Drunken Apple & Gochujang Pork Ribs

Slow Cooker Country-Style Pork Ribs with Dark Rum, Hard Cider & Gluten-Free Beer

These bone-in country-style pork ribs are seasoned overnight, then slow-cooked in a rich, sweet-and-spicy sauce made with Korean gochujang, fresh apple, Jamaican dark rum, hard cider, and gluten-free beer.

The result? Fall-apart tender pork swimming in a deeply savory, slightly smoky, boozy BBQ sauce. And the best part is that everything goes straight into the slow cooker. No browning, no sautéing, no extra pans.

Prep: 20 minutes, plus overnight marinating
Cook: Approximately 6–8 hours on LOW for shoulder-style ribs
Yield: Approximately 6 servings

Ingredients

Pork & Overnight Seasoning

- 3.6 lbs bone-in country-style pork ribs
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- Salt to taste (start with ¾ tsp if your gochujang and tamari are salty)

Boozy Gochujang-Apple BBQ Sauce

- 3 tbsp certified gluten-free gochujang
- 3 tbsp Coruba Jamaican dark rum
- Approximately ½ cup gluten-free hard apple cider
- Gluten-free beer, a splash or more as needed
- 1 large apple, skin on, chopped
- 1 medium white onion, chopped
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp freshly grated ginger
- ⅓ cup tomato sauce
- 3 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 3 tbsp brown sugar

2 tbsp gluten-free tamari

- Optional: 1–2 fresh red chilies, sliced, for additional heat

Garnish

- Sesame seeds
- Sliced green onions

Instructions

1. Season the pork overnight

Combine the smoked paprika, cumin, black pepper, and salt. Rub the seasoning all over the country-style ribs.

Cover and refrigerate overnight to allow the seasonings to penetrate the meat.

2. Load the slow cooker

Place the seasoned ribs in the slow cooker.

Add the chopped apple (skin and all), onion, garlic, ginger, gochujang, rum, hard cider, gluten-free beer, tomato sauce, apple cider vinegar, brown sugar, tamari, and optional red chilies.

Gently stir or turn the ribs to distribute the ingredients.

Add additional cider or beer if needed to bring the liquid up around the ribs. For the original version, the ribs were fully submerged.

3. Cook low and slow

Cover and cook on LOW until the pork is exceptionally tender, approximately 6–8 hours for shoulder-style country ribs. Start checking earlier for leaner loin-cut ribs.

Avoid unnecessary stirring, especially toward the end, when the meat becomes tender enough to fall apart.

4. Finish the sauce

Once the ribs are tender, carefully lift them onto a serving platter.

Spoon the cooking sauce, including the softened apples and onions, generously over the pork.

If the sauce is thinner than desired, transfer some to a saucepan and simmer until reduced before serving. This step is optional.

5. Garnish and serve

Sprinkle with sesame seeds and sliced green onions.

Serve with garlicky mashed cauliflower for a rich, comforting, lower-carb meal that soaks up every bit of that delicious sauce.

Recipe Notes

About the apples: No peeling or grating necessary! Chopped apples soften during the long cooking process and add texture and sweetness to the sauce.

About the booze: The dark rum adds caramel and molasses notes, while the hard cider brings apple flavor and acidity. Gluten-free beer adds another layer of savory complexity.

Gluten-free reminder: Check the labels on the gochujang, tamari, hard cider, and beer. Many traditional gochujang products contain wheat.

Make-ahead tip: Season the pork the night before, then load everything into the slow cooker in the morning.

Leftovers: Refrigerate promptly in shallow containers. Reheat with some of the cooking liquid to keep the pork moist.