

## VIETNAMESE CARAMELIZED GRILLED PORK

**SERVES 4**

**Active time:** 20 min **Start to finish:** 20 min

**6** (¼-inch-thick) boneless pork loin chops

⅓ cup sugar

¼ cup finely chopped shallots (about 2)

**1** tablespoon fresh lime juice

**1** tablespoon Asian fish sauce

½ teaspoon salt

► Pound chops between 2 large sheets of plastic wrap with flat side of a meat pounder or with a rolling pin until less than ¼ inch thick. Make several small ¼-inch-deep slits around edge of each chop to prevent curling, then halve chops lengthwise and transfer to a bowl.

► Cook sugar in a dry 1-quart heavy saucepan over moderate heat, undisturbed, until it begins to melt.

Continue to cook, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon, until sugar is melted into a golden caramel. Add shallots, lime juice, fish sauce, and salt (caramel will harden) and cook, stirring constantly, until caramel is dissolved and shallots are softened, about 2 minutes. Pour sauce over pork and toss until well coated.

► Heat a lightly oiled well-seasoned ridged grill pan over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then grill pork in batches, turning over once, until just cooked through, about 1 minute per side. (Discard any remaining caramel sauce.)

## VIETNAMESE RICE NOODLE SALAD

**SERVES 4 (SIDE DISH)**

**Active time:** 15 min **Start to finish:** 15 min

**4** oz thin rice noodles

¼ cup rice vinegar (not seasoned)

**1** tablespoon sugar

**1** tablespoon Asian fish sauce

¼ teaspoon salt

**1** carrot, coarsely shredded

**2** scallions, thinly sliced crosswise

**1** cup loosely packed mixed fresh cilantro, mint, and/or basil leaves, torn if large

¼ cup chopped unsalted dry-roasted peanuts

► Soak noodles in hot water 10 minutes, then drain in a large sieve.

► Cook noodles in a 4-quart pot of boiling water, uncovered, until tender, about 1 minute. Drain in sieve and rinse under cold water until cold. Drain well and pat noodles dry.

► Whisk together vinegar, sugar, fish sauce, and salt in a large bowl until sugar and salt are dissolved. Add noodles, carrot, scallions, herbs, and peanuts, tossing to combine.

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A Vietnamese caramel sauce lends complex flavor to grilled pork. Rice noodles sprinkled with peanuts and herbs make a perfect accompaniment.

