

IN THE GALLEY WITH TRUDY

Brine-Cured Pork Chops

- 1/2 cup dark brown sugar, packed
- 1/4 cup kosher salt
- 10 black peppercorns
- 5 juniper berries
- 5 bay leaves
- 1/8 cup fennel seed
- 1 cup mixed fresh herbs (rosemary, thyme, sage, oregano)
- Peel of 1 orange
- 1 quart boiling water
- 3 quarts cold water
- 12 center-cut pork chops
- 2 Tbs virgin olive oil

Combine all the ingredients except the water, pork chops, and olive oil in a large glass, ceramic, or plastic container. Add the boiling water and stir to completely dissolve the sugar and salt. Stir in the cold water to cool the brine.

Lay the chops out in one layer in a large, non-reactive pan; completely cover them with the brine. If a chop floats to the surface, weigh it down with a plate. Cover and refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours, depending on how much flavor you want the meat to acquire.

(If the chops must be stacked, change their positions in the brine often.)

Heat a grill or broiler. Drain the pork chops, discarding the brine, and pat dry with paper towels. Brush the chops with the oil, then grill or broil 5 to 6 minutes on each side. Put the chops on a rack in a pan to catch the drippings, and loosely cover with foil. Set the pan in a warm place for 6 to 8 minutes, then serve. Serves 6. •

