BASQUES STUFFED PORK TENDERLOIN WITH HERBED CREAM CHEESE

Serves 4-6

Photo courtesy of Chris Bierlein

Method: Indirect Grilling

For the herbed cream cheese:
6 ounces cream cheese, softened
2 tablespoons butter, softened
1 clove garlic, finely minced
1 teaspoon each coarse salt and black pepper
1/2 teaspoon each dried basil, thyme, and dill

For the pork:
2 pork tenderloins, each 1 to 1 1/4 pounds
3 ounces diced smoked ham
1/2 cup oil-cured sun-dried tomatoes, drained, oil reserved
4 strips thin-cut bacon

In a small bowl, combine the cream cheese, butter, garlic, salt, pepper, and dried spices. Set aside.

Cut a deep pocket in the side of each pork tenderloin. Season the inside of the pocket with salt and pepper. Stuff with half the herbed cream cheese, the ham, and sun-dried tomatoes. Brush the outside of the tenderloins with the reserved sun-dried tomato oil and season with salt and pepper.

Lay four 10-inch pieces of butcher's string on and parallel to your work surface. Lay a strip of bacon on and perpendicular to the strings. Top with one of the tenderloins. Lay a second strip of bacon on top of the tenderloin. Bring up the ends of the strings and tie. Trim the ends close to the knots. Repeat with the remaining tenderloin.

Set up your grill for indirect grilling using Basques Charcoal.
Brush the grill grate clean and oil it well. Indirect grill the tenderloins until nicely browned and the meat is cooked through (at least 145°F), 40 minutes, or as needed.

Let the meat rest for 5 minutes.
Remove the strings, then using a sharp knife (preferably with a serrated blade), slice the tenderloin crosswise into 1/2- to 3/4-inch medallions. Transfer to a platter or plates. If desired, serve with your favorite vinaigrette. Or combine 3 tablespoons of lemon juice with 1/2 cup olive oil. Add salt and pepper to taste. Stir in diced bell peppers and minced chives and dill, if desired.
Serve with the tenderloins.