

# GREENER PASTURES Eco FARM

## PASTURED PORK



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## What is Heritage Pork?

Excerpts from Rare Breeds Canada

Traditionally, pigs were classified as either lard or bacon breeds. As early as the 1500s, pigs were being raised for both meat and lard in North America, brought over from Europe by the first explorers. Centuries of crop development, technological advances and World War II all had an effect on the survival and extinction of different breeds. Today, commercial operations breed for very specific characteristics, while many heritage breeds have had to fight for survival.

Recently, however, chefs have once again begun to discover the rich and complex flavour of heritage pork and the older breeds are making an amazing comeback. First to be adopted by fine restaurants was the Berkshire, and more recently the Tamworth and Large Blacks. These breeds do not meet the commercial criteria for quick growth under intensive management; however, their slow growth and adaptability to pasture management make them easy keepers that produce a lean and luscious product.

## The Tamworth Pig

Excerpts from The Livestock Conservancy

The Tamworth originated in central England. In this region, there were dense forests of oak and beech trees where the pigs were kept to forage in the autumn and winter. The breed takes its name from the village of Tamworth in Staffordshire. Long, lean, and athletic, the Tamworth is probably the most direct descendant of the native pig stock of northern Europe. The Tamworth first found its way to America in the late 1800s and travelled onto Canada from there.

Tamworths have an active intelligence, and they are agreeable in disposition. Sows are prolific, able to produce and care for large litters. The piglets are vigorous and often have 100% survivability.

Throughout history, pigs of this breed were expected to find their own food, especially nuts in oak and beech forests. Long heads and impressive snouts enable these pigs to be efficient foragers. Long, strong legs and sound feet give Tamworth pigs the ability to walk

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Butchers and consumers that insist on humanely raised animals choose heritage breeds. They are hardy and can thrive without confinement or intervention. This reduces stress on both animals and the farmer and allows the livestock to lead a more normal life.

Nowhere has the success of “eat them to keep them” been more apparent. The Berkshire population is thriving, the Large Black is increasing in popularity and the Tamworth is poised for a population explosion. All of this spells good news for Canadian heritage swine.



The 3 little pigs.

for considerable distances. Ginger red coats make the pigs adaptable to a variety of climates and protect them from sunburn.

The Tamworth was traditionally considered a “bacon” breed, meaning that the pigs thrived on low energy foods but grew slowly. They produced meat and bacon that was lean and fine grained. The breed has an excellent carcass yield of up to 70% due to their fine bones creating a more productive meat to bone ratio for finished meat products.

## Raising Pigs on Pasture

By Carl VanRooyen

At Greener Pastures we raise everything out on pasture. We truly believe that this creates happier and healthier animals and results in better tasting meat. Having a successful pastured pork operation, therefore, meant that we would need to raise a breed of pig accustomed to an outdoor environment. We found the Tamworth. Remarkably, it turned out to not only survive in the outdoors, it thrived there!

We brought our 8 piglets to Greener Pastures as soon as they were weaned; they were immediately given a cozy spot in the barn with large pasture access. Throughout the season, the pigs rooted through the pasture, digging up the sod, eating the grass and bugs. Occasionally they enjoyed an in-season treat of apples or pears from near-by local farms and they were given access to a mixed ration Certified Organic Grains milled and mixed right on the farm.

The Tamworth breed is a naturally slower growing variety of pig and so we did not butcher our pigs until around 10 months old. In comparison, conventional pork is processed around 6 months old.



All of our pigs are processed at a government-inspected facility. This allows our customers to enjoy the healthfulness of local heritage pork while being assured that food safety standards are being followed.

## Cooking Pastured Pork

Excerpts from [shadygroveranch.net](http://shadygroveranch.net) and [bonappetit.com](http://bonappetit.com)

Pasture-raised meats are expectedly different than factory-farmed products in taste, texture, appearance, *and* preparation. However, you should not have to compromise flavor and texture just to eat healthily.

Whether it's a chop or a roast, heritage pork is juicy, well-marbled, and insulated by a layer of firm, creamy, super delicious fat. The flesh of heritage pork should be a beautiful, deep shade of red, which means a rich, pronounced, pound-the-table-it's-so-good flavor to match.

Pasture pork does have more fat than conventional pork. But that additional fat is a cook's best friend. You can get an extra-crusty sear on a thick-cut chop and it will rival the best rib-eye steak you've ever had. You can braise that shoulder until it falls apart when you look at it—all without fear of drying out the meat.

Cooking pastured meats can be simple if a few things are kept in mind. First, you need to take care not to overcook your pasture-raised meat. For cuts such as

*"You need to take care not to overcook your pasture-raised meat."*

pork chops this means quicker cooking without heating the interior of the cut too much. This will leave the muscle fibers tender and juicy. These cuts should be allowed to rest after cooking for a period of at least 5 minutes, preferably 10. Cover them with foil or a lid to give them time to reabsorb juices.

For roasts, this means first searing the meat so that the juices become sealed in and then you can slow cook it or roast it in the oven, low and slow to ensure maximum tenderness.

Please find some of our family's favorite pork recipes and meal ideas on page 3 and 4. We hope you enjoy getting the most out of your pasture pork!

## Pork Recipes & Meal Ideas

If you are feeling nervous about cooking heritage pork and aren't sure where to start, we've included a few recipes and a number of meal ideas. As you become more comfortable with preparing your heritage pork, you will likely find some great new ideas and recipes of your own. We love sharing tips and hints and welcome your input as well! If you find something that works really well for you or that has helped you, please feel free to share with us through email or on our Facebook page.

The internet is a wonderful place to find an endless supply of fresh, new and unique recipe ideas. Most of our recipes found below come from various food blogs and farm websites that we follow. We have tried these recipes and can speak for the amazing flavour and results once you're done cooking!

We hope you are able to get as much enjoyment out of working with and cooking your pastured meat as we have. And at the end of the day, with pastured meat, less is always more. Let the meat speak for itself – it should really have enough flavour on its own without having to add too much spice/sauce to it. That will be the real taste test! Happy cooking!

### Pulled Pork in a Crock Pot

From 100 Days of Real Food Blog

#### INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons paprika
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 teaspoons black pepper
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ cup honey
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, peeled and cut in half
- 3 to 3 ½ lbs. pork shoulder, cut in half

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium size mixing bowl, mix together all the spices with a fork.
2. Pour in the honey, vinegar, and olive oil and stir to form a paste.
3. Place the onion in the bottom of the slow cooker. Top it with the pork and then pour the honey paste over all sides of the pork.
4. Turn the slow cooker on to low and cook for 7 to 8 hours or until the meat is tender enough to be easily shredded with a fork.
5. Serve warm with fixings like homemade coleslaw and corn bread. Refrigerate or freeze the leftovers.



Apples make a really tasty treat!

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Pastures Eco Farm,*

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## Pork Chops with Goat Cheese and Caramelized Onion

www.food.com

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 small red onion, sliced
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ½ cup chicken broth, plus 2 tablespoons (hot!)
- 1 ½ teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 4 fresh pork chops
- 2 ounces goat cheese
- Flour, to dust
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream, room temp.
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped

## Bacon Wrapped Jalapeno Poppers

From 100 Days of Real Food Blog

SERVES 24 PIECES

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 dozen jalapenos
- 1 block cream cheese (NOT low fat version)
- 12 slices of raw smoke bacon

Note: Also need: Drying rack or other metal grate to put on top of baking sheet and aluminum foil to protect the pan. Don't be afraid to double this recipe for an extra big crowd ☺.

### INSTRUCTIONS

5. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.
6. Slice each jalapeno down the middle and remove both the stem and the seeds. To remove the seeds you can either use a spoon or your finger.
7. If desired, this step can be done while wearing latex gloves, but whatever you do don't rub your eyes after handling the pepper seeds!

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Melt 1 tbsp. butter in 1 tsp. olive oil in medium sized, oven proof sauce pan over medium/medium high heat.
3. Add red onion. Let cook, stirring constantly for 20 minutes.
4. While onions cook, mix 1 ½ tsp. lemon juice, 1 tsp. brown sugar, 1 tsp. minced garlic, the 2 tbsp. chicken broth and 1 tbsp. olive oil in a small bowl.
5. Add 2 tbsp. of chicken broth to onions at a time, letting sizzle and cook away. Repeat until no broth remains.
6. Butterfly pork chops and sprinkle inside and out with salt and pepper.
7. Spread goat cheese evenly inside each pork chop, leaving room around edges.
8. Once onions are brown and caramelized, add a spoonful of onions to top of goat cheese in each pork chop. There will be onions remaining in the pan. Add lemon mixture to pan with onions and simmer, scraping down the sides of pan.
9. Close pork chops and dust with flour. If you are having trouble keeping them together, use toothpicks or mini skewers. However, it is better if you can work without, as the escaped goat cheese comes in handy for the sauce later!
10. Melt 1 tbsp. butter in skillet over medium heat and cook pork chops for 2-3 minutes on each side, until seared and brown.
11. Put pork chops and any drippings in the pan with the simmering onion/lemon mixture and place in the oven.
12. Cook for 20-25 minutes, depending on the thickness, or until cooked through but still tender.
13. Remove pan from oven and place back on medium-low heat. Remove pork chops and whisk in heavy cream and let come to a bubble. Add parsley. Spoon over pork chops and enjoy!

1. Cut the raw bacon slices in half lengthwise with a sharp knife.
2. Using a spoon, fill the jalapeno halves with cream cheese. It's okay if it gets a little messy.
3. Wrap one small piece of bacon around each cream cheese-filled jalapeno with the bacon seam on the bottom.
4. Bake at 375 degrees F for 20-25 minutes or until the bacon looks brown and crisp. Serve warm and enjoy!