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To provide the best product at the  
best price and provide superior  
customer service for all your  
Smokin-It needs  
**Innovative products**  
**No retail mark ups or middleman**

***The Electric Smoker's Guide to Quick and Easy Smokin'***

**"LAZY Q"**

*By Tony Langley*



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*Smokin-It customers,*

*We are so grateful for Tony's work and how he is willing to share his knowledge on the customer forum and in the informational piece you are about to read and use. He has taken the forum beyond what we envisioned. If you have a question on the forum he is one of a few lead people who you will receive an answer from. His knowledge is such an asset to our products, forum and our success.*

*Tony has tested many of the accessory ideas we have, as well as many of our new smokers. He was invaluable during the stages of development of the new digital smokers. We continue to bounce ideas off of him and appreciate all the hard work he has put into this document. He has become an invaluable asset for us and ‘you’ the customer.*

*The information included in this document is a great resource. We have tried several of the recipes our self and they are the best. Every page is full of information and we hope you find it helpful as you enjoy your Smokin-It smoker. If you have any questions or comments please visit the customer forum. Please remember this forum is run by you the customer.*

*Thank you for your purchase*

*Tony thank you very much for all your time, knowledge and support*

*Steve and Rebecca*

**Have a Smokin-It great day**

## Forward

First, I would like to thank you for your interest in learning how to smoke food and reading my tips!

You are probably thinking, “Who in the world is *this guy?* And, *why should I listen to him?*” ...Valid questions.

First of all, let me tell who I am *not*. **I am not:**

A 30-year pit master who has smoked everything that can be smoked, on every type of smoker possible

A reality TV star who acts like a BBQ chef

A BBQ restaurant owner

A culinary school graduate

Anything else you might *expect* from a BBQ book author

So, now let me tell you who *I am*. First of all, I am *you!* I am just an ordinary guy, with an ordinary day job, who has a passion for BBQ. Not that long ago, my experience with smoking meat was very limited. Granted, I have about 35 years of experience grilling and cooking, but not smoking.

My past experiences with smoking had been mildly successful, but not something I enjoyed. Until I found the Smokin-It electric smoker. I had used smokers that looked like a smoker, but they were terrible and so much work to get the smoker going, then “attempt” to maintain a proper temperature, and finally clean it! Constant monitoring, and constant work! If I wanted to smoke a pork butt, it was an all-day affair; this is why my limited smoking experience was *so limited!* It is not that I did not want to produce “world class” BBQ, it’s just that is was way too much work.

I shopped around for quite a while, in search of an easier solution to making BBQ. I just could not get excited about many of the well-known “big box” smokers out there. I found too much plastic, too many bad reviews, limited life span, and reports of fire hazards. I wanted something better.

I began looking at smokers that looked like they were made for commercial use. All stainless steel construction, replaceable parts, and seemingly well made. I looked at some of the better-known brands, and found them to be way out of my price range. When I found Smokin-It, I knew I had found exactly what I was looking for. All stainless construction, internal smoke box, replaceable parts (affordable), and a family-owned company based right here in Michigan! Pricing was incredible, compared to what I was looking at, and I could not find any negative reviews! The owners seemed to be very proactive with great customer service.

As a new Smokin-It Model #1 owner, I knew immediately this was going to be just what I was looking for. The quality of the unit was great, and it was truly “simple.”

I started out, as many owners, with little information about how to use this new little giant. I spent time on the company forum, [www.smokinitforum.com](http://www.smokinitforum.com), and researched everything on the forum. I found the folks there very helpful, and welcoming. I thought this was a rare thing. I had never really been a “forum geek” before, but knew right away I could definitely enjoy hanging out with these folks!

With information I gathered from the forum, I was ready for my first smoke! My first choice was a Boston butt for pulled pork (I love pulled pork). I followed the directions you will find in this book, and the pulled pork was incredibly good!

Over time, I have modified my preparations and techniques to fit the Smokin-It smokers’ characteristics, and this is what you will find in this book. I, and many of my forum brothers and sisters have fine-tuned many of the techniques for preparing really great BBQ in our units. We have gone through a lot of the work so you will not have to. ***My goal is to make your transition to electric smoking, or “Lazy Q.” (aka “Q”) as easy - and successful - as possible!***

I hope you enjoy the journey!

Tony

## Smokin-It Electric Smokers

## Why an electric smoker?

For me, this was an easy question to answer: EASY!! I really enjoy good smoked BBQ, but could not deal with the hassle of using charcoal or wood smokers. I love the results, just not the process to get there. Like many of you, I have a rather hectic work and personal life. If I want to make pulled pork, I do not have 10-12+ hours to devote to constantly tending to a smoker to get it done.

This is where the Smokin-It smokers shine through. I can focus on the preparation of the food, and let the smoker do all the work, with very little intervention by me, once the smoker door is closed. This will never happen with a charcoal or stick burner.

## Advantages

While, I believe, there are many advantages to a quality electric smoker; these have been the most important to me:

- **Ease of use** - I love the “set it and forget it” aspect. You can forget many of the “traditional” BBQ methods involving foiling and un-foiling meat as it cooks.
- **Consistent results** - If you follow the same methods, you will get consistent results. No one likes to reinvent the wheel every time they want to cook something.
- **Compact footprint** - These smokers can fit many places traditional smokers cannot.
- **Low heat dissipation** - Unlike traditional smokers, these smokers are very well insulated. During a smoke, they barely get warm to the touch on the outside. The advantage is you do not have to worry about catching your patio or house, on fire when using it or someone touching the smoker and getting burned.
- **Quality construction** - I wanted a quality-built product that will stand up to frequent use, and last for years. The all stainless steel construction will fulfill that need.
- **Easy cleaning** - After a long smoke, cleaning is simple and easy
- **No constant intervention** - Self-explanatory
- **Cold weather use** - There are owners using these well-insulated smokers at below-zero temperatures. They are incredibly tight, and the insulation holds the heat in very well.

## Disadvantages

Like everything made, there will be those who are not satisfied with an electric smoker and will tell everyone they know why they are bad. Most of those who bemoan the electric smoker have never actually used one; they just know their stick burners (or other “traditional” smokers) are the *only* way to go for “real” BBQ. I dissent, and would put my BBQ up against anyone’s! The fact is we can make BBQ as good, or better, than any you have ever had. Not bragging; just the truth!

Electric smokers are not allowed in BBQ competitions for a reason: unfair advantage. Electrics produce such consistent results, and moist meat; they pose an unfair advantage over those who smoke the “hard” way.

With that said, here are some of the “disadvantages” (I actually don’t see them as disadvantages, but you will hear these comments/complaints)

- **Electric smokers do not produce a “smoke ring”** - No, they do not. The pink smoke ring you see, from traditional smokers, is just “eye candy”. It does not have any flavor, it just looks cool. Electrics don’t produce the gases to make a smoke ring. Some users, who are actually concerned about the smoke ring, add lump charcoal to the smoke box. This will aid in producing a smoke ring. Looks great, but not required for “real” BBQ.
- **I cannot cook competition BBQ in them** - No, you cannot. What you can do is cook some really good BBQ! I suspect most folks reading this are not interested in competitive BBQ.
- **The heat source is in the same box as the meat** - Not a problem. As you will see later, the element and smoke box are well below the food, and the food cooks fine on all shelves.
- **Temperature swings** - Analog electric smokers do experience temperature swings. All of them. What most find, pretty fast, is the temperature swings will “average” to the set temperature. For example, if I set my Model #1 to 225°, and monitor the box temperature during a smoke, I may see temperature as low as 205°, and as high as 245°. However, the cycling of the analog controller moves this temperature up and down fairly consistently. This is how it averages to 225°. I know it averages well, because my end results are consistent with what they “should” be. The temperature swings are disconcerting to some, but most realize they just go with the territory. A digital controller, such as a PID unit, will eliminate the swings with a +3/-3° accuracy.
- **My smoker does not get up to temperature** - It is possible the temperature knob is not set properly. With a simple procedure, you can recalibrate your temperature knob (see directions on our website).

These are just a few examples of the minor arguments people make against these types of smokers. As you can see, they are easily countered, and really are not “disadvantages” at all.

## Common misconceptions, reported problems and solutions

No product, built by the hands of man, has ever been – or will ever be – without flaw. In this section, I will touch on a few of the common misconceptions, reported problems, and known solutions. Keep in mind, these are just the issues I am aware of. As we get further into using electric smokers, I am sure we will hear of issues not addressed here. The good thing is, there is plenty of help available in the owner's community on the Smokin-It Forum! If you have an issue you just cannot seem to find an answer to do not hesitate to visit the forum and ask for help.

### **Temperature Swings**

Analog smokers *will* encounter temperature swings. This is the reality, and nature of the beast. Some brands even state, on their websites, users can experience temperature swings “as much as +/- 35°”. I use the term “analog” because it is common terminology, but really is not the whole story. In this section, we will get into what “analog” actually *is*, and *why* we see temperature swings.

First of all, the stock Smokin-It smokers (as well as many competitors) use an “analog” controller. So, what is “analog?” According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the best definition of “analog” (as it applies to our smokers) is:

**“Have, relating to, or being a mechanism in which data is represented by continuously variable physical quantities.”**

The “analog” device used in smokers is actually a *rheostat*. This is a mechanical device, also known as a *potentiometer*. Without this turning into a science class, let’s briefly explain what this is. As it relates to the above definition, the “data” is temperature, and “continuously variable physical quantities” is voltage.

In terms we can understand, the controller gets temperature input from a *thermocouple*, located inside the smoker box. The thermocouple actually generates voltage, based on the temperature it is sensing, and sends it up the wire to the rheostat. The rheostat, then, mechanically “senses” the voltage present. It then knows to open or close the circuit to the heating element. Voltage drops too low, based on the set temperature, element goes on. Voltage gets too high, element goes off. It is essentially a switch that senses voltage from the thermocouple.

Now you can see how there is a potential for temperature swings. Say you had a thermometer in the box, and a light switch attached to the heating element of your smoker. When the temperature got close to 225°, you cut the switch off. The hot element will climb to, maybe, 240° before it starts to cool down. As you watch the temperature drop, you kick the element back on when it hits 225°. The element may have cooled to 215° by the time the power from your switch-hits it and it starts to heat. This is, basically, what the rheostat does. It is manually switching the element on and off, based on the voltage (temperature) it’s getting from the thermocouple.

Some owners have reported swings as high as +/-20-25°. In my Model #1 smoker, I consistently see swings as low as +/- 10°. BBQ is a “close enough for government work” proposition...perfect accuracy really is not important, because “close enough” is more than “good enough.” Because the rheostat is going to behave in a “predictable” manner, your temperature swings will average out to the set temperature, thus producing consistent results.

The only way to minimize the temperature swings is to use a digital controller, such as the Auber PID. It is more than a simple “on/off” device; the PID will actually vary the amount of power it sends to the element to make those on/off changes much more gradual.

### **My Smoker Doesn’t Get “Up to Temperature”**

There are several things that can cause this issue:

#### **Meat Load in the Smoker**

First of all, meat load in the smoker will effect box temperature, especially early in the smoke. If you think about putting several pounds of cold meat (34-38 degrees) in the smoker, it is going to have a natural cooling effect. Those who monitor the box temperature, with an external thermometer, will see lower temperatures early in the smoke. This will “even out” over time, and smoke should go as planned. If you are seeing low temperatures when smoking a small amount of meat, it may be caused by other factors.

#### **Drip Pans**

This is another thing that can definitely affect box temperature. Owners, across several forums, have encountered low box temperatures when they have a large “drip pan” under the meat. Most of us foil line the bottom of the smoker, and the roof of the smoke box, to aid in cleanup. If you place a drip pan on the lowest shelf, below the meat, you are going to affect box temperature.

As the heat flows upward from the element/smoke box, an obstruction between the smoke box and the meat will channel the hot air around it. The heat will channel around the drip pan, close to the sidewalls of the smoker. As the air rises along the walls, it will hit the thermocouple at the back of the box. When it does, it is going to heat the thermocouple and trigger the controller to lower the temperature. As this is happening, there is a void of cooler air around the meat (hot air is deflected around the drip pan, and the meat). If you have your temperature probe placed on the same shelf as the meat, it will read lower than what the thermocouple reads. By blocking the airflow from the meat, you have set yourself up for lower than normal box temperatures.

Recommendation: Do not place a drip pan below the meat. Use foil on the smoke box lid and smoker floor to aid in cleanup, and nothing more. Do not interrupt the heat flow from the element to the meat.

Do not confuse this with the use of a water/juice pan for moisture. Most owners put their moisture pan on the smoker floor, next to the smoke box. This does not restrict airflow, and acts as a “heat sink” to the smoke box. The heat sink effect helps minimize temperature swings, but does not restrict the heat around the meat.

Other things that can cause low box temperatures are:

- *Improperly calibrated dial on the rheostat.* This is rare, but can be fixed. Visit the Smokin-It forum or our website for tips on how to adjust the temperature dial.
- *Extreme cold ambient temperature.* We have many owners who live in the “Great White North,” as I like to call it (being a Southerner). I have seen some of my colleagues post smokes, in sub-zero conditions, which come out great. These smokers are very well insulated, and the heating elements do very well. Especially early in the smoke, you may see low box temperatures based on the extreme ambient temperatures.
- *Mechanical issue.* No machine is perfect 100% of the time. It is possible you have a bad heat controller or thermocouple. Contact the company for replacement advice.

## Important Materials and Accessories

Every “good” BBQ chef has a “war chest” of materials and accessories to assist them to make the best “Q” possible. Here are some things to consider for your war chest:

- **Heavy-duty foil** - I like the long and short rolls. The long rolls of foil are used for wrapping meat, and lining the bottom of the smoker. The heavy-duty variety is more tear resistant, aids in cleanup and for wrapping meat after cooking foil retains more heat.
- **BBQ gloves** - I prefer the heavy-duty PVC gloves. They are very easy to clean, durable, and well insulated. This style glove protects your hands, while allowing you to handle the meat with dexterity.
- **BBQ tongs** - A good set of BBQ tongs is great for ribs, or anything flat you are smoking
- **Brining container** - A food grade container, large enough to hold what you are brining, is essential. A snap on lid is a must. You can also use large Ziploc style bags for certain things, like jerky brines. I find it is easier to mix the meat around in a bag vs. a container. Brining containers are best for larger cuts.
- **Remote thermometer** - Absolutely essential to “Lazy Q” success. How can you be lazy if you cannot monitor your temperatures from the easy chair!
- **Baking pan** - I use a cookie sheet for all of my transfers to and from the smoker. Save some money, and buy a cheap cookie sheet. If you cover it with the foil before use, you won’t have much cleanup. You can also use the TK pan sold on the Smokin-It website.
- **Quality wood** - Smokin-It currently sells hickory, cherry, sugar maple, oak and beech wood. All of these are excellent quality, and produce good smoke. Many of the “big box” store woods are too dry for electric smokers, which can lead to wood combustion. Suppliers specializing in smoking wood provide wood with the proper moisture content. I like to keep my smoking wood in sealable Ziploc bags to keep it from drying too much, especially in the winter. Check the Smokin-It forum for many opinions and ideas about woods.

This is a good start to a BBQ war chest. You may have other needs, as many owners do, so you will need to supplement your stock with things specific to your needs. The items above are valuable to *any* electric smoker owner, but it’s just a starting point. You customize as you see fit; there is no limit to the size of one’s war chest!

## Aftermarket Enhancements

### Auber PID Digital Smoker Controller

As these smokers become more and more popular, the aftermarket accessory availability will also grow. One of the increasingly popular options, for those who want precise control of the smoker temperature, is the Auber PID Digital Controller.



The Auber WSD-1503CPH PID controller is the 1800-watt version and allows the user to control the smoker with +/-3° accuracy. It also gives the ability to program six separate steps into the unit. Why would you want steps? Instead of manually adjusting temperatures for different parts of the smoke, this allows the user to automate different temperature profiles. These steps can be triggered by either time or internal temperature of the meat.

For example, say you are smoking a Boston butt pork shoulder. You are starting with a cold smoker, and cold meat. However, you want the smoker to ramp up to 225° a little slower than normal, and you know you may not be able to pull the pork butt out of the smoker just as it hits 200° internal meat temperature. You can set the Auber for the three steps required for this smoke.

Auber also offers the WSD-1204CPH, which is a 1200-watt version. Functionality is the same as the 1503, but it is a lower wattage. This version is perfect for Smokin-It Models #1 and #2. The 1503 is a perfect match for the Model #3. Smokin-It no longer carries these on their website as they can be purchased directly on the Auber Instruments website. The PID can be used to provide your smoker with digital features.

### **The James Jerky Dryer**



An essential accessory to making perfect jerky is the James Jerky Dryer attachment. It is an enclosed fan unit that sits on top of the smoker's vent hole, and draws airflow through the smoker. This removes the moisture that builds up from the drying process. When making jerky, moisture removal is critical to success. Remember, when making jerky, you are *drying* the meat, not *cooking* the meat. The James Jerky Dryer will allow you to slowly dry the jerky, and will help you achieve professional results at home.

The process for using the James Jerky Dryer is simple. Let the jerky smoke for 2 hours, without the fan. Use a small amount of wood (no more than 2 oz.), so the smoke phase will be over when you attach the fan. At about 2 hours, or when visible smoke stops, place the jerky dryer on top of the smoker and plug it into the AC/DC adapter (included).

When the jerky reaches the desired texture, unplug the fan and remove it, along with your jerky. Positive airflow through the smoker is a must, if you are going to get good results from your jerky smokes. I found I could make "professional-grade" jerky by using the James Jerky Dryer.

### **A Quality External Thermometer**

Remote temperature monitoring, of at least the internal meat temperature, is an absolute "must" with this type of smoker. The idea is to cook to a given internal temperature without constantly opening the door to check. Opening the door frequently to check temperature will increase your cooking time, releases valuable moisture from the smoker environment, and creates the potential for wood combustion (due to the introduction of too much air onto the smoldering wood).

There are many makes and models of external thermometers, so do your own research to determine your needs. My recommendation is either the Maverick ET-732 or ET-733 remote thermometer units. Both units offer dual probes and remote monitoring up to 300 feet away. Each has programmable set points for minimum and maximum temperatures, with alarms. The remote signal is strong, and has no trouble going through house walls. Well made, quality probes, accurate and dependable. Many forum members are fanatics about this unit, and praise its worthiness. The ET-732 is currently the BBQ thermometer "gold standard" by which all others are compared - even the newer models, like the ET-733.

## First things first: Seasoning

You have unpacked your smoker, attached the casters, and are staring at your shiny new smoker, dreaming of how your first "LAZY Q" is going to taste. Before we get to the first smoke with meat on board, there is a little "prep work" we need to do to the smoker. This step is called "seasoning." Essentially you want to break in the smoker before you actually use it. Please follow the operating instructions enclosed with your smoker.

## Picking your "First Smoke"

You have a freshly seasoned smoker. What to pick for the first smoke? First of all, there are no "wrong" answers here. Let's look at some possible first smokes to almost always turn out great. My forum buddies and I have differing opinions on what to smoke first. Spend a little time there, and you will see why I say, "there are no wrong answers." Everyone has different tastes, and different backgrounds with smoking, so the decision is solely yours.

**Boston Butt Pork Shoulder:** Everyone who owns a smoker should be able to make great pulled pork. The Boston butt is, hands down the best cut for pulled pork. It is almost impossible to **not** have good results with this smoke. One thing about smoking a pork butt, for the first smoke, is that it does two things. First, it is a long smoke (9-12 hours for an 8 lb. butt) so it really lets you see how your smoker performs over the long haul. Secondly, this long smoke helps to add additional seasoning to the smoker. Flavor imparted by the smoker cannot be overlooked, or underestimated. The Boston butt when prepared right, is almost foolproof. The meat has lots of intramuscular fat and this naturally lubricates and moistens the meat, so it is hard to make a "dry" pork butt for pulled pork. A simple BBQ rub on the butt will work for a first smoke.

**Baby Back Pork Ribs:** Here is another great first smoke. Prep on these is easy and the smoking process is easy. Prep the ribs by removing the "silver skin" against the bone side, then slathering with yellow mustard and a rub. A good trick is to wrap them in plastic, and let them rest overnight in the fridge to "get happy!" This allows the rub to penetrate the meat. When you finally put these in the smoker, it is as simple as setting the temperature and waiting for the great results at the other end.

**Brisket:** Wait...you have heard briskets are hard to cook right? Not so. If you follow the brisket recipe in this book, you will have a brisket worthy to be served at the finest "Q" shack in town. Moist and tender. Smoking a brisket is a lot like the pork butt; it is a long smoke, and your prep work is important. You will also have to monitor the internal meat temperature, so make sure you have a remote thermometer.

**Whole Chicken:** The recipe for whole chicken, in the recipes section, is easy and amazingly good. A chicken will also introduce you to simple brine for poultry. Brining is a technique that greatly enhances moisture retention in meat. Poultry really benefits from this process. If you follow the recipe, you will turn out a chicken extremely moist and flavorful. Just like the other recommendations (except ribs), you will need to monitor internal temperature. This is not a "timed" cook.

As you can see, there are countless possibilities for your first smoke. The bottom line is to not be scared. If you study your technique, and prepare the meat properly, you are almost assured success. The hardest part to making great "Q" with these smokers is the preparation. Once it is in the box, the smoker will do what it does best...smoke you some great "LAZY Q"! No matter what you choose as your first smoke, the key to success is preparation. The next section will help you set yourself up for a great first smoke.

## Setting yourself up for a successful smoke

You have decided on your first meal in your new smoker. The key to a successful smoke is good planning and preparation. While it is not hard to make some really amazing "Q" in these smokers with little effort, there does need to be some effort in preparation.

First of all, decide when you want to eat this is the deadline we need to work backwards from. So, say you are going to smoke some baby back ribs; we need to work backwards from dinnertime so everything comes out right. You read the baby back rib recipe later in the book, but let's walk through the basics here. The whole idea is to get a feel for how to back up your preparation start time so everything "works."

### Baby Back Rib Timeline

My baby back rib preparation actually starts the night before the smoke. If I plan to have ribs on plates at 5PM Saturday, I am going to do some simple prep Friday evening.

Friday 7PM: Remove the ribs from packaging and rinse them, pat dry with paper towel. Remove the “silver skin,” or thick membrane on the back of the bones. This is important to make really good ribs. This picture shows the silver skin on the back of the ribs; notice how shiny it is. It will block all flavoring, and make the ribs tough, so definitely remove it. Once you peel the silver skin off, you are ready to rub. I coat my ribs in plain, cheap yellow mustard before applying the rub. Yellow mustard creates an incredible binder for the rub, and cooks completely away without imparting any flavor to the meat. I use olive oil on poultry, but everything else gets yellow mustard. Once the ribs are slathered in yellow mustard apply the rub, liberally, to both sides of the ribs. Once rubbed, wrap the racks in plastic wrap (or even seal in vacuum bags), and place in the fridge. The ribs will have an “overnight” sleep while the rub you just put on them lets the ribs “get happy”! You will be infusing the rub’s flavor into the ribs.



Saturday, 10AM: I know these baby backs are going to take 5½ to 6 hours, so I am ready to prepare the smoker. Start by foiling the bottom of the smoker with heavy-duty foil, and also covering the lid of the smoke box. Do not forget to poke a hole in the foil covering the drain/air hole in the floor of the smoker. This is very important. Select the wood. Remember these smokers are very efficient, and a little wood goes a long way! I know, from experience, I do not want more than 2 to 2½ ounces of wood for ribs. This will impart a good smoky flavor, but not “over-smoke” them. The meat will only “absorb” the smoke until the meat reaches around 140° internal temperature, so if you continue smoking, you’ll just be collecting smoke on the surface. This will make the meat “bitter,” and over smoked. Think of what the inside of your smoker looks like; you don’t want creosote buildup on the meat.

Before putting the meat in the smoker, we want to add a **water pan** for moisture. I like to use disposable aluminum “mini-loaf” pans. They fit perfectly on the floor of the smoker, next to the smoke box (do not put it on a shelf). Or use the Smokin-It Sasha Flavor Saver to hangs from the racks. The idea is simply to add some liquid for moisture inside the box. I usually use apple juice in my pan, but water, beer, or any other aromatic liquid will work.

Saturday, 11:30AM: Unwrap the ribs, lay them on the shelves (bone-side down), and take them to the smoker. Once they are in place, close and latch the door, turn on the smoker and you are ready to smoke!! Nothing to do now but wait and watch. **Do not open the smoker door for anything!!** At about 15-20 minutes in to the smoke, you’re going to start seeing thin blue smoke coming out of the top vent, just like during seasoning. As the meat continues to cook, the smoke will be mixed with the vapor from the meat.

Saturday, 4:00PM: Dinner is at 5PM, so we want to make sure our ribs are done. We are now 4½ hours into the smoke, so it is time to finally open the door. Remember, it’s been “**no peeking**” up to this point.

To check the ribs for doneness, we are going to look for meat pullback from the bones (exposed ends of the bones), and also bark (the dark, chewy coating of the caramelized rub). A great trick I learned, from “Old Sarge” on the forum, is the **“toothpick test.”** Take a wooden toothpick; stick it in the meat next to a bone. You will feel the tenderness as you press it in. Give a little sideways pull away from the bone. If the meat gives, and the toothpick does not break, they’re perfect. Pull them out, double wrap in heavy-duty foil, and place them in a cooler until dinnertime. If they are not quite done, give them another 20 minutes and try again. When they are done, they do not need to “rest,” like larger cuts of meat.



I hope this gives you an idea of how to properly time a cook. Always work backwards from serving time, and allow enough preparation time to get things ready. As you can see, the preparation is the most time consuming. The great thing is you did not have to constantly tend to your smoker for the last 5-6 hours.

### Welcome to the world of “Lazy Q”!!

## Recipes

The recipes, found here, are meant to do two things: First, you can reproduce them as closely as possible, and enjoy some great “Q” derived from proven success. Secondly, these recipes will teach you basic, and advanced, techniques you can build upon to create your own killer “Q” creations. Once you learn the basics, you will find it is not hard to come up with great ideas. All it takes is a little basic cooking skills, and a lot of imagination. I will cover some of the “preparation” recipes first: Brines & Marinades, Rubs and Sauces

Let's get started! Here's what we'll cover in the following sections:



### Brines and Marinades

We will look at the difference between brine and a marinade. The terms are commonly used as the same thing, but they are very different.



### Rubs

From homemade to “store-bought” recommendations. This is the stuff that puts the bark in the bite.

### Sauces

Whatever style of BBQ you like, there's a sauce to complete the taste experience.



## **Brining and Marinating: What's the difference?**

There are two very distinct differences between "brine" and a "marinade."

Brines use a combination of salt and water, in calculated quantities, to penetrate the entire depth of the meat through a process known, as "diffusion." Brine will also act to make the meat retain more moisture by actually "modifying" the protein fibers near the surface of the meat. Other flavorings, such as sugar, onion, garlic, pepper (or any other aromatics) can be added for additional taste profiles. Brining works incredibly well with poultry, pork, jerky, and even beef.

Marinades are a mixture of liquid flavorings to enhance the flavor of the meat but will not penetrate the meat in the way brine does. Marinades will flavor the surface of the meat, but the deep internal meat will remain unchanged. Marinades are great for steaks, pork chops, jerky, and other thin cuts of meat that do not need the flavor to go deep into the meat. Many commercially available marinades use things like soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, fruit juices, sugars and spices. Some have higher sodium content than others, so read the ingredients.

### **Brining 101**

I discovered the advantage to using brines on poultry and pork, but realized I did not know a lot about what I was doing. All I knew, I could mix a solution of mainly salt and sugar, soak meat in it, and the end result would be meat which is much moister and more flavorful than without the brine. In the process of devising a jerky curing brine, I learned a lot about the *what*, but also the *how* and *why* brining works.

#### *How Brines Work:*

A common misconception is brines work through osmosis. They work through a process known as diffusion. Diffusion allows the salt and water molecules to diffuse throughout the meat. Osmosis would pull the water out of the meat into the solution (path of least resistance). The other to occur is the negative salt ions actually modifies the protein molecules in the meat. They cause the protein fibers to expand (push away from each other), which allows more solution to pass through the fibers. These modified protein molecules then act as a barrier, of sorts, during cooking to trap the moisture inside the meat. So, brined meat will weigh more after brining, and will be plumper and juicier after cooking.

### ***Two different kinds of brine: Gradient and Equilibrium***

**Gradient Brine:** This is many of my brine recipes on the forum, with the exception of my jerky brine. Gradient brine is one set amount of ingredients, and time is the determining factor. I always felt like I was handed down an old recipe, and the instructions were just "follow these directions, and don't ask why." For example, many have seen brines start with ingredients like these:

1 gallon of water  
1 cup of sugar  
1 cup of kosher salt

...and various other ingredients for flavor (onion powder, garlic powder, pepper, etc.). These ingredients are not important for this discussion, as they only affect the final flavor profile of the meat. They will be, however, figured in to the equilibrium brine calculation, so far as weight. The recipe for gradient brine was always like a little "black magic potion," I did not really know how it worked, but if I followed it correctly, it would work. Once the basic gradient brine is assembled, our key metric is going to be time in the brine. For example, I brine a whole chicken no longer than 3-4 hours, but will brine a 9 lb. pork butt for 12-13 hours. If you keep a chicken in salt heavy brine for 12 hours, you are going to have one salty bird. We all have our preferences on time, through trial and error, and our own personal tastes.

Many large operations use gradient brines because they are simple; one brine, many products. The difference is they have the timing down to a science. X gallons of brine, X lbs. of meat, X time, consistency through a process. Sometimes, life gets in the way and we miss a deadline to pull the meat from the brine, or just forget how long it was actually in for. I realize, now, this was luck, no science, just trial and error.

**Equilibrium Brine:** What if you could take the "guesswork" out of brining, and actually predict the results? We have learned brining works by diffusion, not osmosis. Equilibrium brining calculates diffusion, predictably. We are dealing with a known weight of meat, and an equal weight of solution. If you have two containers of solution, side-by-side, with a tunnel between them, and fill both with exactly the same volume weight of solution, they will eventually reach equilibrium. So, one container contains a 2% salt solution, and the other container is plain water. Eventually, the two containers (as a whole unit) will contain a 1% salt solution. Those salt molecules are bouncing off each other, and will eventually bounce through the tunnel, into the water where there are no salt molecules. The 2% solution will diffuse into the 0% solution, and the overall will be a 1% solution. This is what is happening in our meat. If we make a solution exactly the same weight as the meat, the salt, sugar and cure (6.25% sodium nitrite #1 curing salt) will diffuse into the meat and reach equilibrium. No matter how much time the meat sits in the solution, the salt, sugar and cure content will never exceed what it was calculated to be.

Martin, from Digging Dog Farms, put together a great calculator for equilibrium brines:

<http://www.diggingdogfarm.com/page2.html>. Plug-in the variables, and your results will calculate. There is a handy conversion calculator.

#### Real world test

The link above documents my jerky brine. Here's the calculations I plugged into the calculator:

Weight of meat in grams:	4095
Cure #1 % nitrite:	6.25%
Salt % desired:	1.5
Sugar % desired:	2.5
Parts Per Million (PPM) nitrite:	156

#### Calculate the Cure

Cure #1 needed:	10.22 grams
Salt needed:	52 grams
Sugar needed:	102 grams
Total	4259.22 grams (this is the total of meat + cure, salt and sugar)

The solution weight will include these, to equal 4095 grams total weight. By weighing each ingredient, and adding them to your water (or flavoring sauces, like soy and Worcestershire) they will be considered in the total weight of the solution. Remember, the solution must weight 4095 grams for 1:1 brine.

#### What I've learned:

Equilibrium brining, although more preparation work, is a superior brining method to achieve predictable and consistent results. In my jerky brine, for example, I initially used a 2% salt calculation. I now know I needed to reduce the salt in the brine to 1.5%, so I can safely add a little additional seasoning (containing salt) to the surface prior to smoking. This to me, is much more appealing than just "guessing", I need to cut the brine time by, say, 2 hours. I could calculate the salt in the seasoning; it is subjective and based on taste preference.

If interested in a precise method like this, do some research to learn more about equilibrium brining. I believe this to be a far superior method to gradient brining for the simple reason you can predict, and modify, the results very accurately. Due to the complexity of equilibrium brining (calculations, and an accurate kitchen scale, are essential), I am not going to delve

too deeply into this topic. I only wanted to expose you to a little brining science, so you can learn on your own. I will include a few simple gradient brines that work fantastic for their particular applications.

#### Basic Poultry Brine

This simple brine works well with chicken or turkey:

1 gallon cold water	1 t. onion powder
1 cup kosher salt	1 t. rosemary
1 t. granulated garlic	1 cup orange juice

...the orange juice can be substituted with any acidic citrus fruit juice. Pineapple juice gives a good flavor also. I make this up in advance and let it cool to fridge temperature. Whole chickens get 3-4 hours in the bath, while parts get 1-2 hours. Depending on the size, a full turkey breast would go longer than 4 hours.

#### Brine for Pulled Pork (Boston butt shoulder)

I devised this recipe after reading a question about brining pork butts. It got me thinking, and this is what I came up with. I posted this recipe on the forum and have many members who swear it is the best pulled pork they have ever had. Since I tried this, I have not smoked a pork butt that was not brined first.

1 gallon water	1 T. garlic powder
1 1/8 cup kosher salt	1 T. onion powder
1 cup brown sugar	1 T. cayenne
1/2 cup apple cider vinegar	2 t. black pepper
1 t. Instacure #1 (pink curing salt - optional)	

...heat the brine by combining the ingredients and half the water to blend all the flavors. Cool the hot brine by filling the other half of the water with ice. Place the pork butt in the brine and put it in the fridge. A large Ziploc bag, held inside a pan, works. Hold in the brine 12-14 hours. Rinse under water, pat dry, then rub and smoke as normal.

#### Brine for Pork Loin

The pork loin is an excellent cut of meat for the smoker. If smoked properly, it is lean, juicy and tender. Nothing makes better sliced pork sandwiches than a good pork loin. Not to be confused with a pork tenderloin; this is the larger cut of meat from next to Porky's spine. A full pork loin will run 8-9 lbs. This brine will give it a little "ham" flavor, and even produce a faux smoke ring, due to the use of pink #1 curing salt (sodium nitrite).

1 gallon water (I use 1/2 gallon in the pan, then add the other 1/2 gallon in the form of ice when I've cooked the brine)

1 1/8 cup kosher salt
1 cup dark brown sugar
1 T. granulated garlic
1 T. onion powder
1 T. Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning
1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
1 level t. #1 curing salt (carefully measure this)
...soak the loin in the brine for 12-13 hours, then rinse and prep as normal



## Rubs

Rubs are a blend of seasonings, sugar, salt and other ingredients, which are applied to the outside of the meat for flavoring. Rubs are designed to enhance the flavor of the meat, not overpower it. In these recipes, "heat" is very subjective. You should adjust the various pepper amounts to your own taste. All of the recipes I have written are based on my personal preference. Below are starting-points to develop your own rubs.

#### Pork Dry Rub

1 cup brown sugar	2 T. onion powder
1/4 cup kosher salt	1 T. cayenne
1/3 cup paprika	1 T. cumin
2 T. garlic powder	1 T. coriander

2 T. onion powder  
 1 T. coarse black pepper  
 ...blend all ingredients well, in a plastic container with a lid. This makes enough to do at least 2 pork butts, a rather large brisket, or about 6 racks of ribs. This rub is not very hot (spice).

#### Phil's Killer Brisket Rub

4 T. finely ground coffee	5 t. garlic salt
4 T. chili powder	5 t. onion powder
5 t. brown sugar	5 t. smoked paprika
2 t. McCormick Smokehouse pepper	2 t. ground cumin

#### Basic Southwest Brisket Rub

1/4 cup brown sugar	2 T. paprika
1/4 cup kosher salt	1 T. onion powder
2 T. chili powder	1 T. granulated garlic
1 T. coarse black pepper	1 t. ground cumin

...thoroughly mix all ingredients. Coat the brisket in yellow mustard, and then apply the rub liberally. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for 12-24 hours prior to smoking at 225°. Oak and hickory are a good blend of wood for this rub.

#### Texas-Style Wet Brisket Rub (Thanks to Joe from Houston)

2 T. coarse grind black pepper	2 t. garlic powder
2 t. onion powder	2 t. dry mustard
2 t. ground cumin	2 T. kosher salt
2 t. cayenne pepper	2 T. demerara sugar
2 T. ancho chili powder	

Bacon fat (may substitute olive oil or even salted butter)

...lightly toast this spice rub immediately prior to application over low heat in a non-stick skillet. Some of these ingredients are oil soluble so apply a healthy layer of cool bacon fat (should be congealed to the point of at least softened butter) and work into the trimmed brisket, if you want to inject the meat you should do so prior to this step. Then, apply the rub to the bacon fat and pat until well incorporated, wrap in plastic and hold in the refrigerator for 12-24 hours prior to smoking.

#### Santa Maria Steak seasoning

5 T. kosher salt	
2 T. fresh-ground coarse black pepper	
2 T. granulated garlic	
2 T. dried parsley, rubbed in hands to grind finer	
4 t. demerara sugar	

...coat cold meat with olive oil, and sprinkle steak seasoning on just before smoking. No need to allow this to rest in the fridge.



#### **Injections**

Injections allow you to flavor the deep, internal meat.

The ingredients can vary greatly, and are subject to many opinions and ideas. Injections can also act to tenderize the meat, with use of acids to break down the proteins, and add moisture to the meat. Brining (in my opinion) eliminates the need to inject. For large cuts of meat, brining solution can be injected to speed up the process, or you can use a totally different injection for a different flavor profile.

#### Divot Maker's Brisket Injection

1/2 cup beef broth	2 T. demerara sugar
1/4 cup Worcestershire	1 T. kosher salt
1/3 cup full-body beer	2 T. crystal hot sauce

....combine the ingredients in a saucepan, and simmer over low heat for about 20 minutes. Do not bring to a boil. Let the injection cool in the fridge until time to inject. Once cold, inject the brisket thoroughly, apply your favorite rub, then wrap in plastic and let rest in the fridge overnight to get happy.

#### Joe from Houston's Pork Butt Injection

1 cup apple juice	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup kosher salt
2 T. Sriracha	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup turbinado sugar
2 T. Worcestershire sauce	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cider vinegar

....slowly brought it up to temperature, never letting it reach a simmer or boil, until the sugar and salt were fully dissolved. The mixture is then cooled to room temperature and the entire amount injected into the pork butt.

## Sauces

### BBQ Sauce

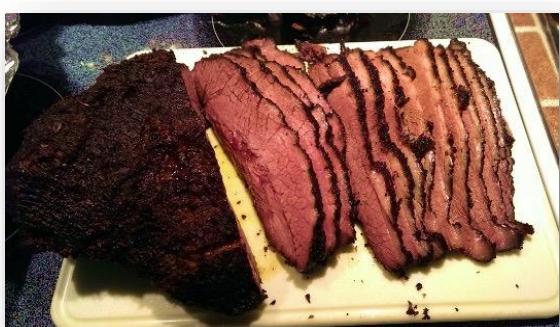
Although there are many great sauces out there, I am only going to include one in this book. This is my St. Louis-style sauce that is my "go to" utility sauce for any BBQ. Of all the sauces we have tried, my family picks this one over all others. Sauces are as varied as sunsets. I like to make a triple batch of this, and put it in cleaned out squeeze ketchup bottles. It keeps for a long time in the fridge, so I fill three large ketchup bottles when I make it. It has a little kick, so adjust the pepper according to your taste. **We can now add the Smokin-It Sauces found on the website!!**



#### Tony's St. Louis-Style BBQ Sauce

2 cups ketchup	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup honey
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup water	$\frac{1}{2}$ t. cayenne
$\frac{1}{3}$ cup brown sugar	2 T. yellow mustard
1 T. onion powder	1 T. garlic powder
$\frac{1}{3}$ cup apple cider vinegar (use the good stuff with "the mother")	
2 t. liquid smoke	

...add all ingredients to a saucepan cold, then heat on low for 20-30 minutes. Stir frequently to blend the ingredients and keep it from burning. Once cool, pour into plastic ketchup bottles and refrigerate. This sauce is even better the second day, after the spices have a chance to blend.



## Beef

From brisket to Prime Rib, beef is a staple of BBQ! This section covers brisket, sirloin tip roast, and prime rib.

## Chicken and Other Birds

Chicken, turkey, duck, or anything that flies!  
This section covers chicken and turkey.



## Pork

Ribs, loins and pork butts! Here, you will find recipes for all of these.



## Jerky

Beef jerky –  
brined, smoked  
and very tasty!

## **Beef**

### Beef Brisket

Start with a 12-16 lbs. "packer cut" brisket (includes the flat and the point). First, trim the fat cap down to about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick. Then score the cap with a sharp knife, in a 1" cross pattern. This will help the rub penetrate the meat, but will still render well. Coat with a light dusting of Morton's Tender Quick, wrap and rest in the fridge for 6-8 hours. (This step makes a killer "faux" smoke ring!)

Remove from the plastic and rinse thoroughly. Rub the outside with yellow mustard or olive oil, and coat with rub. Many have great success with a salt/pepper mixture only. Put the cold brisket into the smoker with 6-8 oz. of hickory and oak or mesquite. Get the temperature to 225°. Monitor temperature, without opening the door, until it reaches 190-195° internal temperature. It should be slightly wet in appearance, bend in the middle when you try to pick it up.

Remove from the smoker, double-wrap in heavy duty foil, and place in a cooler (covered with a heavy towel) for at least 1 hour. The brisket will rest, and finish cooking (internal temperature will rise to 200°). Remove from foil, slice and serve.



### Beef Sirloin Tip Roast

The Sirloin Tip Roast is one of my favorites for sliced beef. It can be likened to the “poor man’s prime rib,” as the taste and texture is similar. Although the sirloin tip is not quite as tender as the standing rib roast, it’s great for thinly sliced sandwiches or au jus. I like to use the same method I use to smoke prime rib: low and slow with a reverse-sear. Due to the quality of a good sirloin tip, I like it at medium-rare to medium, so I pull it out of the smoker at 130° internal temperature. Like prime rib, it gets a 30-minute rest in foil, then into the 500° oven for 7-8 minutes to sear the outside.



The sirloin tip smoke starts with a 6-8 lbs. sirloin tip roast. I like to coat these in yellow mustard and rub then foil wrap and rest in the fridge overnight. You can also inject a sirloin tip with a little beef broth. A 7 lb. roast should take 3.5-4 hours, at 200° (smoker temperature), so I will put this in until about 11AM for a 5PM dinner. The roast goes into a cold smoker, with 3-4 oz. of bourbon barrel oak, set to 200°. I like to add a pan of apple juice during the smoke. We are shooting for an internal temperature of 130°, so nothing to do now but wait.

Once the roast reaches 130° internal temperature, take it out and wrap it in foil for 30-minutes. Pre-heat your oven to 500°. Once the oven is up to temperature, place your roast on a rack in a baking pan. Keep an eye on it, but it should take 7-8 minutes to get a good sear. Once seared, the roast is ready to slice.

Sliced thin, this makes some killer French Dip sandwiches. Serve with au jus, or plain. You can slice this into strips and make Philly cheese steak sandwiches. The possibilities are endless with good “Q”!



#### Smoked Prime Rib Roast (Bone-in)

Here is a treat for the senses. The standing rib roast (better known as a “prime rib”) is one of my very favorite things to put in the smoker. When prepared properly, it is one of life’s wonders, and a meal fit for a king (or queen).

If you want great results with this cut of meat, do not scrimp on the quality of the cut. If you are not dry aging this roast, the only grades to get is USDA Prime or USDA Choice depending on what you want to spend. Here you see the beginning; a 7.57 lb. USDA Prime bone-in rib roast. This is a 5-bone roast, and is a good size for smoking. I use the “low and slow” method, with a reverse-sear at the end.

Here's the game plan:

*First night:* Trim the roast; coat it with olive oil and your favorite seasoning. Wrap in plastic, let it get happy in the fridge overnight (24 hours, actually). Score an X-pattern in the fat cap (like on a brisket) all the way to the meat to aid in spice and smoke penetration.

*Second night:* Remove from the wrap, re-sprinkle with the rub, and put back in the fridge, unwrapped, on a baking rack overnight. This step allows the surface to dry a bit, which aids in crust formation.

*The next day:* Put it in the smoker at about 11AM, with 3 oz. of hickory and cherry at 200°. There, it will slow smoke to an internal temperature of 128° (medium-rare). When removed from the smoker, wrap it in foil to rest while the oven heats to 500°. Once the oven is heated, place the roast in there for about 7-8 minutes to "reverse sear" the outside. When it comes out of the oven, no more resting needed; just slice and serve. This method is backwards from the way most people tell you to cook a prime rib roast, but it works incredible. What you end up with is a roast that is medium-rare all the way from bark to bark no overcooked gray edges and, it is the juiciest I have ever had.



Here's the roast seasoned and tied back together. At this point, it's going to get wrapped and put in the fridge for 24-hours.

Below, we see the roast after drying, unwrapped, in the fridge for 12-hours. It is ready to go in the smoker.



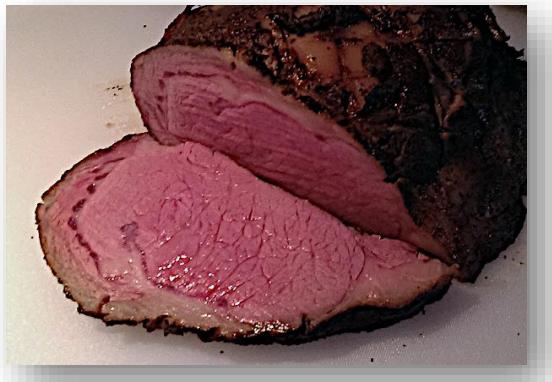
I like to separate the bone rack by cutting against the bones, but not all the way. Keep the bones attached on the thick edge of the roast. The reason for this is twofold: First, it makes the bones much easier to separate after cooking. Secondly, it allows you to season between the bones and the meat. Once the fat cap is trimmed, bones are partially separated, put it back together and tie it with butcher's twine.



Temperature set to 200°, with 3 oz. of hickory/cherry mix. Below on the right, we see the roast at 127° internal temperature, total time 4½ hours. At this point, it gets removed and wrapped in foil while the oven preheats to

500°. (Takes about 30 minutes, which is a perfect rest time for the sear). In the post-sear photos, below, you can see how the reverse-sear really brings the surface to life. The reverse-sear works by super-heating the surface for 5-8 minutes only.

This short blast of heat will not further cook the internal meat, so you end up with a nice pink medium-rare center that extends all the way to the edges of the meat. No further “resting” is needed; the prime rib is ready to slice and serve. Finish removing the bones, then slice.



## Poultry

### Smoked Whole Chicken

Whole chicken, in the smoker, is a real treat. You can make a succulent, juicy chicken that will rival the best roast chicken ever and it will have a nice smoky taste. Start with a whole fryer or roasting chicken, in the 4-5 lbs. range. Brining a whole chicken is easy, and very beneficial to the finished product. Start with my basic brine for poultry for 3-4 hours. When you remove the bird from the brine rinse well with cold water, and pat dry.

Now is the time to prepare the bird. I like to fill whole chicken (and turkey, too) with “**mire poix**,” which is nothing more than **equal parts of chopped celery, carrots and onion**. You can also add other aromatics, such as lemon or orange slices to the mixture. Filling the cavity of the bird with this does a couple of things. First, it adds fantastic flavor to the meat, from the inside out. Secondly, it stabilizes the cooking. Instead of the heat filling an empty cavity, and cooking the bird from both sides (inside and outside), your bird will cook more evenly from the outside. The aromatic veggies inside act as a “heat sink” while cooking, and give off some great flavor in the process. Prep the bird, first, by coating in olive oil and your favorite poultry rub.



Rubs will add some flavor, but your skin will not be crispy, so the rub flavor is not as important as the smoke and internal flavoring. Some like to get the rub under the skin, on the surface of the meat. I prefer not to do that, as disturbing the skin tends to make it cook weird, and not look very appealing when done. Once you have the outside of the chicken prepared, fill the cavity with the mire poix.

Some woods good for chicken are: Hickory, Cherry, Apple and Peach

I prefer cherry, hickory, or a blend of hickory and cherry. You let your taste decide on the wood, as everyone's taste is different. Once the smoker is ready, put your bird in flat on a shelf or the Smokin-It turkey/chicken rack. Place it as high as possible, and smoke at 250° until you reach an internal temperature of 165°. I place the probe in the thickest part of the breast, and it works every time. The smoked chicken will be the best you have ever had.

### Smoked Turkey

Fortunately, a turkey is really just a big chicken, so the technique is the same. The only difference is the size of the brining container for a whole turkey. I recommend no more than a 13-14 lbs. turkey for the smoker. If you go larger you risk

keeping the turkey exposed to the “danger zone” of food safety, which is the period of time between 40° and 140° internal temperature. Poultry is known to have salmonella, so the more time it spends in this range, the greater chance of growing bad things in it. If you try to smoke a monster 22 lb. bird, you will regret it later (as will your guests). If you need more than a 14 lb. turkey, smoke two.

Follow the same preparations discussed in the chicken section, above. I use exactly the same process, and it makes a delicious turkey. Here is the bird going into the smoker. You see a small potato in the neck cavity; that’s to keep the mire poix from spilling out. You can use stuffing as well. Smoker is set to 250° with 3 oz. of cherry wood. Remember to rest the turkey, under a tent of foil, for about 30-minutes before carving. This allows the juices to stabilize and lets the meat firm a little (making carving easier).



## Pork

### Brined Boston Butt Pork Shoulder

This is one of my absolute favorites pulled pork, I never knew how my first pork butt. Many of my

praised this recipe. I really just stumbled on the concept of brining a pork butt. First of all, you need to start out with a good cut of meat for great pulled pork. I prefer the bone in Boston butt cut of pork shoulder. This is the top shoulder cut from the front leg of the hog, and is far superior (for pulled pork) to the “picnic” cut, which is the lower part of the leg. Bone in also cooks superior to boneless. A good size, for pulled pork, is 7-10 lbs. smaller butts will do, but are harder to cook right. Size matters with a pork butt.

#### Pork Butt Brine

1 gallon water  
1½ cup kosher salt  
1 cup brown sugar  
½ cup apple cider vinegar  
1 t. #1 pink curing salt

2 t. black pepper  
1 T. cayenne  
1 T. onion powder  
1 T. garlic powder

....put ¼ of the water in a pan big enough to hold 1 gallon of water. Add the other ingredients and heat over medium heat. The idea is to melt and blend all of the ingredients. Once complete, remove from heat and add the remaining ¾ gallon of water in the form of ice cubes. This will cool the brine enough to put the pork in it. You can cool the brine further by placing ice in a Ziploc bag and putting it in the pan. If the ice in the bag melts, just replace it. This way, you are cooling the brine without diluting it.

Once the brine is cold, place your pork butt in a brining container and add the brine. This can be a big Ziploc bag or any food-grade container for brining.

Here, we see the butt out of the brine, rubbed and ready for the smoker.

### for Pulled Pork

I have always loved much until I brined forum buddies have



*Two different containers, same results*



#### Let the butt swim

from the brine and rinse well under cold water. This will remove a little residual salt on the surface. Once rinsed, slather with yellow mustard and rub of your choice. The butt goes in the smoker with a water pan full of apple juice, and 5-6 oz. of hickory and cherry wood. Peach works well, as does straight hickory or oak. Try different woods to see what your preference is. Set the temperature to 225° make sure your temperature probe is in a meaty part and not touching the bone, and close the door.

Your pork butt will hit “the stall” anywhere from the 160° to 180° on temperature. Prior to this, you are going to see a steady climb in temperature, and begin to panic that it is going to be done too soon. At this rate, it is only going to take 3 hours to cook. Your 8 lb. pork butt will **NOT** be done in 3-4 hours. Large cuts of meat, like the pork butt, will experience a rapid climb in temperature as the heat starts to penetrate the meat. However, this rapid climb will come to an abrupt halt in what we call “**the stall**.” At this point, the meat has absorbed enough heat to start breaking down the internal fat and connective tissue in the meat. As the temperature stops climbing, and stalls, you have “evaporative” cooling going on. The rendered fat and tissue is working its way to the surface of the meat, and is acting to “cool” the internal meat. Much like you cooling in the summer time, when the wind hits your sweat you can actually feel cool. Your pork butt is now you in the summer wind.

**The most important thing to remember about the stall: Do not do anything!** Do not adjust the temperature or open the door. **Do not intervene!** It is doing the cooking will yield some very tender and moist pulled pork. We just hit 190° internal temperature. At 190° we can pull the butt out and quickly double-wrap in foil to rest. Place the wrapped butt in a cooler, with a heavy towel on top (inside the cooler, of course), and close the lid. We need to let the butt rest for 30-minutes (minimum) to 2 hours. During the “rest,” the meat is reabsorbing all the fat and tissue, which was rendered during cooking. This will make the final pulled meat very moist.

## Pork Loin

One of my favorites for sliced pork sandwiches is the whole pork loin. Not to be confused with pork tenderloin, this is the larger cut from the top of the ribs, next to the hog's spine. A full loin will weigh in at 8-9 lbs. We start the pork loin with a brine. When the brine is ready, place the pork loin in it for 12 hours. This will ensure good brine penetration, and maximum flavor and moistness. Once the loin is brined, rinse under cold water, coat in yellow mustard and rub.

This is also half of the loin. Due to the length of a full loin, I usually cut them in two so they'll fit in the smoker. Below is the setup for the loins. 2 oz. of hickory wood and water pan filled with apple juice. Temperature probe, from the Maverick, in the largest half. As with other smokes, I cook loins without peeking for the full time. We are shooting for **145°** internal temperature on these.



Once the loins hit 145° I like to reverse-sear them on a hot grill. Just a few minutes per side does the trick.

Once seared, it is time to slice. I like to slice the loins thin. (*Tip: invest in a good-quality carving knife. Look for the Granton edge, as this displaces the juice while slicing. It makes really clean, thin, slices.*) The #1 curing salt penetrates the meat with sodium nitrites, which leaves a faux smoke ring in the meat.

## Brined Beef Jerky

This is a little more “advanced,” but I wanted to include it, for you adventurous souls out there. Jerky is a great staple of Americana, and it’s hard to find anyone who does not like it. The key to good jerky is:

- Use good meat (lean)
- Cure it (*a must* for food safety)
- Smoke it at a temperature that will *dry* it, not cook it
- Use the James Jerky Dryer to aid in removing moisture, because these smokers are so “tight,” it is very difficult to do jerky without a fan
- Use “equilibrium brining” to absolutely control the results

Start with 4-5 lbs. of lean beef, like an eye of round roast. Trim any surface fat, and slice  $\frac{1}{8}$ ” thick, with the grain. Bag the meat, weigh it, and place back in the fridge. (You need the total meat weight for the brine calculator).

**Prepare your equilibrium brine:** The calculations, below, are just an example, based on one of my smokes

Meat:	4095 g (9 lbs.)
Cure #1:	6.25%
Salt %:	1.5
Sugar %:	2.5 (used 2% last time)
ppm cure:	156

Calculated, this gave me:

Cure #1	10.22g
Salt	52g
Brown sugar	102g

I also used 2 cups of soy sauce, 1 cup of Worcestershire sauce, 1 Tbsp. garlic and onion powder (each).

Simmer the brine for 10-15 minutes, to blend the flavors, cool to fridge temperature. Add the meat to the brine. You can let it soak overnight, or 2-3 days, with no problem. That is the beauty of equilibrium brining; once it is absorbed, it equalizes and can never get any saltier. Prepare the smoker, as usual. Pat the meat dry, but do not rinse it. Use 1.5-2 oz. of hickory or mesquite. Lay the strips out on the shelves, and carry to the smoker.

Allow the meat to smoke for 2 hours, without the fan in place. After 2 hours, add the jerky fan. Total time should be 6-8 hours, depending on the thickness of your slices. When you check it, you are looking for dry meat, but not crispy meat. Smoking at 145° will dry it, not cook it. Since the meat is cured, this is perfectly safe.

When the meat is done, it should look like this:



### Smokin' Times, Temps & Wood\*

The information in this guide is meant to be **ONLY** a guideline. Variables, like weather conditions (wind, ambient temperature, humidity), as well as the uniqueness of each piece of meat, can vary the times by as much as an hour or more. Learn to tell doneness visually, as well as with temperature and time, and you will be a much better chef at the smoker. With experience, you will get to know what is “done,” and what is not.

Type of Meat	Smoking Temperature	Time to Complete	Finished Temperature	Wood Amount	Recommended Wood
<b>Beef</b>					
<b>Brisket (Sliced)</b>	225-240°F	1½ hrs./pound	190-200°	5-6 oz.	Hickory, Mesquite, Oak, Pecan, Maple
<b>Brisket (Pulled)</b>	225°F	1½ hrs./pound	200°	5-6 oz.	Hickory, Mesquite, Oak, Pecan, Maple
<b>Chuck Roast (Medium-Rare) 3-4lbs.</b>	200-225°F	2-3 hrs.	130-145°	4-5 oz.	Hickory, Oak, Cherry, Pecan, Maple
<b>Bone-in Prime Rib</b>	200°F	4-5 hrs.	128° + reverse-sear	4-5 oz.	Hickory, Oak, Pecan, Maple
<b>Beef Ribs</b>	225°F	3-4 hrs.	175°	2½-3 oz.	Hickory, Oak, Pecan, Maple
<b>Meatloaf</b>	225-240°F	3-4 hrs.	160°	2½-3 oz.	Hickory, Oak, Pecan, Maple
<b>Meatballs (2") (all meats)</b>	225°F	1 hr.	160°	2-3 oz.	Hickory, Oak, Cherry, Pecan, Maple
<b>Burgers</b>	225°F	1-1½ hrs.	160°	2½-3 oz.	Any
<b>Pork</b>					
<b>Pork Butt (Sliced)</b>	225°F	1-2 hrs./pound	175°	5-6 oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Apple, Oak, Maple
<b>Pork Butt (Pulled)</b>	225°F	1-2 hrs./pound	190-195°	5-6 oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Apple, Oak, Maple
<b>Pork Loin</b>	225-240°F	3-5 hrs.	145° + reverse sear	5-6 oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Apple, Oak, Maple
<b>Spare Ribs</b>	235°F	5-7 hrs.	Tender*	2½-3 oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Oak, Apple, Maple
<b>Tenderloin</b>	225-240°F	2-3 hrs.	145°	2½-3 oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Oak, Apple, Maple
<b>Baby Back Ribs</b>	225-240°F	4-6 hrs.	Tender*	2½-3 oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Oak, Apple, Maple
<b>Venison Bacon (150°/2hr, 175°/4hr, 200° until 155°)</b>	140-200°F	5-7 hrs.	155°	5-6 oz.	Hickory, Cherry, Apple, Maple
<b>Poultry</b>					
<b>Whole Chicken</b>	250°F	2-4 hrs.	165°	2-2½ oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Pecan, Apple, Maple
<b>Chicken Legs &amp; Thighs</b>	250°F	2-4 hrs.	165°	2-2½ oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Pecan, Apple, Maple
<b>Chicken Wings</b>	250°F	1½-2 hrs.	165°	2-2½ oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Pecan, Apple, Maple
<b>Chicken Quarters</b>	250°F	2-4 hrs.	165°	2-2½ oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Pecan, Apple, Maple
<b>Quail/Pheasant</b>	240°F	1½-2 hrs.	165°	2-2½ oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Pecan, Apple, Maple
<b>Cornish Hens</b>	235-240°F	2-3 hrs.	165°	2-2½ oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Pecan, Apple, Maple
<b>Whole Turkey 12#</b>	240-250°F	6-7 hrs.	165°	3-4 oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Pecan, Apple, Maple
<b>Turkey Legs</b>	250°F	4 hrs.	165°	2-2½ oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Pecan, Apple, Maple
<b>Turkey Wings</b>	225°F	2½ hrs.	165°	2-2½ oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Pecan, Apple, Maple
<b>Turkey Breast</b>	240°F	4-5 hrs.	165°	2-2½ oz.	Cherry, Hickory, Pecan, Apple, Maple

<b>Sausage &amp; Jerky</b>					
Boudin (pork)	230°F	2½ hrs.	160°	2½-3 oz.	Hickory, Oak, Cherry, Pecan, Maple
Breakfast Sausage	230°F	3 hrs.	160°	2½-3 oz.	Hickory, Oak, Cherry, Pecan, Maple
Fatties	225°F	3 hrs.	165°	2½-3 oz.	Hickory, Oak, Cherry, Pecan, Maple
Jerky (cured)	145°F w/ Jerky Fan	6-8 hrs.	N/A	2-2½ oz.	Hickory, Mesquite, Oak, Apple, Cherry, Maple
Pepper Stix (use chips) slowly increase temp	150-200°F	6-8 hrs.	155-165°F	3-4 oz.	Hickory, Mesquite, Oak, Cherry, Maple
Brats	225°F	2 hrs.	160°	2½-3 oz.	Hickory, Oak, Cherry, Pecan, Maple
Summer Sausage	190°F	4-6 hrs.	155-165°F	3-4 oz.	Hickory, Mesquite, Oak, Cherry, Maple
Country Style Sausage (use chips vs. chunks)	190°F	2-3 hrs.	150-155°F	3-4 oz.	Hickory, Mesquite, Oak, Cherry, Maple
<b>Fish</b>					
Salmon	140-170°F	2-5 hrs.	140-145°	2-2½ oz.	Apple, Maple
Tilapia	220°F	1-2 hrs.	140-145°	2-2½ oz.	Apple, Maple
Whole Trout	220-225°F	1-2 hrs.	140-145°	2-2½ oz.	Apple, Maple
Oysters	225°F	½-¾ hrs.	140-145°	2-2½ oz.	Apple, Maple
Lobster Tail	225°F	¾-1 hrs.	140-145°	2-2½ oz.	Apple, Maple
Scallops	225°F	¾-1 hrs.	140-145°	2-2½ oz.	Apple, Maple
Shrimps	225°F	½-¾ hrs.	140-145°	2-2½ oz.	Apple, Maple
<b>Sides</b>					
Smoked Corn on the Cob	225°F	1½-2 hrs.	N/A	2-3 oz.	Any
Smoked Potatoes	225°F	2-3½ hrs.	N/A	2-3 oz.	Any
Baked Beans	225°F	1-2 hrs.	N/A	2-3 oz.	Any

**\*Note:** Be sure to use **Internal Temperature** to tell you when the food/meat is done. Time is just an estimate and is NOT an indicator of doneness. The wood amounts are a guideline; adjust to taste. Recommended woods are also just a starting point, from experience. Wood smoke flavor is very subjective and everyone's tastes are different. Often you are influenced by what region you have grown up in, so experiment with different woods, and find what suits your taste.

Check our FAQ, 'For the Customer' and the Smokin-It customer forum (all on our website) for recipes and information  
Please contact us at [smokin.it.info@gmail.com](mailto:smokin.it.info@gmail.com) if you have any questions or concerns



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