

Easy BBQ Pork Ribs

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Smoked baby back ribs have plenty of down-home flavor, but they require special equipment and take a while to cook on the grill; this oven-to-grill method can be done in stages, so there’s no need to baby-sit the ribs. First, coat them all over with a sweetly spiced rub, then roast them in the oven while you make a simple barbecue sauce. When you’re ready to serve, throw the ribs on the grill, brush with the sauce, and let the heat turn the sauce into a sticky glaze. Pass around some potato salad, grilled corn, and a roll of paper towels at the table.

Special equipment: You’ll need a pastry brush or barbecue basting brush for this recipe.

Game plan: You can make the ribs through step 7 up to 2 days in advance. After roasting, transfer them to a large, shallow container, set aside to cool for about an hour, then cover and refrigerate. When you’re ready to grill, remove the ribs from the refrigerator and let them come to room temperature before grilling, about 1 hour.

The sauce can be made ahead and stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Let it come to room temperature before using.

INGREDIENTS

For the ribs:

- 3 tablespoons kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 tablespoons packed dark brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons paprika
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons ground mustard
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 full racks baby back pork ribs (about 5 to 6 pounds)

For the barbecue sauce:

- 1-1/2 cups ketchup
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/3 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1/4 cup light or dark molasses (not blackstrap)
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons paprika



INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE:

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For the ribs:

1. Place all of the ingredients except the ribs in a medium bowl and stir to combine; set aside.
2. Cut 4 (24-by-12-inch) pieces of aluminum foil; set aside.
3. Pat the ribs dry with paper towels. **This is the tough part but it's also the most important part!**
4. Remove the thin membrane attached to the underside of the ribs by doing the following: Flip the ribs over so they're bone-side up.



5. Starting at the end of 1 rack, slide the tip of a paring knife between the membrane and the bone, then lift and cut through the membrane.

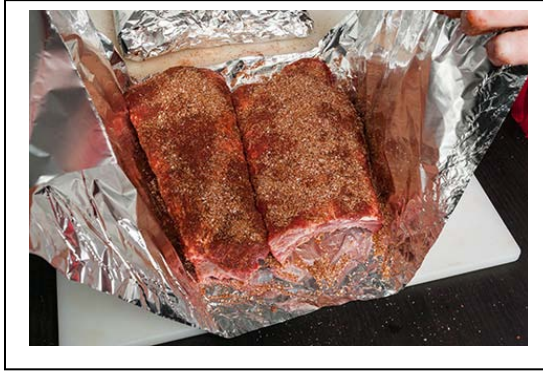


6. Grasping the membrane with a paper towel, pull it toward the other end of the rack and completely remove it. Repeat with the second rack.



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- Cut 1 rack in half crosswise and place the 2 pieces side by side on a sheet of foil. Repeat with the second rack and a second piece of foil.



- Evenly coat both sides of the ribs with the spice rub. Pull the foil up and over each set of ribs to create 2 completely enclosed packets. Place the packets side by side on a rimmed baking sheet. Cover the baking sheet tightly with the remaining 2 pieces of foil. (At this point, you can roast the ribs immediately, but for the best flavor and texture, refrigerate them for up to 24 hours.)



- Heat the oven to 325°F and arrange a rack in the middle. (If you rubbed the ribs in advance, remove them from the refrigerator and set aside at room temperature while the oven is heating, at least 20 minutes.)
- Place the ribs in the oven and roast until fork-tender, about 2 hours. Meanwhile, make the sauce.

For the barbecue sauce:

- Place all of the ingredients in a medium saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat, whisking occasionally. Reduce the heat to low and continue to simmer, whisking occasionally, until the flavors have melded and the sauce has reduced to about 2 cups, about 30 to 40 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside until ready to grill.

To grill the ribs:

- Heat a gas or charcoal grill to medium (350°F to 450°F).
- Remove the ribs from the foil, place them meaty-side up on the grill, and brush them with some of the sauce. Cover the grill and cook for 5 minutes. Flip and brush the ribs and cook another 5 minutes. Continue to cook, flipping and brushing every 5 minutes, until the sauce has thickened and the ribs are heated through and have grill marks, for a total grilling time of 20 minutes.
- Transfer the ribs to a cutting board and cut the racks between the bones. Transfer the remaining barbecue sauce to a serving bowl and serve with the ribs.

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