



Menu du Jour

19 Jun 06

Trimming Spare Ribs

Pork ribs are sold in slabs usually having 11 to 14 bones, depending on how they were trimmed by the butcher. At the retail level, ribs are sold either whole or trimmed "St. Louis" style where the sternum, costal cartilage and skirt meat is trimmed off. It's less expensive to buy whole slabs and trim them yourself... plus you'll have lots of tasty tidbits for nibbling on!



Untrimmed slab of spare ribs, front



Untrimmed slab of spare ribs, bone side

The untrimmed slab weighed 5.4 pounds



Trim off the rib tips (or knuckle bones) and sternum:



Trimmed slab with sternum and knuckle bones removed

Place the slab bone side up on a cutting board and feel for the end of the ribs with your fingertip. Using a very sharp boning knife cut just above the ends of the bones down the length of the slab.

Remove the skirt:



The skirt is a small piece of meat on the bone side of the slab



Skirt meat removed



Remove the silverskin:



Silverskin removed

Remove the membrane from the bone side of the slab. Use a butter knife to pry up an edge of the membrane at the sternum end of the slab – the end with the longest bone. Grasp it with a paper towel and pull it off toward the other end of the slab.

There is a thin layer of membrane-like material beneath the silverskin you have just removed. Don't try to remove this; it's what holds the ribs and meat together.

Trim Up The Rack:



Trimmed rack, sternum (top left) and knuckle bones

With the membrane removed and trimming complete, scrape away any large deposits of fat hiding between the bones. Next, flip the slab over and cut off any large areas of fat on the meat side of the slab.



Trimmings from the slab: sternum (right), rib tips (top) and skirt



Finished rack, ready for seasoning and cooking, slightly over 3 pounds