

Ribs & Sauces

Barbecue-featuring meat that has been basted, then cooked slowly over low heat-is considered synonymous with the South. But the sauces and spices differ from state to state and region to region: In North Carolina, pork shoulder is doused in a thin, clear, cider vinegar-based sauce, while Memphis is the home of dry-rubbed ribs.

Kansas City, where ribs are traditionally covered with a sweet, ketchup-based sauce, is home to both the American Royal Barbecue Contest-the world's biggest competitive barbecue cook-off-and Gates Bar-B-Q, an empire of five restaurants run by Ollie Gates. The Gates barbecue legacy began in 1946 when Ollie's father, George, left his railroad job to open Gates' Ol' Kentuck in Kansas City. The restaurant was such a success he opened a second one in 1954, renaming them Gates & Sons Bar-B-Q a few years later. The restaurant chain adopted its current name when Ollie's daughter Arzelia, along with other family members, became actively involved in the business.

Ollie begins cooking ribs by lighting the coals in a chimney, using tongs to arrange them on one side of the grill once they are hot-the ribs will be placed on the opposite side of the grill from the coals, so they are cooked with indirect heat. The grill is ready when the temperature reaches 230° to 250° . Ollie recommends laying a bed of hickory chips across the coals followed by a layer of hickory-wood blocks; the fragrant wood imparts excellent flavor to the meat. Hickory is ideal because its density makes it burn for long periods, giving off a lasting heat and leaving little ash.

To serve 18 to 20 people, use 6 slabs of 2 1/2 to 3-pound pork spare ribs with the skirts still on. Trim the meat, and blot with paper towels. Then, sprinkle the ribs on both sides with seasoning, and marinate for 15 minutes. Arrange the slabs on the grill rack, close to the fire at first, then farther away; the meat will cook more slowly as it is moved away from direct heat. As a rule of thumb, the slabs should be cooked for 1 hour for the first pound plus 1/2 hour more for each additional pound. When you can pull the ribs gently apart with gloved hands, they are finished. In a saucepan, warm the barbecue sauce. Transfer the ribs to a cutting board, and allow to cool slightly. Cut between the individual ribs, and serve with sauce.

At Gates Bar-B-Q, Ollie's barbecued beans are cooked right in the pit with the ribs; they get their smoky flavor from the pit drippings. In fact, bubbling pots of baked beans can be found in most Kansas City barbecue pits.

Sources:

Ribs and Sauces
800-662-RIBS
www.GatesBBQ.com

Rib Seasoning

Makes about 2 cups

The rib seasoning is a dry rub that should be applied 15 minutes before grilling; the barbecue sauce, warmed up in a saucepan, is an ideal accompaniment to the finished ribs.

1 cup sugar

1/2 cup salt

2 tablespoons paprika

2 tablespoons red pepper

1 tablespoon ground cumin

1 tablespoon ground celery

1. In a medium bowl, mix together all ingredients. Store in a tightly sealed jar.

Barbecue Sauce

Makes 3 quarts

1 cup sugar
1/4 cup salt
2 tablespoons celery seed
2 tablespoons ground cumin
2 tablespoons ground red pepper
2 tablespoons garlic powder
1 tablespoon chili powder
2 quarts ketchup
2 cups apple vinegar
1 1/2 teaspoons liquid smoke
1 teaspoon lemon juice

1. In a small bowl, mix together sugar, salt, celery seed, cumin, red pepper, and garlic and chili powders. Set aside.

2. In a large bowl, combine remaining ingredients. Add dry ingredients, and mix well. Serve warm or at room temperature. Sauce can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 weeks or in freezer for up to 6 months.

Barbecue Beans

Serves 18 to 20

2 fifty-five-ounce cans baked beans
1/2 cup firmly packed dark-brown sugar
1/2 cup molasses
3 tablespoons Rib Seasoning (recipe above)
3/4 cup Barbecue Sauce (recipe above)
1 teaspoon liquid smoke

1. In a cast-iron pot, combine all ingredients.

2. Cook on the grill, stirring occasionally, until hardened "crust" forms on top of beans, about 20 minutes.

Beef Kidneys

Serves 10

1 beef kidneys (about 1 1/2 pounds)

1 tablespoon olive oil

Coarse salt (to taste)

Freshly ground black pepper (to taste)

1. Place beef kidneys on the heated grill. Brush with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Cook until firm to the touch but slightly pink in the center, about 10 to 15 minutes.

Prime Porterhouse Steak

Serves 10

2 two-inch-thick prime porterhouse steaks (about 4 pounds)

1 tablespoon olive oil

Coarse salt (to taste)

Freshly ground black pepper (to taste)

1. Place steaks on the heated grill. Brush with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. For rare steaks, cook 10 to 12 minutes per side.

Lamb Chop

Serves 10

10 one-inch-thick rib lamb chops

1 tablespoon olive oil

Coarse salt (to taste)

Freshly ground black pepper (to taste)

1. Place chops on the heated grill. Brush with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. For rare chops, cook 3 to 5 minutes per side.

Free-Range Poussin

Serves 10

3 poussin (about 3 pounds)
1 tablespoon olive oil
Coarse salt (to taste)
Freshly ground black pepper (to taste)

1. Using a pair of poultry scissors, split the poussins down the breast side. Set the bird, backside down, on a clean work surface. Using the heel of your hand, press down to flatten the bird. Brush with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Place flattened poussin on the heated grill. Cook over medium-low heat until the juices run clear when the thickest part is pricked with a two-pronged fork, about 30 minutes.