Roast Pork and Sauerkraut

INGREDIENTS

- Pork loin, bone-in, 3 to 4 lbs
- 2 or 3 large garlic cloves
- 16 oz sauerkraut
- 1 tsp caraway seeds
- Black pepper
- 8 oz dark beer

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 425°. Slice the garlic cloves into slivers and stick them into slits all over the pork roast. Place the roast in a small roasting pan, fatty side up at first (no need for a rack) and put it into the oven, allowing about 30 minutes per pound, roughly two hours for a 4-pound roast.

After you start the roast, put the sauerkraut into a large bowl. (I like the kind of sauerkraut that comes in a bag best, followed by name-brand bottled varieties.) Rinse the kraut in fresh water and drain. Then stir in the caraway seeds, black pepper to taste, and the dark beer.

Turn the roast over after about 30 minutes. Then, halfway through the cooking period, take the roast out of the oven and pour off any fat that has accumulated in the pan, taking care not to discard the tasty crunchy bits. Turn the pork again, pour the kraut-beer mixture around it, and return it to the oven until the pork is done. I suggest taking the roast out once or twice more and stirring the kraut around. Let the roast rest outside the oven for about 10 minutes before slicing and serving.

ABOUT PORK COOKING TEMPERATURE: Most of us were brought up with firm rules about never under-cooking pork, and many respectable cookbooks insist that it be cooked to at least 160° internal temperature. Nowadays, though, even regulations as strict as the California Uniform Retail Food Facilities Law require only that pork be cooked to “a minimum internal temperature of at least 145°.” A bit of rosy pink in the middle of a pork roast is all right, and signals a juicier, more tender slice than you'll get if you take your roast all the way to well-done. But it's still prudent to use a meat thermometer to ensure that it's not under-cooked.