

Hickory Smoked Pork

Serves 6-8

Courtesy of Restaurant Associates Chef Albert Lukas, for demo June 17, 2016

Ingredients:

One 5-pound boneless pork butt
2 cups Carolina Pork Rub (see recipe above)

Equipment needed:

5 pounds hickory chips, soaked in water for at least six hours
1 bag all-natural wood charcoal (commonly sold as “cowboy charcoal”
1 square disposable Aluminum 8x8 Pan

1. Starting the day before, remove the pork shoulder from its wrapping and pat dry with a paper towel. Be sure to dry it well to remove all surface moisture, as this will allow for the rub to be properly applied.
2. Place the pork shoulder onto a baking sheet that is larger on all sides than the piece of meat. Generously apply the pork rub all over the meat, being sure to firmly rub it into the meat until it is well coated. Place the pork in to an appropriately sized container and wrap in cling film and refrigerate overnight. (Early the next day, remove the pork from the refrigeration one hour before you begin the smoking or oven-cooking process.)
3. Smoking instructions: Using a kettle-style grill, set the charcoal on fire using an electric or chimney starter. (For optimal flavor, it is important not to use lighter fluid.) Allow the charcoal to “burn down” to white hot embers, then use a small shovel to push the embers to one side of the grill. Place the aluminum pan (to catch the juices) in the void next to the embers.
4. Drain the water off the hickory chips and place approximately two to three heaping handfuls directly onto the embers. Quickly put the grill’s wire rack in place, and place the pork shoulder onto the grill rack over the aluminum pan. Place the kettle dome over the grill. Adjust the bottom and top vents in order to control the cooking temperature. The cooking temperature should be 200°F. Let the pork smoke for approximately 1 ½ hours per pound of meat till done (so for a 5-pound pork butt, you should assume 7 ½ hours). During the cooking process you will periodically have to add more hickory chips as they burn down.
5. Oven-cooking instructions: Preheat your oven to 375°F. Unwrap the pork shoulder, place in a large roasting pan, and transfer to the oven. Cook for 20 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 225°F. Continue to roast for approximately 1 ½ hours per pound of meat till done (so for a 5-pound pork butt, you should assume 7 ½ hours). Using a probe thermometer check the internal temperature of the pork once it reaches 180 degrees F and is fork tender remove from the grill. Allow the meat to rest for 30 minutes before handling. Using your fingers “pull” the pork into pieces you may choose to do it as a fine shred or pull into slightly larger piece for a meaty texture.

6. Doneness for both methods: Use a meat thermometer to check the internal temperature of the pork for doneness—it should be 180°F and is fork-tender. (While the USDA food safety guidelines recommend cooking pork to an internal temperature 145 degrees F, it is important for BBQ style pulled pork to be cooked to between 180-190 degrees F. This is due to the fact that the meat will only break down into that soft BBQ texture at the higher temperature range.) Remove from the grill and allow the meat to rest for 30 minutes before handling.
7. Use your fingers to “pull” the pork into pieces—you may choose to do it as a fine shred or pull into slightly larger piece for a meaty texture. Serve with your favorite BBQ sauce and enjoy!

Recipe courtesy of Restaurant Associates chef Albert Lukas



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