

Memphis Blues Pulled Pork

By George Siu and Park Heffelfinger

Follow this recipe and you will be in barbecue heaven! This is our signature dish. Our staple. If you don't have a gas barbecue or smoker (the first two methods listed), below is our Oven-Roasted Pulled Pork recipe. Also included are our Memphis Blues All-Purpose Dry Rub and our Memphis Blues Classic Barbecue Sauce. Enjoy!

Serves 8

Ingredients:

5 lb (2.2 kg) pork shoulder or picnic shoulder
½ cup (125 mL) All-Purpose Dry Rub (see below)

six 3 x 3 inch (8 x 8 cm) chunks apple wood

OR

one 2 lb (1 kg) bag of wood chips if smoking with a smoker box

Method for Gas Barbecue:

Rub the pork shoulder with the dry rub. Make sure the shoulder is well coated on all sides. Turn on one side of the gas barbecue to create a temperature of 250–275°F (120–140°C). Put one piece of apple wood on the lit side of the grill. (Or, use a smoker box and refill as needed.)

Place the shoulder on the unlit side of the grill, fat side up. Close the lid and allow it to smoke. Once the smoke has cleared, open the lid and put in another chunk of wood. Repeat this smoking technique until all the wood is gone. A 5 lb (2.2 kg) pork shoulder will take approximately 8 hours to become soft enough to pull apart. During the last hour of cooking, tightly wrap the meat in tinfoil to allow the shoulder to steam in its own moisture.

Take the meat off the barbecue and let it stand for 20 minutes. Remove the tinfoil and place the meat in a large stainless steel bowl. Use your hands to break the meat up into tiny pieces (a kneading motion similar to making bread works well). Incorporate all the fat and juices into the meat mixture. Use right away or package it in plastic wrap (to retain moisture) for later use. Keeps refrigerated for up to 2 weeks, or frozen for several months. Serve with Memphis Blues Classic Barbecue Sauce (recipe below).

Method for Water Smoker:

Start the charcoal in a starter chimney. Make sure the coals are white and hot before loading. Fill the water reservoir half full. Load the charcoal into the smoker and place 2 chunks of wood on it. Or, use handfuls of wood chips placed directly on the charcoal. Place the pork shoulder on the top rack of the smoker, fat side up. Close the lid and allow it to smoke. Keep adding hot charcoal and wood as it burns down. You may need to reload 3 or 4 times during the 8 hours. Monitor the temperature and try to keep it consistently between 250–275°F (120–140°C). During the last hour of cooking, wrap the meat in tinfoil to retain its moisture. Serve as above.

Memphis Blues Oven-Roasted Pulled Pork

Pick a pork shoulder that's not too lean, because you will render the fat through the lean meat during the long roasting time. You'll lose up to 30% of the raw weight when it's done. Even in the oven, expect about 5–5½ hours of cooking time. It's slow food—don't rush it!

Serves 6

Ingredients:

4 lb (2 kg)	boneless pork shoulder or picnic shoulder with a fat cap
¼ cup (60 ml)	All-Purpose Dry Rub (see below)

Method:

Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C).

Rub the pork shoulder liberally with the All-Purpose Dry Rub. Place the shoulder in a roasting pan, fat cap up, and cook in the preheated oven for 3.5 hours. Remove from the oven, wrap with tinfoil, and cook for another 1.5 hours to 2 hours. To know when it's done, test it by pushing down on the pork shoulder. It should feel tender and ready to fall apart, if it's still too firm, cook for another 30 minutes.

Remove from the oven and unwrap the pork. Use two forks to separate the pork while it rests in the roasting pan. There will be natural juices and drippings that you can incorporate back into the pulled pork. Just massage them in with your hands (clean, of course!) This will add extra flavor and keep it nice and moist. Serve on a bun, with a salad, or as a meal. It's versatile! Serve with Memphis Blues Classic Barbecue Sauce (recipe below).

Memphis Blues All Purpose Dry Rub

Ingredients:

1 cup (250 ml)	dried parsley
1 cup (250 ml)	sugar
1 cup (250 ml)	Lawry's Seasoned Salt
3 Tbsp (45 ml)	ground black pepper
3 Tbsp (45 ml)	garlic powder
3 Tbsp (45 ml)	onion powder
3 Tbsp (45 ml)	dried oregano
3 Tbsp (45 ml)	sweet paprika
1 Tbsp (15 ml)	mild mustard powder (* Do NOT use Keen's)
1 Tbsp (15 ml)	celery salt
pinch	cayenne pepper

Method:

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and whisk thoroughly so there are no clumps. Store in an airtight container in the cupboard up to 6 months. Use on pork, chicken, turkey or fish.

Memphis Blues Classic Barbecue Sauce

Most barbecue joints have a signature sauce. This is ours. We have received many requests for bottled version, which we are planning on offering one day. Right now our focus is on keeping up with the demand in our restaurants.

Makes 2 cups (250 mL)

Ingredients:

2 Tbsp (30 mL)	tomato paste
1 Tbsp (15 mL)	dark brown or demerara sugar
1 Tbsp (15 mL)	molasses
1 Tbsp (15 mL)	white vinegar
1 Tbsp (15 mL)	soy sauce
1 Tbsp (15 mL)	honey
1 Tbsp (15 mL)	ketchup
1 tsp (5 mL)	yellow mustard
1 tsp (5 mL)	Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp (5 mL)	garlic powder
1 tsp (5 mL)	onion powder
	dash Louisiana-style hot sauce
1 tsp (5 mL)	Lawry's Seasoned Salt
½ cup (125 mL)	water

Method:

Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan. Whisk thoroughly or combine with a hand-held blender to ensure there are no lumps. Simmer over low heat while stirring frequently for 1 hour (this pasteurizes the sauce). Cool for at least 1 hour before transferring to an airtight container for storage. Store for up to 1 month in the refrigerator.

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