



The Pitmaster Recipe Book

COMPETITION-WINNING BBQ

15 essential recipes from award-winning pitmasters to elevate
your backyard BBQ to championship level

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MAIN COURSE

Texas-Style Brisket

Prep: 30 min**Cook:** 12-16 hours**Temp:** 225-250°F**Serves:** 12-15

The holy grail of BBQ. True Texas brisket keeps it simple—just salt, pepper, smoke, and time. This is the recipe that wins championships.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole packer brisket (12-15 lbs)
- 1/2 cup coarse black pepper
- 1/2 cup coarse kosher salt
- 2 tbsp garlic powder (optional)
- Yellow mustard (as binder)
- Post oak or hickory wood chunks
- Beef tallow (for wrapping)
- Pink butcher paper

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 **Trim the brisket:** Remove hard fat, leaving 1/4" fat cap. Square off edges and remove any silver skin from the flat.
- 2 **Apply binder & rub:** Coat with thin layer of mustard. Mix salt and pepper 1:1 and apply liberally on all sides. Let rest 1 hour or overnight in fridge.
- 3 **Prep your smoker:** Bring to 225-250°F with clean smoke. Fat side down for offset smokers, fat side up for pellet/vertical smokers.
- 4 **The cook:** Smoke for 6-8 hours until bark is set and internal temp hits 165-170°F. This is the stall—don't panic.
- 5 **Wrap it:** When bark is mahogany, wrap in butcher paper with a few tablespoons

of tallow. Return to smoker.

6

The finish: Cook until probe tender (feels like butter), usually 200-205°F internal. Total cook: 12-16 hours.

7

Rest: Rest in cooler for 1-2 hours minimum. Slice against the grain, point and flat separately.

□ Pro Tips

- Choose USDA Prime or high-quality Choice for best marbling
- The stall is your friend—it means the bark is setting
- Probe test multiple spots—when it slides in like butter, you're done
- Never skip the rest. 2 hours minimum, 4 hours is better

MAIN COURSE

Competition Ribs

Prep: 20 min**Cook:** 6 hours**Temp:** 225-275°F**Serves:** 4-6

The famous 3-2-1 method produces perfect fall-off-the-bone ribs every single time. This is the competition-proven technique.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 racks St. Louis-style spare ribs
- 1/2 cup All-Purpose BBQ Rub (page 19)
- Yellow mustard (as binder)
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 4 tbsp butter
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 cup apple juice
- Your favorite BBQ sauce
- Apple or cherry wood chunks

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 **Prep ribs:** Remove membrane from bone side. Apply mustard binder then coat generously with rub. Let sit 30 min or overnight.
- 2 **Phase 1 - Smoke (3 hours):** Smoke at 225°F bone-side down. Spritz with apple juice every 45 min after first 2 hours.
- 3 **Phase 2 - Wrap (2 hours):** Lay ribs meat-side down on foil. Add butter, brown sugar, honey. Wrap tightly. Return to smoker at 275°F.
- 4 **Phase 3 - Glaze (1 hour):** Unwrap ribs, meat-side up. Brush with BBQ sauce. Return to smoker at 250°F to set glaze.
- 5 **Test for doneness:** Ribs should bend when picked up with tongs. Bone should

twist easily but not fall out.

6

Rest & serve: Rest 10 min, slice between bones, and serve with extra sauce on the side.

□ Pro Tips

- St. Louis cut ribs are more uniform than baby backs—better for competitions
- Don't want fall-off-the-bone? Try 3-1.5-0.5 for more bite
- Apply sauce in thin layers—3 light coats beats 1 heavy coat
- Let them rest before cutting or all the juices run out

MAIN COURSE

Classic Pulled Pork

Prep: 20 min**Cook:** 10-14 hours**Temp:** 225-250°F**Serves:** 15-20

Nothing feeds a crowd like a beautiful pork butt. Low and slow transforms this tough cut into the most tender, flavorful pulled pork you've ever tasted.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bone-in pork butt/shoulder (8-10 lbs)
- 1/2 cup All-Purpose BBQ Rub
- 2 tbsp paprika
- Yellow mustard (binder)
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup apple juice (for spritzing)
- Hickory or apple wood chunks

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 **Prep the butt:** Trim excess fat to 1/4". Score fat cap in crosshatch pattern. Apply mustard, then rub generously all over.
- 2 **Into the smoker:** Fat cap up at 225°F. Don't open for first 3 hours—let bark develop.
- 3 **Spritz & wait:** After 3 hours, spritz every hour with apple juice/vinegar mix. The stall will hit around 160°F.
- 4 **Optional wrap:** At 165°F, wrap in foil or butcher paper to power through stall. Or just ride it out unwrapped for better bark.
- 5 **Probe test:** It's done when probe slides in like butter, usually 200-205°F. Total

time: 10-14 hours.

6

Rest & pull: Rest 1-2 hours in cooler. Pull by hand or with forks. Mix bark pieces throughout. Sauce optional.

□ Pro Tips

- Bone-in has more flavor and tells you when it's done (bone should wiggle)
- Save the drippings—mix them back in when pulling for extra moisture
- Don't over-sauce! Let people add their own
- Pulled pork freezes beautifully for up to 3 months

MAIN COURSE

Smoked Whole Chicken

Prep: 15 min**Cook:** 3-4 hours**Temp:** 275-325°F**Serves:** 4-6

Smoked chicken is the gateway to BBQ glory. Quick cook time, incredible flavor, and perfect for weeknight dinners. The key? Crispy skin with juicy meat.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole chicken (4-5 lbs)
- 3 tbsp olive oil or melted butter
- 1/4 cup All-Purpose BBQ Rub
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 lemon, halved
- 4 garlic cloves
- Fresh thyme & rosemary
- Apple or cherry wood chunks

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 **Prep the bird:** Pat completely dry with paper towels. Remove giblets. Tuck wing tips under.
- 2 **Season:** Rub with oil, then apply rub mixed with baking powder (this helps crisp the skin). Season under skin too.
- 3 **Stuff the cavity:** Add lemon halves, garlic, and herbs inside. Don't truss—air needs to circulate.
- 4 **Smoke high:** Cook at 275-325°F. Higher temp = crispier skin. Takes about 3-4 hours.
- 5 **Temp check:** Done at 165°F in thickest part of breast, 175°F in thigh. Let probe

slide in easily.

6

Optional crisp: Crank to 400°F for last 10 min or finish under broiler for extra crispy skin.

7

Rest: Rest 15 min before carving. Don't skip—juices need to redistribute.

□ Pro Tips

- Dry brine overnight—1 tsp salt per lb, uncovered in fridge for crispiest skin
- Spatchcock for even faster cooking and crispier skin
- Use a beer can or chicken throne for vertical cooking
- Fruit woods (apple, cherry) are perfect for poultry

MAIN COURSE

Kansas City Burnt Ends

Prep: 30 min**Cook:** 14-18 hours**Temp:** 225-275°F**Serves:** 8-10

The meat candy of BBQ. These little cubes of brisket point are caramelized, sticky, and dangerously addictive. Worth every minute of the cook.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole packer brisket point (5-7 lbs)
- 1/2 cup Texas Brisket Rub (page 19)
- Yellow mustard (binder)
- 1 cup BBQ sauce
- 4 tbsp butter, cubed
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 tbsp hot honey
- Oak or hickory wood chunks

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 **Prep the point:** Separate point from flat if using full packer. Trim, apply mustard, season heavily with rub.
- 2 **First smoke:** Smoke at 225°F for 6-8 hours until internal temp reaches 165-170°F and bark is set.
- 3 **Wrap & continue:** Wrap in butcher paper. Continue smoking until 195°F internal, about 4-5 more hours.
- 4 **Cube it:** When probe tender, remove and rest 30 min. Cut into 1-1.5" cubes.
- 5 **The sauce:** Toss cubes with BBQ sauce, butter, brown sugar, and hot honey. Place in foil pan.

6

Final smoke: Return uncovered pan to smoker at 275°F for 1-2 hours, stirring every 30 min until sticky and caramelized.

□ Pro Tips

- The point has more fat = more tender burnt ends. Don't use the flat.
- Cut cubes WITH the grain—they hold together better
- Stir gently during final phase to prevent breaking apart
- Serve immediately—they don't hold well

MAIN COURSE

Brisket Street Tacos

Prep: 20 min

Cook: 5 min (using leftover brisket)

Temp: High heat for tortillas

Serves: 8-10 tacos

The perfect way to use leftover brisket. Fresh tortillas, tangy pickled onions, and that smoky brisket create taco perfection.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb leftover brisket, chopped
- 12 small corn tortillas
- 1 cup pickled red onions
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 avocado, sliced
- Lime wedges
- Cotija cheese, crumbled
- Salsa verde or your favorite salsa
- **For pickled onions:**
 - 1 red onion, thinly sliced
 - 1/2 cup lime juice

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 **Pickle the onions:** Combine onion, lime juice, salt, and sugar. Let sit 30 min minimum (overnight is better).
- 2 **Reheat brisket:** Chop brisket into small pieces. Warm in skillet with a splash of beef broth or brisket drippings.
- 3 **Warm tortillas:** Heat dry skillet over high heat. Warm tortillas 30 sec per side until slightly charred. Stack and cover.
- 4 **Assemble:** Double up tortillas. Add brisket, pickled onions, cilantro, avocado, and cotija.
- 5 **Finish:** Squeeze lime over top, add salsa. Serve immediately with extra

- 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp sugar

pickled onions on the side.

□ Pro Tips

- Use a mix of point and flat for best texture variety
- Make pickled onions the day before—they only get better
- Corn tortillas are traditional, but flour works if you prefer
- Add a drizzle of Alabama white sauce for a fusion twist

Sides

EVERY GREAT BBQ NEEDS LEGENDARY SIDES

SIDE DISH

Smoked Mac and Cheese

Prep: 20 min

Cook: 1.5 hours

Temp: 225-250°F

Serves: 10-12

Regular mac and cheese is good. Smoked mac and cheese is legendary. That kiss of smoke transforms this comfort food classic into something unforgettable.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb elbow macaroni
- 4 cups sharp cheddar, shredded
- 2 cups Gruyère, shredded
- 1 cup smoked Gouda, shredded
- 4 tbsp butter
- 4 tbsp flour
- 4 cups whole milk, warmed
- 1 tsp mustard powder
- 1/2 tsp cayenne
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 1 cup panko breadcrumbs

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 **Cook pasta:** Cook macaroni 2 min UNDER al dente (it'll finish in smoker). Drain and set aside.
- 2 **Make sauce:** Melt butter, whisk in flour, cook 2 min. Slowly add warm milk, whisking constantly until thick.
- 3 **Add cheese:** Remove from heat. Stir in 3/4 of cheeses until melted. Add mustard, cayenne, salt, pepper.
- 4 **Combine:** Fold in pasta. Pour into cast iron or foil pan. Top with remaining cheese and panko.
- 5 **Smoke it:** Smoke uncovered at 225-250°F for 1-1.5 hours until bubbly and

- Chopped burnt ends
(optional topping)

golden on top.

6

Rest & serve: Let rest 10 min. Top with chopped burnt ends if desired. Devour.

□ Pro Tips

- Mix of cheeses = complex flavor. Never use pre-shredded (anti-caking agents prevent melting)
- Undercook pasta—it absorbs sauce and continues cooking in smoker
- Cast iron gives best crust on bottom and edges
- Add bacon, jalapeños, or pulled pork for loaded version

SIDE DISH

Pitmaster Baked Beans

Prep: 15 min

Cook: 3 hours

Temp: 250°F

Serves: 12-15

Sweet, savory, smoky, and loaded with meat. These aren't your grandma's baked beans—unless your grandma was a competition pitmaster.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cans (28 oz each) baked beans
- 1/2 lb bacon, chopped
- 1 lb ground beef or chopped brisket
- 1 onion, diced
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup BBQ sauce
- 2 tbsp yellow mustard
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 jalapeño, minced (optional)
- Salt & pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 **Cook the meat:** Fry bacon until crispy. Remove. Brown ground beef in bacon fat. Remove.
- 2 **Sauté aromatics:** Cook onion in remaining fat until soft, about 5 min. Add jalapeño if using.
- 3 **Combine:** In large foil pan, mix beans, bacon, beef, onion, brown sugar, BBQ sauce, mustard, and vinegar.
- 4 **Season:** Taste and adjust salt, pepper, and sugar. Should be sweet-savory balance.
- 5 **Smoke it:** Smoke uncovered at 250°F for 2-3 hours, stirring every 45 min, until thick and bubbly.

6

Finish: Beans should coat a spoon. Let rest 15 min—they thicken as they cool.

□ Pro Tips

- Use leftover brisket or burnt ends instead of ground beef for next level
- Smoke alongside your main meat—beans love absorbing drippings
- Make day before—flavors meld and improve overnight
- Add pineapple chunks for Hawaiian twist

Rubs & Seasonings

THE FOUNDATION OF GREAT BBQ

SEASONINGS

Essential BBQ Rubs

All-Purpose BBQ Rub

The workhorse rub that works on everything—pork, chicken, ribs, beef.

Mix together:

- 1/4 cup paprika
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 2 tbsp kosher salt
- 1 tbsp black pepper
- 1 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tbsp garlic powder
- 1 tbsp onion powder
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp cumin

Makes about 1 cup. Store in airtight container up to 6 months.

Texas Brisket Rub

Simple. Perfect. Let the meat shine.

Mix together:

- 1/2 cup coarse black pepper (16 mesh)
- 1/2 cup coarse kosher salt
- 2 tbsp garlic powder (optional)
- 1 tbsp onion powder (optional)

The Dalmatian rub (50/50 S&P) is all you need. Purists skip the garlic.

Memphis Dry Rub

Sweet, savory, with a kick. Perfect for ribs.

Mix together:

- 1/4 cup paprika
- 3 tbsp brown sugar
- 2 tbsp kosher salt
- 2 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tbsp black pepper
- 1 tbsp garlic powder
- 1 tbsp onion powder
- 2 tsp dry mustard
- 1 tsp celery salt
- 1/2 tsp cayenne

Sauces

REGIONAL CLASSICS TO MASTER

SAUCES

Classic Kansas City BBQ Sauce

Prep: 10 min **Cook:** 30 min **Makes:** 2 cups

Thick, sweet, tangy, and tomatoey. This is the BBQ sauce most people picture—and for good reason. It's perfect on everything.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup ketchup
- 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 tbsp molasses
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tbsp yellow mustard
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 tsp cayenne
- Liquid smoke (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 **Combine:** Whisk all ingredients together in a saucepan.
- 2 **Simmer:** Bring to low boil, then reduce heat and simmer 20-30 min, stirring occasionally.
- 3 **Adjust:** Taste and adjust sweetness, tang, or heat to your preference.
- 4 **Cool & store:** Cool completely. Store in jar in fridge up to 2 weeks.

□ Pro Tips

- Add 1 tbsp bourbon or whiskey for adult version
- Blend smooth or leave chunky—your call
- Tastes better after resting overnight

SAUCES

Carolina Vinegar Sauce

Prep: 5 min **Cook:** None **Makes:** 2 cups

Eastern Carolina style—thin, tangy, and fiery. No tomato, no sweetness, just pure vinegar punch. Perfect for pulled pork.

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 cups apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup white vinegar
- 1 tbsp crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Combine all ingredients in a jar.
- 2 Shake vigorously until sugar dissolves.
- 3 Let sit at least 1 hour (overnight is better).
- 4 Shake before each use. Keeps indefinitely.

SAUCES

Alabama White Sauce

Prep: 5 min **Cook:** None **Makes:** 2 cups

Creamy, tangy, and totally unique. Invented in Alabama for smoked chicken, but incredible on pork and as a dip.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup mayonnaise
 - 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
 - 2 tbsp lemon juice
 - 1 tbsp prepared horseradish
 - 1 tsp black pepper
 - 1/2 tsp salt
 - 1/2 tsp cayenne
 - 1/2 tsp garlic powder
-

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Whisk all ingredients until smooth.
 - 2 Taste and adjust tang/heat.
 - 3 Refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving.
 - 4 Keeps 1 week refrigerated.
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