



Menu du Jour

28 Nov 2004

Hickory & Mesquite Smoked Spare Ribs

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Pork ribs are sections of intercostal meat and bone cut from the hog's rib cage and backbone. There are a variety of ribs usually available at the meat market: Baby Backs and Spareribs being the most common. (Country style ribs are actually more like pork chops than actual ribs.) Baby Backs are smaller, and more expensive, than Spareribs. They also have less meat and less fat than Spareribs. For this recipe, a full slab of Spareribs is used. The slab weighed just over 5 1/2 pounds before trimming. After trimming to a St. Louis style rib, the slab weighs in at three pounds, a perfect size for two people to enjoy. (St. Louis style ribs are prepared by removing the brisket bone parallel to the rib side and removing the skirt meat.)

1 slab pork Spareribs
1/2 cup rib rub (see below)
1 cup apple cider
3 – 4 hickory chunks
1 – 2 mesquite chunks
5 – 8 pounds all-natural lump charcoal

Rib Rub:

2 tablespoons hot 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 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. Trim the top of the ribs, removing the small bones. Generously sprinkle both sides of the ribs with rub. (This should be done a day ahead. Wrap the rubbed ribs with food film and refrigerate. Bring to room temperature before cooking.) Trimmed pieces may be cooked along with the ribs and served as appetizers at another time.

Prepare Grill Dome:

Fill the Grill Dome firebox about one-half full of lump 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 30 to 40 minutes depending on the size of your Grill Dome, the amount of fuel and the ambient temperature. For my ET, the bottom vent should be open about one-half inch and the top vent about 10% to maintain a low temperature.)

Prepare recipe:

Once the Grill Dome temperature is stabilized, place the ribs on the cooking grate bone side up 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 hour 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. As an approximation, figure the ribs need to smoke-cook at 200° F. to 225° F. about an hour to 1 1/2 hours per pound.

Pull the ribs from the Grill Dome when they reach an internal temperature of 165° F.

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



Finishing Sauce

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 1/2 teaspoons Louisiana-style hot sauce
1 cup ketchup
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
3 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard
1 teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
1/2 cup finely chopped sweet onion
1 tablespoon dark brown sugar
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 tablespoon Ancho powder

Combine ingredients in medium saucepan and bring to a low simmer over medium heat. Cook until reduced by one-third.

Plate Presentation

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



Cooking photos



Untrimmed Spares with silverskin still attached, 5.6 pounds



Spare Ribs After Trimming, 3 pounds



Trimmed With Silverskin Removed



Trimmed, Rubbed, And Ready For The Grill Dome



**On the Grill Dome, 225° F. grate temperature
Ambient temperature 46° F. Wind-chill 39° F. Wind 17 – 28 mph**



After Cooking For One Hour

From The Kitchen Of Michael H. Stines
www.CapeCodBBQ.com



Finished Ribs After Cooking For 3 1/2 Hours
Ambient temperature 47° F. Wind-chill 41° F. Wind 13 – 21 mph





Cooking Log

Time	Notes	Grill Temp.	Meat Temp.
1030	Grill Dome lit	40	
1100		180	
1115	Ribs On	220	60
1215		207	145
1315	Vents adjusted	175	147
1415		226	154
1445		228	165
1500		226	170