

COCONUT PORK SALAD

serves 2

While this looks like a good bit to do, it's not terribly time-consuming, and is actually easy to accomplish if you spend a few minutes organizing the four cooking chores--rice, sauce, salad, and pork. I added some acorn squash to the salad only because it was getting tired of sitting on the counter and needed to go somewhere. Use or not.

- 1 cup cooked basmati rice, salted and peppered
- Salad (recipe below)
- 2 bone-in, 1 1/2-inch thick loin pork chops
- Olive oil
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
- Lime, cut in half
- Sauce (recipe below)

Divide rice between two plates or shallow bowls. Top each with half of the salad. Set aside. Heat grill to medium-high. Brush chops with oil and season well with salt and pepper. Brown pork chops on each side for two minutes; reduce heat, cover, and cook until temperature is at 140 degrees Fahrenheit--another 7-8 minutes or so, turning to ensure even cook. Remove to a plate and let rest 3 minutes. Top each serving of rice and salad with a chop, drizzle with lime juice, and spoon sauce over all. Garnish with reserved toasted coconut and green onions. Serve while chop is warm.

SALAD:

- 1/2 cup unsweetened coconut (reserve 2 tablespoons for garnish)
- 1/2 cup chopped, cooked acorn squash, optional
- 2 cups arugula
- 1/4 small onion, thinly sliced
- 2 medium tomatoes, cut into eighths
- 2 scallions minced (save half for garnish)
- 1/4 cup each fresh cilantro and mint leaves
- olive oil
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper

Toast 1/2 cup unsweetened coconut in a 375 degree oven for a 3-4 minutes, watching closely, until lightly browned. Remove and set aside to cool.

Cut an acorn squash--if using-- in half horizontally and scoop out seeds and fibers. Place upside down in a microwave-safe dish, add 1/2-inch water, and cover. Microwave at full power for 5 minutes. Remove, let cool, trim, and slice. Set aside. You'll need only 1/2 cup; reserve the remainder for another use.

Toss together arugula, red onion, tomatoes, scallions, minced, fresh cilantro and mint leaves, and all but 2 tablespoons of the cooled coconut (reserve rest for garnish) with a drizzle of olive oil. Season with salt and pepper; toss again.

SAUCE:

- 1 tablespoon each minced garlic and ginger
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/4 jalapeno, minced (no seeds or membranes)
- 1/2 stick white portion of lemongrass, minced*
- 6 cilantro stems
- 1/2 can (7.5 ounces) unsweetened low-fat coconut milk
- 2 teaspoons fish sauce
- Juice of half a lime

In a small saucepan, cook minced garlic and ginger in a tablespoon of olive oil over low heat for a minute. Add jalapeño, lemongrass and the cilantro stems; let cook another minute or two until tender. Stir in 1/2 can unsweetened, low-fat coconut milk, bring to a low simmer and cook for 3 minutes. Stir in 2 teaspoons fish sauce and juice of half a lime. Taste and adjust seasonings. Set aside until needed.

*No lemongrass? Sub a teaspoon of grated lemon zest.

This dish was inspired by a [favorite Tyler Florence recipe](#).

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