

## **Pork Pairings: Wisconsin's Seasonal Produce**

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One of the things I love most about cooking in Wisconsin is how naturally pork fits with our seasonal ingredients. Pork is a versatile canvas, and when you pair it with what's growing around us - whether it's spring ramps or fall squash - you get dishes that taste grounded, local and deeply satisfying.

Here is a quick guide I share with students when we talk about building flavor with the seasons.

### **Spring:**

Pork tenderloin or medallions shine with bright, earthy vegetables. Think asparagus, baby carrots or (if you're lucky) a handful of ramps. A light pan sauce with lemon and herbs pulls everything together.

### **Summer:**

This is the season for shoulder steaks on the grill. A simple rub, a quick char, and you're ready for sweet corn relish or grilled peaches. Pork's richness pairs beautifully with that natural summer sweetness.

### **Fall:**

When the weather cools, pork loin with roasted squash, apples, or cranberries becomes a comfort dish that practically cooks itself. A little sage or thyme is all you need.

### **Winter:**

Cold months call for slow-cooked pork shoulder with onions, cabbage, or root vegetables. The low-and-slow method turns a humble cut into something silky and full of warmth.

For example: **Winter Pork Shoulder with Cabbage and Mustard**

Late November is when I start leaning into the kind of cooking that makes the whole kitchen smell good. Pork shoulder is perfect for this time of year - affordable, forgiving and rich enough to stand up to winter vegetables. Paired with cabbage and a little mustard it becomes a dish that feels both rustic and cozy.

## **Ingredients**

- 3–4 lb. pork shoulder (boneless or bone-in)
- Salt and black pepper
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 onion, sliced
- ½ head green cabbage, cut into wedges
- 1 cup apple cider or chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons whole-grain mustard

- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- Sprig of thyme

## Method

1. Season and sear:  
Pat the pork dry and season generously with salt and pepper. Sear it on all sides in a heavy Dutch oven - get that deep brown color.
2. Build the base:  
Add the onions and lightly brown them in the same pot. Nestle the cabbage wedges around the pork.
3. Add the flavor:  
Pour in the cider or stock, whisk in the whole-grain mustard, and tuck in a sprig of thyme if you have it.
4. Low and slow:  
Cover and cook at 300 F for 3 -3½ hours, until the pork is tender enough to pull apart with a fork but still sliceable.
5. Brighten it up:  
Splash in a tablespoon of cider vinegar at the end to wake everything up.

Serve it right in the pot with some mashed potatoes or a loaf of crusty bread.

*Enjoy!*