

CHIP COOPER'S BBQ RECIPE AND COOKING PROCEDURE

January 9, 2004

Ham or Shoulder (note: you also may use a smaller butt. The advantage of ham is that it is lean, but it has little meat that is not covered with a thick skin, and therefore it has less outside meat and the rub and smoke does not penetrate the skin well at all. The shoulder has more fat content, but it has more exposed meat, and therefore will yield more outside meat and will react to the rub and smoke better than ham.)

Choose fresh, uncured ham or shoulder, approximately 20 lbs. in weight.

Charcoal & Starter

For best results use Big Green Egg natural lump charcoal. Never use lighter fluid; it will leave a distinctive taste. Start the fire with paper or use a paraffin-based starter.

Wood Chunks: 3-5 chunks white oak or "Pig Nut Hickory" (almost the size of a tennis ball) (note: "Pig Nut Hickory" is preferred, but any combination of oak and hickory will do just fine). Do not soak in water; use the wood dry.

Disposable Aluminum Drip Pan

For large BGE, use Hefty SuperRoaster Pan 16" x 12½" x 3 1/4"

Dry Rub

Any rub that is intended for pork will do fine for starters. A good one to buy is Butt Rub - see buttrub.com; you also may buy it a BBQ Galore store). After you experiment with several commercially available rubs, you should develop your own blend. Low sodium rubs may be good for you, but they don't provide a good base of flavor to the meat (you need a fair amount of good old fashioned salt in the rub).

Sauce For Pulled Pork

No preference; use whatever you like, but make sure you heat it and serve it warm so the flavor will be maxed out.

Eastern NC-Style BBQ Sauce

In a small sauce pan, pour in apple cider vinegar and add a heaping tablespoon of medium dark brown sugar. Bring to a boil and then pour in a squeeze bottle for use as described below.

Apply Rub

2 hours before cooking, splash ham with cider vinegar and sprinkle with rub of your choice.

Basic Cooking And Serving Procedure

1. Start charcoal and wood 1 hour before cooking. After the hour, most of the white smoke will have subsided (don't worry about that - you'll get the flavor). Place v-rack inside Disposable Aluminum Drip Pan, and place the Drip Pan on the BGE grill. Use water in

the Drip Pan for the entire cooking process (you may add other liquids such as vinegar, apple juice, etc. if you like).

2. Stabilize dome temp at 250 degrees. Insert internal thermometer in thickest part of ham. Cook at dome temp of 250 degrees with the fat side up until the internal temp of the ham reaches 200 degrees in the thickest part. This may take at least 15 hours, or so. To speed up the cooking time, at any time after 10 hours of cooking time, increase the dome temp to 325 degrees.

3. After the pork reaches the target internal temp of 200 degrees, remove from cooker and let sit for about 30 minutes before serving.

4. The cooked BBQ will hold well for hours if you double wrap in foil and place in an enclosed ice chest. The insulation plus the foil will hold in the internal temp.

5. Serve the ham both Memphis Pulled-Pork style and Eastern NC Chopped style.

For Memphis Pulled-Pork style BBQ - pull off completely lean pieces of up to 4-5 inches long from the center of the ham. Serve the lean pulled pork stacked on a platter with no sauce on the meat. Serve the sauce(s) as dipping sauces on the side.

For Eastern NC Chopped style BBQ - pull meat and chop with meat cleaver. Mix some outside meat ("Mr. Brown") with some lean inside white meat ("Mrs. White"). When Mr. Brown has thoroughly mixed with Mrs. White, add salt, red pepper flakes, and Eastern NC-Style Vinegar Sauce to taste. Continue to stir and add small amounts of salt, pepper flakes, and vinegar sauce until you know it's right. Serve in a bowl or platter with vinegar sauce and red pepper flakes on the side.

Texture And Taste

If the ham is done correctly, the meat be "fall from the bone" tender, but not mushy. Most of the internal fat should be rendered out, but the meat should be moist, not dry. The large bone in the center should pull clean out of the ham.