

BBQ Baby Back Ribs

Serves 4

For a more potent spice flavor, coat the ribs with the spice rub as directed and refrigerate them overnight, wrapped tightly in plastic wrap. If you'd like to use wood chinks rather than wood chips when using a charcoal grill, substitute 2 medium wood chunks, soaked in water for 1 hour, for the wood chip packet.

Salt and pepper

1/2 granulated sugar

2 (2 lbs) racks baby back or loin back ribs, trimmed, membrane removed

1 tablespoon plus 1/2 teaspoon paprika

1 3/4 teaspoons ground cumin

1 1/2 teaspoons chili powder

1 1/2 teaspoons packed dark brown sugar

1 teaspoon white pepper

3/4 teaspoon dried oregano

1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

2 cups wood chips, soaked in water for 15 minutes and drained

1. Dissolve 1/2 cup salt and granulated sugar in 4 quarts cold water in a large bowl or container. Submerge ribs in brine, cover, and refrigerate for 1 hour. Remove ribs from brine and pat dry with paper towels.

2. combine paprika, cumin, chili powder, brown sugar, white pepper, 3/4 teaspoon salt, 3/4 teaspoon pepper, oregano and cayenne in a small bowl. Rub each rack with 1 tablespoon of spice rub and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Using large piece of heavy duty aluminum foil, wrap soaked chips in foil packet and cut several vent holes in top.

3A. FOR A CHARCOAL GRILL: Open bottom vent halfway. Light large chimney starter three quarters filled with charcoal briquettes (4 1/2 quarts). When top coals are partially covered with ash, pour evenly over half of grill. Place wood chip packet on coals. Set cooking grate in place, cover, and open lid vent halfway. Heat grill until hot, about 5 minutes.

3B. FOR A GAS GRILL: Place wood chip packet over primary burner. Turn all burners to high, cover, and heat grill until hot and wood chips are smoking, about 15 minutes. Leave primary burner on high and turn off other burner(s).

4. Clean and oil cooking grate. Place ribs on cooler side of grill and cook for 2 hours, covered, until grill temperature drops to about 250 degrees, flipping, switching, and rotating ribs every 30 minutes so that rack that was nearest fire is on outside. Add to fresh briquettes to pile of coals (if using charcoal). Cover and continue to cook (grill temperature should register 275 to 300 degrees on grill thermometer), flipping, switching and rotating ribs every 30 minutes, until meat easily pulls away from bone, 1 1/2 to 2 hours longer. Transfer ribs to cutting board, cut between bones to separate ribs, and serve.