



Pork Ramen
Courtesy of Momofuku Las Vegas

PORK RAMEN

2 cups ramen broth
5 to 6 oz. ramen noodles (can be purchased pre-made, no need to make by scratch)
2 to 3 slices pork belly
0.5 cup pork shoulder
2 sheets nori (a.k.a. seaweed, cut 3 by 3 inches each)
0.25 cup thinly sliced scallions (greens and whites)
2 thin slices fish cake
4 to 5 bamboo shoots
0.25 cup seasonal vegetables (corn and/or peas are good)
1 slow-poached egg
Taré, to taste (or mirin combined with kosher salt if you are not interested in making taré)

THE RAMEN

1. Heat up your ramen bowls in a low oven.
2. Boil the noodles and portion into bowls.
3. Top with broth.
4. Arrange the pork shoulder and pork belly, scallions, bamboo shoots, fish cake and vegetables around the edge of the bowl. Slide the egg into the middle.
5. Finish by tucking a couple pieces of nori about one-third of the way into one side of the soup, so they lean against the side of the bowl and stand above the rim.
6. Serve hot.

RAMEN BROTH

2 pieces of konbu (a.k.a. edible kelp, cut 3 by 3 inches each)
24 cups water
2 cups dried shiitakes, rinsed
4 lb. chicken, either a whole bird or legs
5 lb. meaty pork bones
1 lb. smoky bacon, preferably Benton's
1 bunch scallions
1 medium onion, cut in half
2 large carrots, peeled and roughly chopped
Taré

THE BROTH

1. Rinse the konbu under running water, then combine with the water in an 8-qt. stockpot. Bring water to a simmer over high heat and then turn off the heat. Let steep for 10 minutes.

2. Remove konbu from pot and add shiitakes. Turn heat back up to high and bring the water to a boil, then turn the heat down so the liquid simmers gently. Simmer for 30 minutes, until the mushrooms are plumped and rehydrated and have lent the broth their color and aroma.
3. Heat oven to 400 degrees F.
4. Remove mushrooms from the pot and add the chicken. Keep the liquid at a gentle simmer. Skim and discard any froth, foam or fat that rises to the surface. Replenish water as necessary to keep the chicken covered.
5. After about an hour, test the chicken: the meat should pull away from the bones easily. If it doesn't, simmer until it does, then remove chicken from the pot.
6. While the chicken is simmering, put the pork bones on a baking sheet and brown in oven for an hour. Turn them over after 30 minutes to ensure even browning.
7. Remove the chicken from the pot and add the roasted bones to the broth, along with the bacon. Adjust heat as necessary to keep the broth at a steady simmer. Skim the scum and replenish water as needed.
8. After 45 minutes, remove bacon. Gently simmer pork bones for 6 to 7 hours—as much time as your schedule allows. Stop adding water to replenish the pot after hour five.
9. Add scallions, onions and carrots to pot and simmer for 45 minutes.
10. Remove and discard bones and vegetables. Pass the broth through a strainer lined with cheesecloth.
11. Season to taste with taré.

TARÉ

2 – 3 chicken backs

1 cup sake

1 cup mirin

2 cups usukuchi (light soy sauce)

Freshly ground pepper

THE TARÉ

1. Heat oven to 450 degrees F.
2. Cut chicken back into 3 pieces, split rib cages in half and separate thigh from leg bones.
3. Spread the bones out in a wide (12 to 14 in.) ovenproof sauté pan or skillet and put it in the oven for 45 minutes to 1 hour: check on the bones after about 40 minutes to make sure they're just browning, not burning. You want deeply browned bones, and you want the *fond*—the fatty liquid caramelizing on the bottom of the pan—to be very dark but not blackened. Watch as the bones color, and then pull them out when they're perfectly browned.
4. Remove the pan from the oven and put on the stovetop. Pour a splash of the sake onto the pan and place the pan over a burner. Turn the heat to medium-high. Once the sake starts to bubble, scrape the *fond* up off the bottom of the pan.
5. Add the remaining sake, mirin and soy to the pan. Turn the heat to high.
6. Bring the liquid to a boil, then lower the heat so that it barely simmers. Cook for one hour.
7. Strain the bones out of the tare and season the liquid with 5 or 6 turns of black pepper.

PORK BELLY

1 three-pound slab skinless pork belly
0.25 cup kosher salt
0.25 cup sugar

THE BELLY

1. Nestle the belly into a roasting pan.
2. Mix the salt and sugar in a small bowl and rub the mix all over the meat.
3. Cover the container with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 6 hours, but no longer than 24.
4. Heat the oven to 450 degrees F.
5. Discard any liquid that accumulated in the container. Put the belly in the oven, fat side up, and cook for 1 hour, basting it with the rendered fat at the halfway point, until it's an appetizing golden brown.
6. Reduce oven temperature to 250 degrees F. and cook for another hour, until the belly is tender.
7. Remove pan from the oven and transfer the belly to a plate. Decant the fat and the meat juices from the pan and reserve. Allow the belly to cool slightly.
8. When it's cool enough to handle, wrap the belly in plastic wrap or aluminum foil and chill in the fridge until firm.
9. Cut pork belly into ½-inch thick slices that are about 2 inches long. Warm them for serving in a pan over medium heat (for one or two minutes). Use immediately.

PORK SHOULDER

1 three-pound piece boneless pork shoulder
0.25 cup kosher salt
0.25 cup sugar

THE SHOULDER

1. Place pork shoulder in roasting pan. Mix salt and sugar in a small bowl and rub mixture all over the meat. Cover the container in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 6 hours, but no longer than 24.
2. Heat oven to 250 degrees F.
3. Discard any liquid that accumulated in container. Put the shoulder in the oven and cook for 6 hours, basting it with the rendered fat and pan juices every hour. Take it out of the oven and let it rest for 30 minutes.
4. Shred the meat, pulling it into rosy strands using two forks.

BAMBOO SHOOTS

1 twelve-ounce can sliced bamboo shoots
1 pickled chile, seeded and chopped (optional)
Splashes of grapeseed and Asian sesame oils
Splash of usukuchi (light soy sauce)
Salt

THE SHOOTS

1. Drain the bamboo shoots in a colander and rinse well under running water.
2. Stew, over low heat, with oils, soy and chile for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until tender.
3. Taste, and season with salt if needed.

SLOW-POACHED EGG

Large eggs, as many as you would like

THE EGG

1. Fill a large, deep pot with water and heat on lowest possible temperature.
2. Place a cake or steamer rack on the bottom of the pot. Use an instant-read thermometer to monitor the temperature in the pot. Once the water is between 140- and 145-degrees F, add the eggs. Let them bathe for 40 to 45 minutes, checking the temperature regularly with a thermometer.
3. To serve, crack eggs one at a time into a small saucer. The thin white will not be firm or solid, so tip the dish to pour off and discard the loosest part of the white.

