

## Uncertain future for islanders who survived Tongan eruption

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“They cooked it and it was the best meal,” said Vailea. “On a normal day, you wouldn’t call it a good meal. But on that Tuesday, it was very special.”

The next day, they were all transported to the nearby island of Nomuka and then a few days later to Nuku’alofa, the capital, where they have been living since. None of them have been back to Mango Island. Until Sunday, they were in lockdown after the outbreak of the virus, which was likely brought in by foreign military crews delivering vital aid.

The survivors say it has been difficult for them over the past few weeks as they deal with the trauma and the lockdown restrictions, but it has helped immensely that they have all been living together and have been able to comfort one another. They’ve benefitted from the clothes, food, and money that have been donated by people from around the world.

What happens next remains uncertain. As

town officer, Vailea has been meeting regularly with Tongan officials but said the final decision of whether they will be able to return and resettle Mango Island rests with Tonga’s government and the monarch, King Tupou VI. The survivors hope they will get a decision within the coming weeks.

Vailea said the people of Mango Island are split, with some wanting to return and others happy to start life afresh in Nuku’alofa or elsewhere. He said it is his duty to support whatever his people want.

Halapaini said he has mixed feelings. All the good things that he enjoyed in life were on Mango Island, but he also worries that the volcano could erupt again.

Vailea is more emphatic. He wants to return to Mango Island, where life can be hard but where you own your time and share everything with your neighbors. Where you wake up in the morning and jump on your boat to fish.

## Korean flavors punch up pulled pork

By Christopher Kimball  
Christopher Kimball’s Milk Street

**P**ulled pork is a great staple for many reasons, including that it’s a hands-off meal that can feed a lot of people with little effort.

Simply cut tough and chewy pork shoulder or butt into chunks and toss it into a Dutch oven with seasonings. Cooked low and slow for several hours, it emerges succulent and tender enough to shred. Once the pot is in the oven, it requires almost no attention.

Many cooks will brown the pork in batches before braising it, but we found this step unnecessary if you use the right seasonings. In our book *COOKish*, which limits recipes to just six ingredients without sacrificing flavor, we make an Asian-inflected take on pulled pork with a trio of high-powered ingredients.

The Korean red pepper paste called gochujang adds loads of umami-rich flavor with the right amount of spice. Hoisin and white miso offer a sweeter, balancing depth.

We like the pork piled onto soft buns with pickled jalapenos on the side. It also is great with a crisp cabbage slaw, which adds a cooling crunch that contrasts with the succulent meat.

Editor’s note: To view additional recipes, visit <177milkstreet.com/ap>.



**PUNCHED-UP PORK.** Pictured are bites of Miso-Gochujang Shredded Pork, a recipe found in *COOKish*. (Milk Street via AP)

### Miso-Gochujang Shredded Pork

Start to finish: 3 3/4 hours (30 minutes active)  
Servings: 6 to 8

- 3 to 4 pounds boneless pork butt or shoulder, trimmed and cut into 1 1/2-inch chunks
- 3/4 cup gochujang
- 1/4 cup hoisin
- 1 medium yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup white miso

Heat the oven to 325° Fahrenheit with a rack in the lower-middle position. In a large Dutch oven, stir together the pork, gochujang, and hoisin. In a bowl, toss the onion with the miso, then distribute over the pork. Cover and cook for 2 hours. Uncover and cook until the pork is fork-tender, another 1 1/2 to 2 hours, stirring once or twice. Skim off and discard the fat, then shred the pork.

Optional garnish: Thinly sliced scallions or toasted sesame seeds, or both.

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