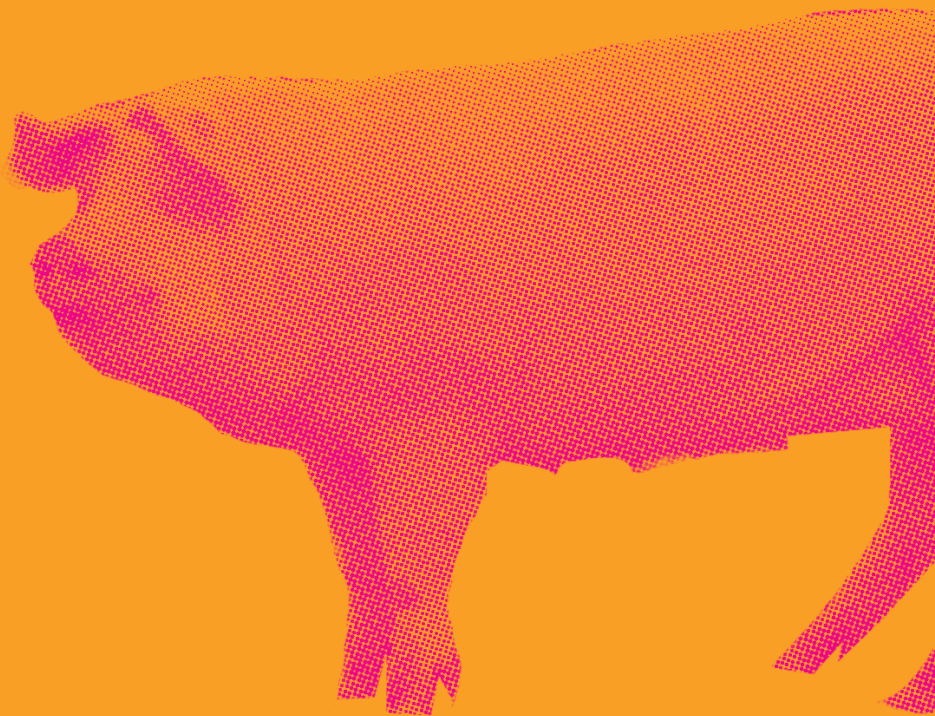
Chef Cyrus Todiwala OBE DL

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The Portuguese word *assado* simply stands for 'roast'. The Goan version naturally is spiced and is quite celebratory, since most Goan homes of the old would not have ovens. Makeshift ovens were created and local ingenuity made some classic preparations. I have seen meat being slow roasted in earthenware pots with coconut husk being used as fuel to provide a gentle heat, resulting in a superb smoky flavour that is simply amazing.

Whilst *assado* of pork generally refers to the loin, one can use rolled shoulder or collar, as well. There are many recipes or secrets used by Goan cooks that are similar to the original Portuguese version introduced during their occupation of Goa. The Goan love for pork is also linked to the Portuguese decision to settle there in a sinister kind of way.

During filming in Portugal for Mr. Todiwala's *Galleons of Spice*, I cooked the whole suckling pig, roasted in a 300-year-old oven on a Port Wine Estate in Vesuvio, and always have very fond memories of this dish.



Roast Loin of Pork Goan (Assado de Porco)

INGREDIENTS:

2 kg rolled pork loin or shoulder or collar
4 inch piece cassia bark (use cinnamon if not available)
1 heaped tsp black peppercorns
4-5 large dry chillies
5-6 cloves
1 heaped tsp ground turmeric
1 large approx. 4 inch piece of ginger
6-8 garlic cloves
2 longish green chillies
3-4 small red onions, coarsely cut
100 ml sunflower or rapeseed oil
100 ml tamarind pulp
200 ml palm vinegar (or use cider vinegar)
1 tbsp brown sugar
1 tbsp salt
8 medium to small potatoes, peeled, cut into chunks
3-400 g pumpkin, deseeded & cut into chunky pieces
3-4 small red onions (additional and optional)
3 tbsp chopped fresh coriander

METHOD:

Break the cassia bark (or cinnamon) into small pieces. Add to a mortar along with the peppercorns & cloves and crush coarsely. Gently toast this mixture in a frying pan over low heat and add red chillies that have been torn into pieces. Toast well, but do not burn. Cool. In a blender, add ginger, garlic, onion, green chilli, turmeric powder and the now cooled spice blend, tamarind pulp, vinegar, half of the oil, sugar and salt. Puree to a relatively fine paste. Taste and adjust as needed.

Marinate the pork well by rubbing with the masala and set it aside in the refrigerator (if you have the time for a few hours). The extra masala must be kept aside. If using pork collar, you might have smaller pieces, in which case, marinate individually and proceed as normal. I do strongly recommend this cut of pork as it is fabulous and tasty yet highly underrated.

Peel the potatoes & cut into chunks, then set aside. De-seed the pumpkin & cut into chunks (leave the skin on if you like) and add it to the potatoes. Optionally, if you are an onion lover like my family, peel three small onions & cut them into round chunks as well, and mix them all into the masala.

Preheat the oven to approx. 170-180C. Add the remaining oil to a roasting tray and spread well. Scrape the excess masala from the marinated pork, and brown the pork well on all sides. Keeping the pork in the center of the tray, spread the marinated vegetables all around and place in the oven.

After about 30 minutes, reduce heat to 130-140C and continue cooking for another 30-40 minutes (if using a rolled joint. A rolled loin will take just over an hour, if using smaller pieces or individual chops adjust your cooking time accordingly.)

When the pork is cooked, remove separately and check the vegetables. They might need some seasoning, taste and then add freshly chopped coriander. Serve the pork sliced surrounded by the vegetables.

