

\*Pulled Pork and Pear Empanadas with Cilantro Mojo

By Carmen Gonzalez, New York, NY

"This recipe's combination of pork and the garlicky-lemony mojo offers a great balance to the natural sweetness of the pears." ~ Chef Carmen Gonzalez

Makes filling for 30 large (or 60 small) empanadas

3 pounds boneless pork butt or pork shoulder

[La Saltena empanada shells](#)



Adobo

\* YOU WILL NEED

3 tablespoons dried oregano  
1/2 bunch fresh rosemary  
10 cloves garlic, finely minced  
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

Mop

\* YOU WILL NEED

1 cup apple cider vinegar  
1/2 cup water  
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce  
1 tablespoon kosher salt  
1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper  
2 teaspoons vegetable oil

Mojo

\* YOU WILL NEED

5 cloves garlic, finely minced  
1/2 bunch cilantro, coarsely chopped  
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Spiked Caramelized Pears

\* YOU WILL NEED

1/2 cup granulated sugar  
4 Anjou pears cut in 1/4-inch dice  
1 medium Vidalia (or comparable sweet) onion cut in 1/4-inch dice  
1 Scotch Bonnet or habanero chile pepper, finely minced  
1 teaspoon sherry wine vinegar  
A few drops of fresh lemon juice

## DIRECTIONS

For the adobo, combine the oregano, rosemary, garlic and olive oil in a small bowl. Place the pork butt or shoulder in a roasting pan, fat side up. Rub the adobo all over the pork, using some pressure to get it to adhere. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours. One hour before you're ready to roast the pork, remove it from the refrigerator and preheat the oven to 350°F.

For the mop, combine the vinegar, water, Worcestershire sauce, salt, pepper and oil in a bowl.

Season the pork with salt and freshly ground black pepper, and cover with aluminum foil. Place the roasting pan in the middle of the preheated oven and cook until a meat thermometer inserted in the center or thickest part of the meat registers 165°, turning the pan and brushing the pork with the mop every 20 minutes, for a total of about 90 minutes. Remove from oven and set aside to cool.

Make the mojo while the pork is cooling. Sauté the minced garlic to soften slightly. Add the cilantro, lemon juice and olive oil. When it is cool enough to handle, shred the meat using your hands or two forks and pour the pan juices and mojo over the shredded meat.

For the spiked pears, put the sugar in a non-reactive sauté pan and heat gently until it dissolves. Just as the sugar begins to color slightly, add the diced pears and onion, raise heat and toss to coat. Continue cooking another few minutes, until pears and onions are soft and golden brown. Remove from heat and add minced chile, vinegar and lemon juice. Toss to combine and set aside to cool.

To make the filling, add 4 cups pulled pork and mojo to the caramelized pears and stir to combine.

Place 2 heaping tablespoons filling in the middle of the empanada shell near the bottom. Use your finger and a small dish of water to lightly moisten the edges of the shell all the way around. Carefully fold the top over the contents to make a semi circle and use a fork to crimp the edges.

Finish the empanadas by deep-frying them in 350°F vegetable oil until golden brown, about 2 minutes per side. Drain on paper towels and serve warm with Grilled Pear and Mango Relish.

