

Bone-In Vs. Boneless Pork Chops

Today, I will be discussing the difference between boneless and bone-in pork chops. There are subtle flavor and textural differences, but the type of pork chop you buy comes down to personal preference and how you intend to use it.

The two most common types of bone-in pork chops you'll see are rib chops and center-cut chops. The less common blade chop is another type of bone-in chop that comes from the shoulder end of the loin.

The rib chop is what most of us envision when we think of pork chops. It contains the curved rib bone, which you'll see along the side of this cut. This is the same bone that makes up a rack of mouthwatering baby back ribs.

Pork rib chops are less expensive than center-cut or boneless pork chops, but they also contain the least amount of meat overall. Because of the bone, a rib chop appears larger than a boneless chop, but it may contain a fair amount of fat.

You can identify a center-cut pork chop, also called a loin chop or center loin chop, by the T-shaped bone that runs down the middle of it. On one side of this bone, there is lighter loin meat; on the other, you'll see darker tenderloin meat. Center-cut pork chops tend to be more expensive than other bone-in chops, but they're also larger. They yield more meat with a relatively small amount of gristly fat.

Pros of Bone in Pork Chops

- The bone and fat in these cuts provide extra flavor and juiciness, which can prevent chops from getting dry.
- The bone makes an eye-appealing presentation.
- This type of cut with the bone left in is typically less expensive.

Boneless pork chops are the same as a rib chop or center-cut chop, but the bone has been cut away. They're ultra-lean, as much of the fat has been removed, so some feel they are less flavorful than bone-in pork chops.

Whether you buy boneless or bone-in pork chops, any pork chop cooked to a perfect, juicy medium (145°F) is pretty much guaranteed to be melt-in-your-mouth good!

Pros of Boneless Pork Chops

- Boneless chops are ready to go right out of the package.

- There's no waste on a boneless pork chop, and you don't have to pay for the weight of the bone or fat.
- Because a butcher has trimmed away the fat and bone, the pieces are leaner and require less work.

Use these tips for delicious, flavorful pork chops.

To prevent your pork chops from drying out, marinate or brine them to get more moisture into the meat before cooking. Even a quick 30-minute marinade can help.

Season well before cooking. Since pork chops are very mild on their own, salting them before cooking will bring out the pork's natural flavor.

Let your pork chops reach room temperature before cooking. This will reduce overall cooking time and help prevent dryness.

Pick a method that cooks your chops quickly, like grilling, pan-searing, or broiling. The faster the chops cook, the less moisture you'll lose. To get a nice crust on the outside, you can sear your chops over high heat and then let them finish in the oven.

Cook all pork chops to a minimum internal temperature of 145°F. Always insert the probe at the thickest part of the meat and ensure it's not touching the bone.

Let meat rest for a few minutes before cutting into it. This lets the juices re-absorb into the meat, keeping it tender and moist. If you cut into your chops too soon, the juices will run out instead of staying inside.

Pork chops are affordable, easy to cook, and crowd-pleasing. There's no end of options for what you can whip up with these tasty chops!

(Sources: www.allrecipes.com; www.colemannatural.com; pork.org; www.usda.gov)