

OPINION



You ‘nita’ stop and try this pressure cooker recipe

Any time I find pork shoulder at a great price at our local grocery store, it’s a no-brainer for me to put it in the cart and let Joey know that I wouldn’t mind if he threw it on his smoker over the weekend.

That’s why it was a little weird last week when Joey put one in the cart and asked if I would prepare it instead.

He found a recipe for carnitas made in a pressure cooker, and of course, we had to give it a try. This comes from the blog “Platings and Pairings.” You can find the original post at <https://www.platingsandpairings.com/best-instant-pot-pork-carnitas/>. I added extra seasoning in my version and added a step to the preparation.

Pressure Cooker Pork Carnitas
Ingredients
4 to 6 pounds pork shoulder
1 1/2 tablespoon garlic salt



Pork carnitas can be made in a pressure cooker and yield flavorful, delicious pulled pork that is especially delicious in a taco.

- 1 1/2 tablespoon cumin
- 1 tablespoon oregano
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoon basil
- 1 1/2 teaspoon coriander
- 1 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoon paprika or smoked paprika
- 1 cup water
- 2 oranges
- 1 lime

Directions
Trim most of the fat off the pork shoulder and cut the meat into two-inch cubes.

Combine the garlic salt, cumin, oregano, brown sugar, basil, coriander, chili powder and paprika in a bowl and stir to combine. Reserve about 2 tablespoons, plus 2 teaspoons, of the mixture.

With the rest of the spice rub, pour it over the pork, coating it as evenly as possible.

Add the pork to your pressure cooker, along with one cup of water.

Cut your oranges and lime in half. Squeeze as much juice out of each half as you can into the pressure cooker, and then place the fruit, cut side down, into the pressure cooker, as well.

Seal the pressure cooker and cook on high pressure for 40 minutes, and then let the pressure release naturally for 10 minutes before opening the cooker.

While the pork cooks, prepare a rimmed baking sheet by lining it with aluminum foil or parchment paper.

When the pork is done, remove it with a slotted spoon and shred it with two forks. Put the shredded pork on the prepared baking sheet. Sprinkle the reserved seasoning over top of the pork and give it a stir, spreading it out evenly on the sheet.

Preheat the broiler in your oven to high and place the baking sheet under it. Let the pork crisp for around three minutes, checking regularly. Remove the pork when it’s just starting to crisp up along the edges.

Serve the pork as a taco, sandwich, or however you like it.

This was delicious. Joey graciously acted as my sous chef, trimming and breaking down the pork shoulder while I prepared the spices. We enjoyed the pork in some corn tortillas, along with avocado, fresh spinach, and some hot sauce.

The leftovers reheated very nicely, too.

The next time we find a good deal on a large piece of pork, Joey and I may have to thumb wrestle to see who will be the one to cook it.

The good news is that no matter who wins, there won’t be any losers.

Spice Up Your Life is a weekly recipe column by Lindsey Young of Harvey County Now, who describes herself as an enthusiastic amateur cook and can be reached through her website at spiceupkitchen.net.



Have you prehabilitated today?

By Joanie Holm, R.N.

On a recent morning, the first story I heard on the radio was about Prehabilitation prior to surgery. We have all heard of rehabilitation, but have you considered prehabilitation, or increasing your exercise before surgery?

Recent studies by Durrand, Singh and Danjoux of the National Institutes of Health have documented what was inherently known — that building up a reserve of strength before surgery pays off. Makes sense, right!

The physiological challenge of a major surgery has been linked to running a marathon. In both cases, preparation is critical. Surgery involving a major body cavity has an estimated mortality of 4%. Post-operative complications of a major surgery affect 15-40% and may increase the hospital length two- to four-fold as well as increasing readmissions.

The NIH study demonstrated that increasing preoperative functional capacity promotes recovery, reduces complications and reduces healthcare cost.

Later in the day, as I walked the track, my brain took a leap. Isn’t life our chance to prehabilitate? Wouldn’t prehabilitation help us if we caught COVID or influenza? What if you or I suddenly need to have our appendix or gallbladder removed? What if we are in a car crash and have broken bones? What if we have a stroke or heart attack? Prehabilitation through daily exercise, eating a balanced diet and moderate intake of harmful substances would increase our chances of survival and recovery without complications.

Today and all of the tomorrows are our chance to prepare for the possibility of poor health. We are the key member of the prehab team. Take advantage of your health today to prepare for unexpected complications. Get up and get moving!



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Hydration: Water-rich foods make a difference

As the summer heat builds, it is essential to keep hydrated. And, while most of us know that we should drink eight glasses of water daily, how we get our fluids doesn’t have to be all from plain water. Fruits and vegetables can also protect against dehydration.

Our bodies need water to support body functions. For digestion, water is in our saliva to moisten food, in our stomach juices to digest food, in our blood to transport nutrients and oxygen, and to help carry waste out of our body. Water also allows us to regulate body temperature, improve energy, and brain function. Mild dehydration can cause fatigue, headaches, decreased physical endurance, and cognitive performance.

To keep from getting dehydrated, you need to drink six to eight cups of liquid each day. Depending on your activity level, you may need to drink more. Older people may be less sensitive to thirst, meaning that they may not feel thirsty, which can cause them not to drink enough water.

Getting that liquid from fruits, vegetables, and liquids other than water can contribute to your total fluid intake. Select foods that are more than 80%. Check the list below to see the percentage of water in some of your favorite fruits and vegetables:

Cucumbers, 96%; celery,

95%; lettuce, 95%; tomatoes, 94%; zucchini and summer squash, 94%; bell peppers, 92-94%; watermelon, 92%; broccoli, 91%; grapefruit, 91%.

Incorporating more fruits and vegetables into your diet can also improve overall health. To snack smart, keep cut-up fruits like watermelon, cucumbers, or citrus in the refrigerator for a quick bite. Use fruit and leafy green vegetables in smoothies for a hydrating breakfast—jazz up your water with slices of fruit like lemon, limes, or berries to enhance flavor.

Keeping yourself hydrated is an easy way to stay healthy; it doesn’t all have to come from plain water. Eating more fruit and vegetables will improve your health and keep you hydrated during the hot summer months.

Citrus Berry Mint Infused Water

Ingredients (for a large pitcher, about 6-8 cups):

- 1/2 orange, thinly sliced
- 1/2 lemon, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup strawberries, hulled

and halved

- A few fresh mint leaves (5-7)
- 6-8 cups cold water
- Ice (optional)

Instructions:

1. Prep the ingredients: Rinse the fruits and mint well. Thinly slice the orange and lemon and halve the strawberries.
2. Combine in a pitcher: Add all the fruit and mint leaves to a large pitcher.
3. Add water: Pour in the cold water. Stir gently to mix.
4. Infuse: Let the water sit in the refrigerator for at least 1-2 hours to allow the flavors to infuse. For a stronger flavor, leave it overnight.
5. Serve: Pour over ice if desired. Add a few pieces of fruit or mint to each glass for presentation.

Tips:

- Try muddling (gently crushing) the mint leaves or berries for a bolder taste.
- Use sparkling water instead of still water for a fizzy twist.
- You can refill the pitcher once or twice with more water using the same fruit (within 24 hours).

Ask

DR. UNIVERSE

Dr. Universe: Do video games rot your brain?
—Joie, 10, Texas

Dear Joie,

After answering science questions all day, I like to play Mario. It’s relaxing to smash Goombas and zoom down pipes.

I asked my friend Dene Grigar if that’s wrecking my brain. She leads the Digital Technology and Culture program at Washington State University Vancouver.

She told me that sometimes people dismiss new things by calling them harmful.

That often happens with new technology or media. People reacted that way to railroads, telephones, cameras and television. People even freaked out about books. For a long time, books were hard to come by, and regular people couldn’t read. When that changed, folks worried about “reading fever.” They thought reading would rot their brains and harm society. Experts call that a moral panic.

Usually, those attitudes relax when people learn more about the new technology or media.

“The reason people say video games rot your brain is because most people don’t know how to read a game,” Grigar said.

It turns out games are more than cool graphics. They tell stories and use narrative structure—like books. The skills we use to analyze great literature are the same ones we use to analyze great games.

That’s why experts talk about “reading” a game instead of just playing it.

But most people have teachers to guide us as we learn to read and examine literature. We don’t usually get that with video games.

A good way to start reading a game is to look at the character you’re playing—your avatar.

Notice how they interact with the in-game world. Think about how your choices affect their journey. Compare what they go through with your own experiences in the real world.

When I play Mario, I can just stomp Goombas. Or I can think about how Mario leaves home to track down his kingdom’s kidnapped leader. He jumps and squishes his way across unfamiliar lands. He defeats enemies in dungeons—only to be teleported to a new world with even more bad guys.

Sometimes the real world feels like that, too. We tackle one obstacle, and another one pops up. It takes serious grinding (and maybe help from a tutorial or friend) to keep going. It needs a hero who doesn’t give up.

Grigar told me that kind of analysis separates a good game from a not-so-good one.

“What I look for in a quality game isn’t the graphics,” she said. “It’s whether I’m moved to do something thought-provoking. Am I thinking through this story? Do I need to make decisions? Is my brain tasked with doing something useful?”

Making those choices and completing those quests might teach your avatar something about the in-game world. It may show you something about the real one.

The right game—like the right book—could help you level up.

Sincerely,
Dr. Universe

Got a question? Ask Dr. Universe! Send an email to WashingtonStateUniversitys.resident.cat-scientist.and.writer.Wendy.Sue.Universe@Dr.Universe@wsu.edu or visit her website at askdruniverse.com.

PUBLIC NOTICE						
(Published in The Oskaloosa Independent July 17, 2025)1t						
NOTICE OF HEARING TO EXCEED REVENUE NEUTRAL RATE AND BUDGET HEARING						
The governing body of Norton Township and Norton Fire District #12 Jefferson County						
will meet on September 7, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at 508 Taggart, Nortonville, Kansas for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed use of all funds, the amount of ad valorem tax and the revenue neutral rate. Detailed budget information is available at Jefferson County Clerk's Office and will be available at this hearing.						
BUDGET SUMMARY						
Proposed Budget 2026 Expenditures and Amount of 2025 Ad Valorem Tax establish the maximum limits of the 2026 budget. Estimated Tax Rate is subject to change depending on the final assessed valuation.						
Fund	Prior Year Actual 2024		Current Year Estimate 2025		Proposed Budget 2026	
	Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate*	Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate*	Budget Authority for Expenditures	Amount of 2025 Ad Valorem Tax Proposed Estimated Tax Rate*
General	6,560	0.520	7,600	0.582	11,000	8,507 0.642
Library	10,000	1.251	15,000	1.463	19,105	13,445 1.014
Fire General	27,995	0.883	36,722	1.594	68,722	38,284 2.887
No-Fund Warrants	16,640	0.562	16,320	0.486	19,000	17,478 1.318
Totals	61,195	3.216	75,642	4.125	117,827	77,714 5.861
					Revenue Neutral Rate-Township General**	
					1.471	
					Revenue Neutral Rate-Library**	
					0.573	
					Revenue Neutral Rate-Fire District**	
					1.417	
Less: Transfers	0		0		0	
Net Expenditure	61,195		75,642		117,827	
Total Tax Levied	49,468		170,443		XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	
Assessed Valuation:						
Township General	12,514,799		12,852,585		13,258,825	
Library					8,501,612	
Fire District	22,607,995		23,032,508		13,258,825	
Outstanding Indebtedness, Jan 1	2023		2024		2025	
G.O. Bonds	0		0		0	
Other	48,000		32,000		80,000	
Lease Purchase Principal	0		0		0	
Total	48,000		32,000		80,000	
**Tax rates are expressed in mills.						
***Revenue Neutral Rate as defined by KSA 79-2988						
David Schneider, Township Trustee						

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