



UrbanGriller
Always Play With Your Food

Golden Crispy Pork Belly

Chris Girvan-Brown



I love pork belly, and with only two of us to feed most of the time, it's a great choice. Like a lot of us, I'm on a constant search for the best method to get thick crispy crackle on my pork belly.

At home, I'm usually cooking in my Big Green Egg. As with all kamados, the moisture retention properties of the BGE make it hard to get a crispy skin. I've had really good results from hanging the belly over the fire or setting it on an angle so the fat all runs off the skin and doesn't pool. But I want perfection. So the search continues.

I remember watching Gordon Ramsay once searing the skin in a pan to the point where the skin just starts to "fizz" on the edges before cooking it in an oven. I wasn't entirely convinced by that, but it was interesting.

I discovered some time ago that if you salt the skin and leave it overnight in the fridge, the salt draws moisture from the skin and dries it out. I use this technique all the time. Sometimes I mix the salt fifty-fifty with baking powder, based on the theory that the baking powder softens the skin and allows it to "fluff up" during cooking. However, the baking powder can leave a bitter taste if you are not careful.

I've been impressed with a Chinese technique that covers the bottom and sides of the pork with foil, then layers the top with salt before roasting.

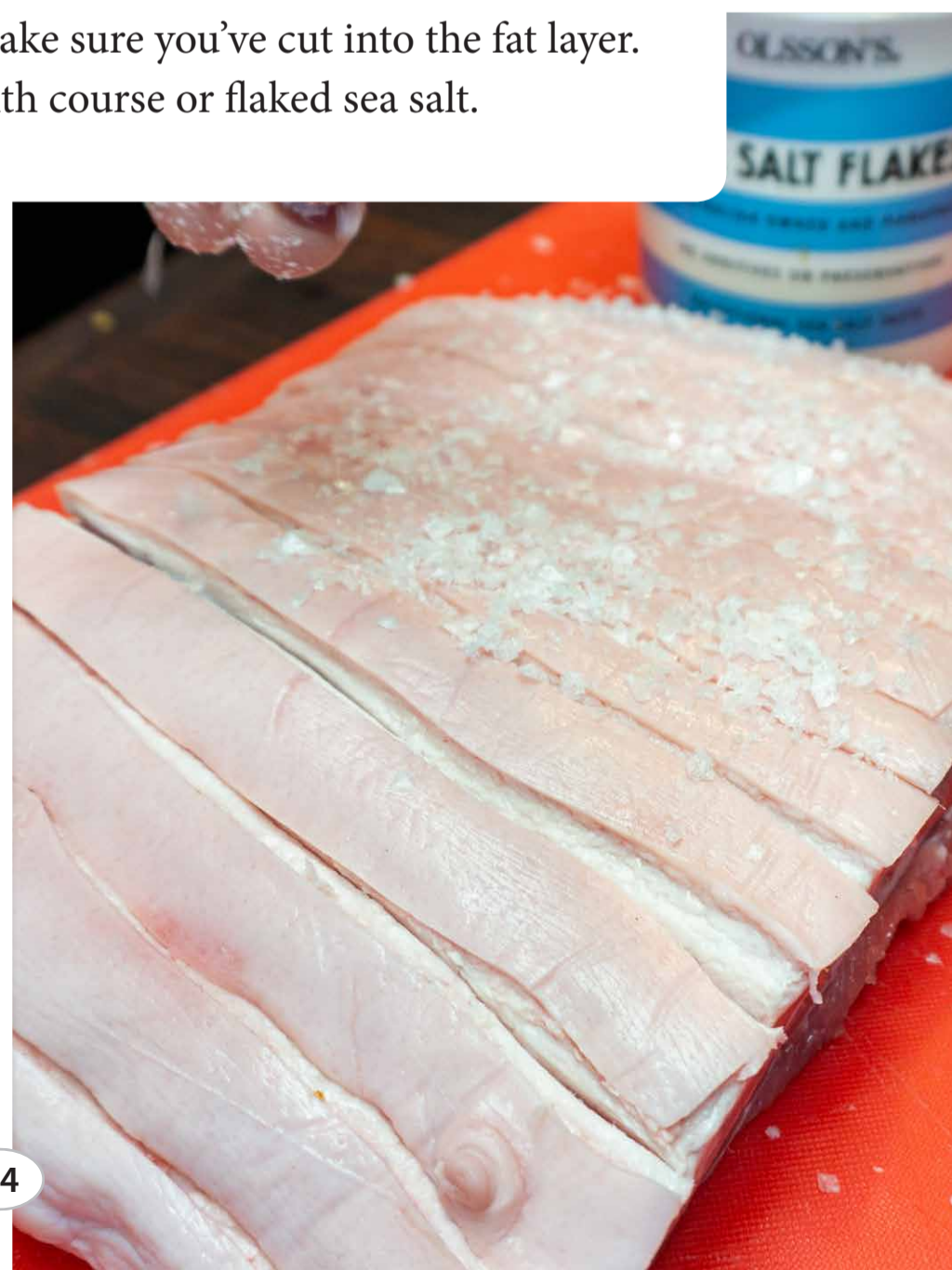
I read another technique from Australian food media guru [Lyndey Milan](#). Lyndey adapted a recipe from Michael Moore that shared some characteristics with Gordon Ramsey's technique, and I decided to make my own adaptation.





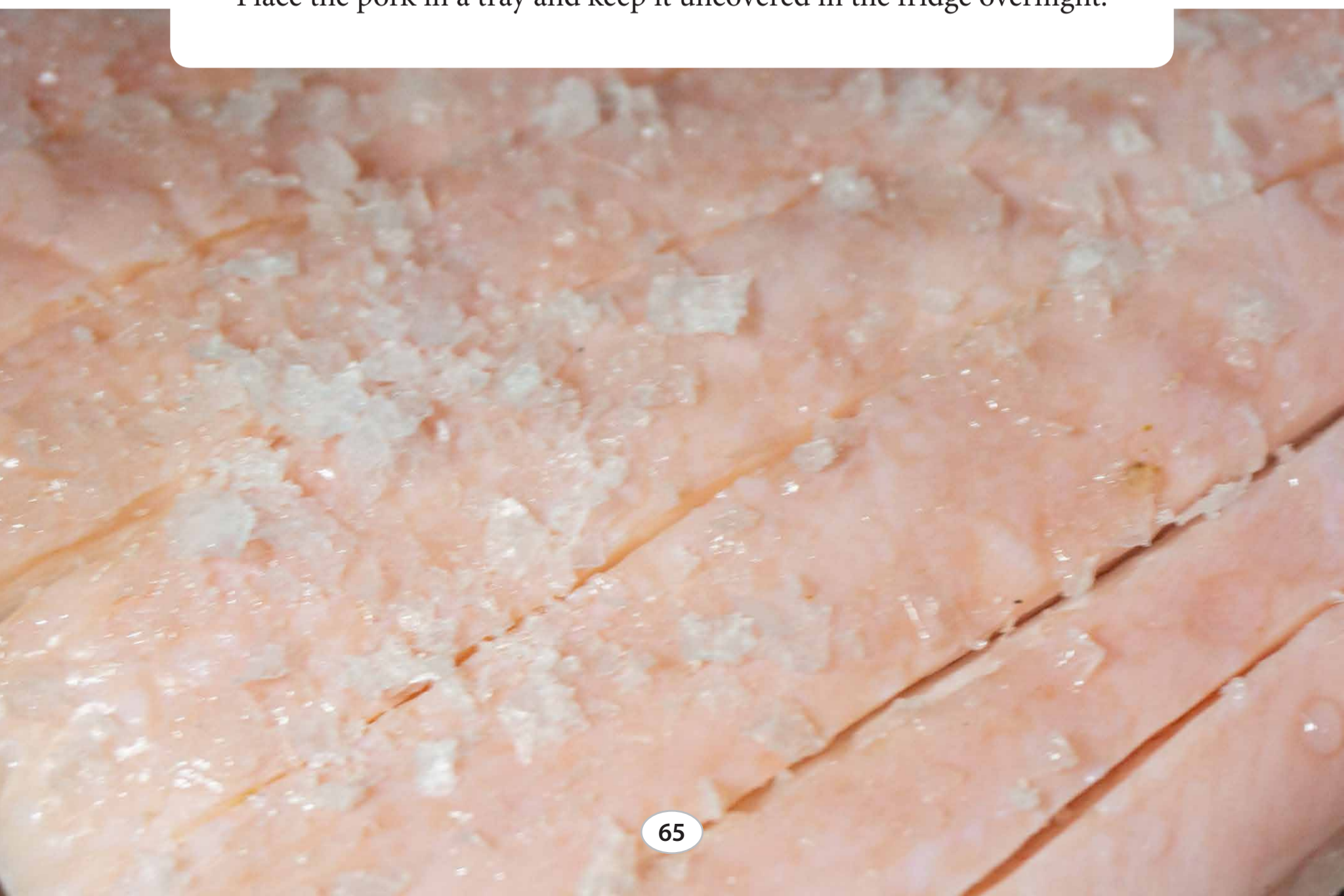
Use a sharp blade to score the skin with nice even cuts. I like to use a craft knife for this. Be careful not to cut the flesh, but only the skin and fat.

Open the cuts with your finger to make sure you've cut into the fat layer. Sprinkle the scored skin with course or flaked sea salt.





Place the pork in a tray and keep it uncovered in the fridge overnight.





The next day you will see a lot of moisture on the surface. Brush off the salt and wipe the skin dry. Be thorough. I cover a butter knife in kitchen paper to dry the inside of the cuts.





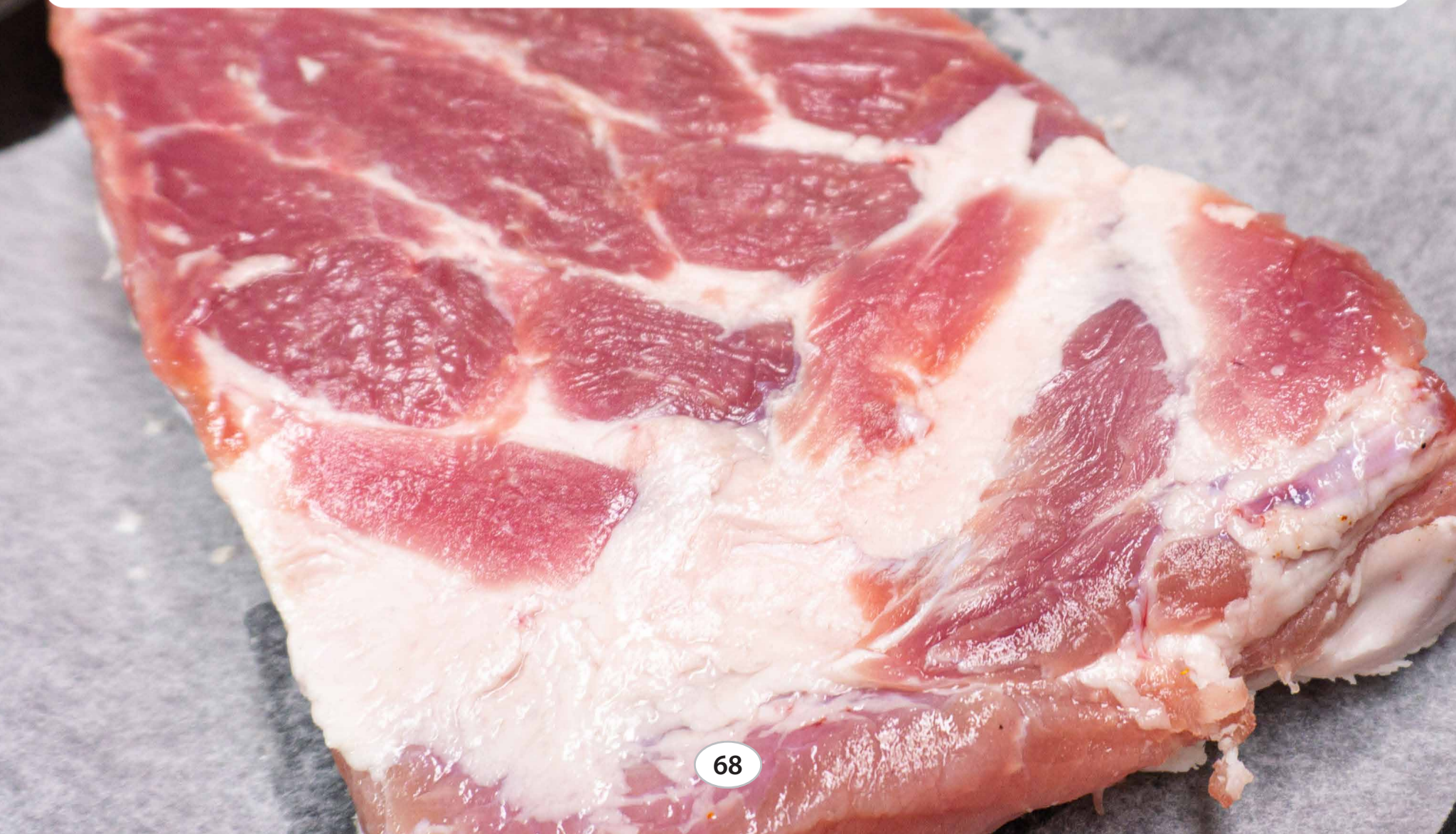
Notice how the salt has modified the skin, and the skin is dried with a kind of blotchy look.

Brush the skin with a light coat of oil and sprinkle it generously with salt.





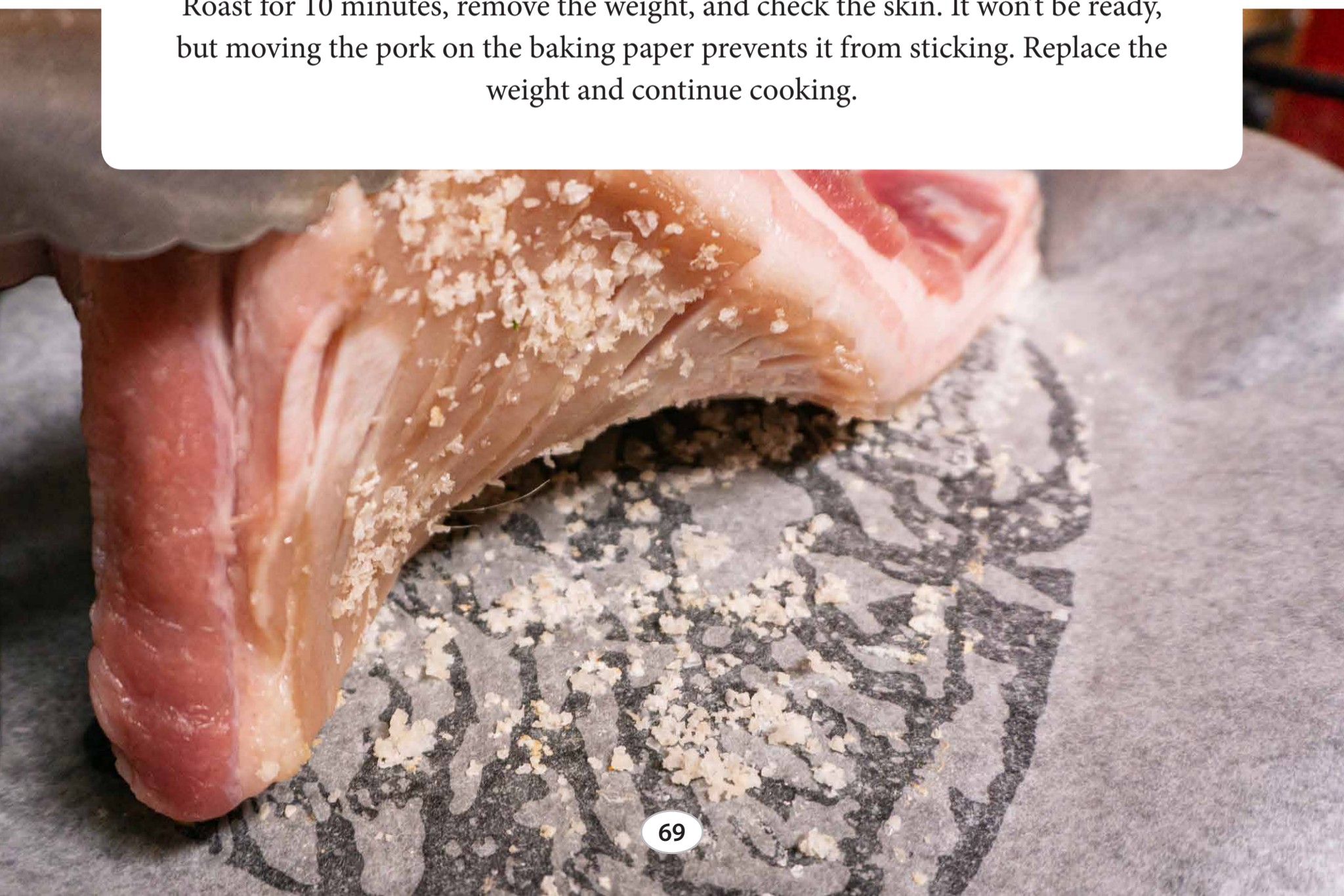
Start your barbecue and get the temperature up to 180–200 degrees C (356–392 degrees F)
Place the pork skin side down in a tray or pan. I'm using a flat cast iron griddle pan. I put a sheet of silicone coated baking paper under the pork to keep it from sticking.





Put the pan into the barbecue and place a weight on top to hold the skin against the pan. I use a brick covered in foil.

Roast for 10 minutes, remove the weight, and check the skin. It won't be ready, but moving the pork on the baking paper prevents it from sticking. Replace the weight and continue cooking.



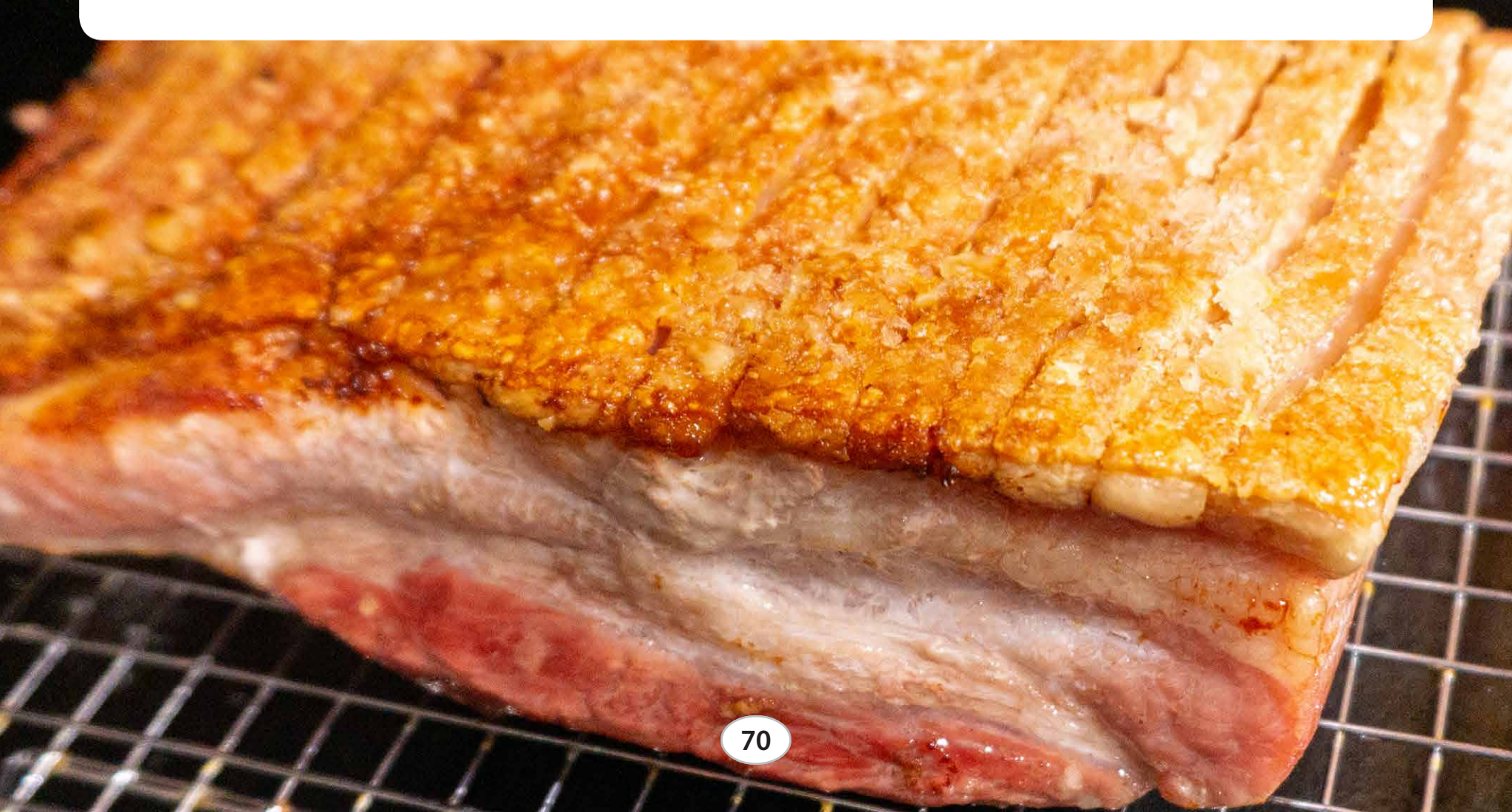


Check the progress of the skin again every 10 minutes.

By the fourth check, there should be the start of a lovely golden crackle on the skin.

Remove the pork from the barbecue. Flip it skin side up and check to see if the crackle is well progressed.

Return it to the barbecue and cook at a slightly reduced temperature for a further 30–40 minutes.





Rest the pork for 10–15 minutes before serving.



I've done this a few times now, and it has become my go-to method. It gives a no-fail golden crackle every time! It takes a bit of effort, but the result is spectacular.



Chris Girvan-Brown (aka Urban Griller) is Australia's BBQ Guru. He has written numerous BBQ articles for food magazines, instruction manuals, and cookbooks. He also does BBQ cooking segments for local radio and has been running BBQ cooking schools for 14 years.



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