Chili Braised Pork Stew (Collegiate)

4 large dried ancho chiles (about 3/4 oz.), stemmed, seeded
2 large dried chiles de árbol or japones chiles, stemmed, seeded
2 Tbsp. sugar
1 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
1 5-lb. boneless pork shoulder (Boston butt) diced ½
Kosher salt
2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
1 large onion, chopped (about 2 cups)
3 large garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
2 bay leaves
2 tsp. dried oregano, preferably Mexican
2 tsp. ground coriander
2 tsp. ground cumin
1/2 tsp. ground allspice

Place chiles in a medium bowl. Add enough boiling water to cover, and set a small plate or bowl on chiles to keep submerged. Let soak until softened, about 30 minutes. Drain chiles, reserving 1 cup soaking liquid.

Preheat oven to 350°. Place chiles, sugar, lime juice, and ¼ cup reserved soaking liquid in a blender. Purée chile mixture, adding more soaking liquid as needed to form a smooth paste. Season pork shoulder generously with salt and spread paste over pork. DO AHEAD Can be rubbed 1-2 days ahead. Cover and chill. Let come to room temperature before continuing.

Heat oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat. Add onion, garlic, bay leaves, oregano, coriander, cumin, and allspice. Cook, stirring often, until onion is soft, about 8 minutes. Add pork to pot; cover and transfer to oven. Braise pork, basting occasionally with pan juices, until very tender, about 2 ½ hours.