



Menu du Jour

17 Aug 2004

Memphis-style Baby Back Ribs

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Pork ribs are sections of intercostal meat and bone cut from the hog's rib cage and backbone. They are usually large, flat, rectangular slabs that include ribs, meat and layers of fat. Baby Back ribs are located on the loin of the hog and are much smaller than Spare ribs which are the actual hog ribs. Although full slabs of untrimmed Baby Backs are available in most meat markets, this recipe uses commercially trimmed racks containing six to eight ribs each and weighing about eight ounces.

At the Rendezvous, one of Memphis' premier smokehouses located in an alleyway across from the famed Peabody hotel, ribs are served "dry" with two varieties of house sauces available in squeeze bottles for those who prefer their ribs "wet."

2 trimmed racks Baby Back pork ribs
1/2 cup rib rub (your favorite brand or use the rub below)
1 cup apple juice or cider
3 – 4 hickory chunks
1 – 2 mesquite chunks
5 – 8 pounds all-natural lump charcoal

Rendezvous-style Rib Rub:

2 tablespoons Hungarian paprika
2 teaspoons seasoned salt
2 teaspoons cracked black pepper
2 teaspoons granulated garlic powder
2 teaspoons granulated onion powder
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1/2 teaspoon chili powder
1/2 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper

Prepare Grill Dome:

Fill the Grill Dome firebox about 1/2 full of lump charcoal. Using an electric igniter or three small pieces of SuperCedar fire starter, light the charcoal. Add one chunk of mesquite and two



chunks of hickory to the charcoal. Prepare the Grill Dome for indirect cooking and allow the temperature to stabilize at 225° F. (This will take about 20 to 30 minutes depending on the size of your Grill Dome and the amount of fuel. For my ET, the bottom vent should be open about 1/4 to 1/2 of an inch and the top vent about 10% to maintain a low temperature.)

Prepare rub:

In a small mixing bowl, combine all of the ingredients and mix well. (This rub will keep, covered and stored in a dark place, for several weeks.)

Prepare ribs:

Using a butter knife or a Phillips head screwdriver, gently work the tool under the silverskin to loosen it. Grab the silverskin with a chef's towel and gently pull it off of the ribs. Trim any pockets of excess fat. Generously sprinkle both sides of the ribs with rub. (If desired, this could be done up to a day ahead. Wrap the rubbed ribs with food film and refrigerate.)

Prepare recipe:

Once the Grill Dome temperature is stabilized, place the ribs on the cooking grate bone side down and smoke-cook for one hour. After one hour, spray with ribs with apple cider, turn the ribs over and continue smoke-cooking another one to two hours or until tender. (Add wood chunks as needed to maintain the smoke and spray the ribs with apple cider every 45 minutes or so.)

Just remember every time you open the Grill Dome's cover to spray the ribs (or to take a peek at your handiwork) the temperature will drop 25 to 50 degrees or more, adding to the total cooking time.

When the ribs are tender to your liking, remove them from the cooker and serve with your favorite barbecue sauce on the side. (If you prefer "wet" ribs, brush the ribs with warmed sauce during the last 20 minutes of cooking.)



Plate Presentation

Carve the ribs into individual pieces and place on a service plate. Serve with baked beans and a creamy cole slaw or pasta salad. Offer warmed sauce on the side.

Cooking photos



Trimmed Baby Backs with silverskin still attached



Silverskin removed, rubbed and ready for the smoker



On the Grill Dome, 225 degrees



About three hours later... perfect ribs (without sauce)