

Bacon Ribs: A Unique Twist On Traditional Smoked Baby Back Ribs

Prep: 3 days curing (plus ~20 minutes active) • Cook: About 4 1/2 hours at 225–250°F

Baby back ribs are cured like bacon, then slow-smoked to a tender rib bite with a rosy bacon-leaning flavor and a sweet, savory bark from Memphis Dust. The result marries classic rib chew with unmistakable bacon/ham aroma and color.

Ingredients

- baby back ribs (trimmed of excess fat and loose flap meat)
- as needed water (cold; for wet cure)
- per curing calculator/precise weight curing salt (Prague Powder #1)
- per cure formulation kosher salt
- per cure formulation sugar (white or brown)
- per cure formulation black pepper (freshly ground)
- as needed mayonnaise (thin coating; or use mustard as a substitute)
- as needed Meathead's Memphis Dust BBQ dry rub (generous, even coating)
- as needed wood chunks (apple, cherry, or hickory) (for smoking)
- as needed barbecue sauce (optional, for finishing)
- as needed foil or unwaxed butcher paper (optional, for Texas Crutch)

Instructions

1. Trim excess surface fat and any loose flap meat from baby back ribs.
2. Make a wet cure by mixing cold water with Prague Powder #1 (curing salt), kosher salt, sugar, and ground black pepper; measure the curing salt precisely with a scale.
3. Place ribs and wet cure in a large zip-top bag, seal, and refrigerate for 3 days, turning the bag once daily for even curing.
4. Set up a grill or smoker for indirect, two-zone cooking at 225–250°F; add wood chunks (apple, cherry, or hickory) for smoke.
5. Remove ribs from the cure, rinse under cold water to remove surface cure, and pat completely dry.
6. Lightly coat ribs with a thin layer of mayonnaise (or mustard), then apply a generous, even layer of Meathead's Memphis Dust BBQ dry rub on all sides.
7. Smoke ribs bone-side down on the indirect side until tender with a good bend and the meat has pulled back from the bones by about 1/4 to 3/4 inch, roughly 4 1/2 hours. Aim for tender with tug, not fall-off-the-bone.
8. Optional Texas Crutch: When you see 1/4 to 1/2 inch pullback, wrap racks tightly in foil or unwaxed butcher paper for

up to 45 minutes to boost tenderness; do not exceed this or ribs may steam.

9. Unwrap (if crutched) and return to the cooker briefly to re-firm the bark if needed.

10. Keep ribs unsauced to showcase the bacon/ham flavor, or brush on barbecue sauce during the last few minutes to set and turn tacky.

11. Slice between the bones and serve.

Tags: BBQ, Pork, Smoked, Ribs, Bacon, Cured

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