

Cuban Sandwiches

What's Hot in the South of Florida – that is spreading throughout the states like wildfire - Cuban Sandwiches – or Media Noche (translated “Midnight”). These wonderful sandwiches are all the rage in Florida, and as most popular food items are, there are many variations. Basically, it is a grilled hoagie-type sandwich consisting of smoked ham slices, Swiss cheese slices, dill pickles, and sliced or shredded roasted pork. You can personally alter the ingredients if you wish, but my challenge was to give the sandwich a little more “kick”, so I created a Cuban Spice Rub for the Pork and instead of spreading the sandwich with mayonnaise or mustard, I created a chipotle mayonnaise that I believe truly compliments the sandwich. If you prefer, you can just add mustard or mayonnaise.

Some people eat them cold, but I prefer to grill them in the “Panini” style by weighing them down when you put them on the grill. I simply added a cookie sheet over them, weighted down with a heavy skillet or cans or whatever.

These Cuban Sandwiches are delicious with plantain chips or a salad of orange slices, red onions, and greens or with my recipe for Cuban Black Beans and Rice. Get with it this summer and enjoy a Cuban sandwich tonight!

Cuban Sandwich

- 6 Long sandwich rolls or hoagie rolls, split in half
- 12 Thin slices of Smoked Ham
- 12-18 Thin slices of Swiss Cheese
- 12 thin slices of kosher dill pickles, sliced lengthwise
- 2 lbs. Roast Pork, thinly sliced or shredded (plus some reserved pan juices if you prefer) -- Recipe below
- ½ Cup Mayonnaise
- 1-2 Chipotle chiles in Adobo sauce, processed til smooth

Cuban Roast Pork:

Cuban Spice Rub

- 2 Tab. Paprika
- 1 Tab. Garlic Powder
- 1 Tab. Onion Powder
- 1 Tab. Thyme, dried, crushed
- 1 Tab. Kosher Salt
- 1 Tab. Freshly Ground Pepper
- 1 Tsp. Ground Cumin
- ½ Tsp. Ground Allspice
- ½ Tsp. Ground Ginger
- ½ Tsp. Ground Cinnamon
- ½ Tsp. Cayenne Pepper, ground

Mix ingredients together. Set aside 2 teaspoons to use if making the Cuban black beans.

- 1 6-8 lb. Pork Loin or Shoulder, boned
- Recipe of Cuban Spice Rub
- ½ Cup Freshly squeezed Lime Juice
- ½ Cup Freshly squeezed orange juice or grapefruit juice
- ½ Cup Water or White wine or Sherry
- 1 Large Green Bell Pepper, coarsely chopped
- 1 Large Onion, coarsely chopped

Rub Pork with Cuban Spice Rub Mix and set aside. Combine juices with water or wine and add the chopped onion and pepper. If you want, you can marinate pork in this mixture overnight or you can pour the mixture over the pork in a roasting pan or slow cooker and cover and cook immediately.

If cooking in a slow cooker, cook on low for 8-10 hours or overnight. Cool in juices. Transfer to cutting board and discard fat. Slice or shred the pork, as desired. (Pork can be made ahead of time and refrigerated for 3 days.) Strain the pan juices into a glass measure and skim off the fat. Can then use over the pork on the sandwiches.

If cooking in oven, place pork in Dutch oven or roasting pan on a roasting rack and pour over ingredients. Cover and roast in 350 degree oven for 3-4 hours or until roast is nice and tender. Cool in juices. Transfer to cutting board and discard fat. Slice or shred the pork, as desired. (Pork can be made ahead of time and refrigerated for 3 days.) Strain the pan juices into a glass measure and skim off the fat. Can then use over the pork on the sandwiches.

To Assemble Cuban sandwich:

Process chipotle peppers in adobo sauce and add chipotle paste that results into the mayonnaise, one tablespoon at a time, until desired taste. (Chipotle Peppers are smoked jalapeno peppers --- these will be hot, so add to desired heat.) Spread Chipotle Mayonnaise on both cut sides of roll. Add slices of Swiss cheese, then slices of smoked ham, the slices of dill pickle, then shredded pork (adding some pan juices if desired). Top with roll half. Assemble all sandwiches.

Preheat your grill or grill pan to medium high. Place Cuban Sandwiches on grill. Top with cookie sheet and weigh down with heavy skillet or weighted cans. Grill a several minutes on each side, turning just once. Slice in half and serve. (You can also use an electric sandwich grill press if you have one.)

Serve these sandwiches with plantain chips or your favorite chips or a salad or this recipe for Cuban Black Beans and Rice.

Cuban Black Beans and Rice

2 Tabs.	Olive Oil
1 Small Onion,	finely chopped (approx. 1 cup)
½	Red Bell Pepper, finely chopped (approx. ½ cup)
3-4 Cloves	Garlic, minced
1 Large 1 lb. 13 oz. Size Can of Black Beans,	undrained
1 ½ Cups	Water
2 Tsp.	Cuban Spice Rub (from above recipe)
	Salt and Pepper to taste
2 Tabs.	Freshly Squeezed Lime Juice or White Vinegar or to taste
4-6 Cups	Hot, cooked white rice

Heat oil in heavy saucepan over medium high heat. Add onion, pepper and garlic and cook until tender, about 4-5 minutes. Stir in beans, seasoning, and water. Bring to a boil and simmer 10-15 minutes. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Add lime juice or vinegar and heat 5 minutes more. Serve over hot cooked white rice. Makes 6-8 servings.

Jungle Jim's has all the ingredients you will need, including the plantain chips (or fresh plantains you might want to slice and grill). Cuban sandwiches – it's what happening in Cincinnati!