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Cuban pig economics

Pork is THE meat in Cuba. Beef is very limited and tightly government controlled. Possession of beef for consumption is a serious crime against the state. Most chicken consumed in Cuba is imported from the US and therefore only available in government stores. Chicken in quantity is simply unsuitable for home production. Fish is in short supply. But anyone can raise a pig at home for low cost. Pigs are a great income supplement or private source of income.



One starts with the purchase of a newly weaned pig. They are not hard to find and generally cost 600 Cuban pesos, or US\$24-. This one was for sale in the main square of Cueto, a town in eastern Cuba. Simply bring a lead rope, pay your money, and take it home.

Tie up the pig in your back yard or keep it on your back porch and feed it your food scraps. Many collect food scraps daily from a bucket one gives their neighbors and nearby friends. The more scraps one collects, the quicker the pay-off.





Or, you can have your own sow and raise your own pigs. This family seems to live well from their income from raising a litter of pigs every year.

After about 9 months, you have a marketable pig. The standard price is 15 Cuban pesos or US\$.60 a pound. Locally in Cueto, pigs are weighed on the scale at the train station, the only one available. The man in the uniform is not there in any official capacity. He is the seller of the pig. This pig weighed 146 pounds; bringing the equivalent of US\$88. The seller's profit of \$64 is equivalent to about six months of his government salary. The pig is very unhappy being tied up to be placed on the scale. And he has not yet realized that he has seen his last sunrise.





Pigs are butchered late at night or early in the morning then the meat sold fresh that day for 25 Cuban pesos or equivalent US\$1.00 per pound. The first customers get their choice of cuts while the last get whatever is left. All meat is sold and consumed daily as nothing is refrigerated.

Alternately, someone may spit roast the pig and sell it as sandwiches. A fresh roasted pork sandwich is 5 Cuban pesos or 20 cents equivalent.

