

Perfect Smoked Pork Butt: Tender, Flavorful & Easy BBQ

4-6 lbs pork butt (bone-in or boneless)



OVEN
225°F

TIME
30 min

TEMP
165°F

PRINT
Recipe Card

INGREDIENTS

4-6 lbs pork butt (bone-in or boneless)

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons paprika

1 tablespoon salt

1 tablespoon black pepper

1 tablespoon garlic powder

1 tablespoon onion powder

1 tablespoon brown sugar

Wood chips for smoking (hickory, apple, pecan, or cherry are great choices)

Swaps and Notes:

Pork Butt: Also called Boston butt, this is a cut from the upper part of the pig's shoulder. Look for a good marbling of fat, which will render down and keep the meat incredibly moist. Bone-in tends to be more flavorful and can act as a natural temperature guide (the bone will wiggle free when done).

Olive Oil: This acts as a binder for the dry rub. You can use any neutral oil or even yellow mustard for a traditional BBQ binder.

Dry Rub: The provided spice blend is a fantastic starting point. Feel free to adjust ratios or add other spices you enjoy, such as cayenne pepper for heat, cumin for earthiness, or dried thyme. Make sure your brown sugar is packed for accurate measurement.

Wood Chips/Chunks: Wood chips are good for shorter smokes, but for a long cook like pork butt, wood

chunks are often preferred as they burn longer and produce more consistent smoke. Choose your wood wisely - hickory, apple, pecan, and cherry are all excellent choices that impart different subtle flavors.

Foiling/The Stall (Optional but Recommended): Many pitmasters wrap the pork butt in foil (or butcher paper) once it hits the "stall" (usually around 150-165°F internal temperature) to push it through faster and retain moisture. This is known as the "Texas Crutch." While not strictly necessary for this recipe, it can speed up the cook and help maintain juiciness.

Instructions:

Preheat the Smoker: Set your smoker to a consistent temperature of 225°F (107°C). Allow it to come to temperature and stabilize. This low and slow temperature is crucial for rendering the fat and breaking down the connective tissues, resulting in tender meat.

Prepare the Pork Butt: Pat the 4-6 lbs pork butt completely dry with paper towels. This helps the rub adhere and creates a better bark.

Generously rub the pork butt all over with 3 tablespoons of olive oil. Make sure it's fully coated, as this helps the rub stick.

Make the Dry Rub: In a small bowl, combine the 2 tablespoons paprika, 1 tablespoon salt, 1 tablespoon black pepper, 1 tablespoon garlic powder, 1 tablespoon onion powder, and 1 tablespoon brown sugar. Mix well until all spices are evenly distributed.

Apply the Rub: Liberally rub the spice mixture all over the entire surface of the pork butt, pressing it gently to ensure it adheres. Don't be shy - this is where much of your flavor and delicious "bark" comes from.

Smoke the Pork Butt: Once your smoker is at temperature and producing clean smoke, place the rubbed pork butt directly on the grates. Add your chosen wood chips (or chunks) to the smoker as needed throughout the cooking process, ensuring a consistent smoke flow for the first few hours.

Monitor Temperature & Cook: Smoke for approximately 1.5 hours per pound. For a 6 lb pork butt, this would be about 9 hours. However, cooking by temperature is more reliable than by time. Continue smoking until the internal temperature of the pork butt (measured in the thickest part, away from the bone if bone-in) reaches 195°F (90°C). At this temperature, the collagen has broken down, making the meat incredibly tender for pulling. Some pitmasters even go up to 200-205°F (93-96°C) for maximum tenderness.

Rest the Pork: Once the pork butt reaches the target internal temperature, remove it from the

smoker. Tent it loosely with foil (or wrap tightly in butcher paper) and let it rest for at least 30 minutes. For best results and incredibly juicy meat, a rest of 1-2 hours is ideal. This allows the juices to redistribute throughout the meat, keeping it moist.

Shred and Serve: After resting, the pork butt should be so tender that you can easily shred it with two forks (or bear claws). Discard any large pieces of rendered fat or bone.

Tips for Success:

Patience is Key: Smoking is a marathon, not a sprint. Don't rush the process. Low and slow is how you achieve that incredible tenderness.

Don't Over-Smoke: You want a consistent, thin blue smoke, not thick white smoke, which can make your meat bitter. Add wood chips/chunks as needed, especially in the first few hours.

Trust Your Thermometer: An accurate meat thermometer is your best friend. Cook to temperature, not just time. A probe thermometer that stays in the meat throughout the cook is highly recommended.

The "Wiggle Test": If you're using bone-in pork butt, when the bone wiggles freely and can be easily pulled out, your pork is likely done.

Rest, Rest, Rest: Do not skip the resting step! It's critical for juicy pulled pork.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Storage and Leftover Tips:

More Recipes You Will Love:

For a taste of the South, my This Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo Is My Favorite Bowl Of Southern Comfort is a must-try.

DIRECTIONS

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10. **Enjoy your perfectly smoked pork butt!**
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15. **Rest, : Rest, Rest:** Do not skip the resting step! It's critical for juicy pulled pork.
16. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** Smoked pork butt is synonymous with pulled pork, and it's incredibly versatile. Serve it piled high on soft brioche bun with your favorite BBQ sauce, or as part of a [This Walking Taco Bar Is My Favorite No-Fuss Way To Feed A Crowd](#). It's also delicious as a filling for [These Sheet Pan Quesadillas Are My Favorite Way To Feed A Crowd Fast](#). Classic sides include coleslaw, cornbread, baked beans, macaroni and cheese, or potato salad. For other comforting savory dishes, you might also enjoy [my This Tomato Skillet With Okra And Sausage Is My Favorite Quick Dinner Packed With Southern Flavor](#).
17. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** Leftover smoked pork butt is a dream! Once shredded, store it in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3-4 days. It also freezes exceptionally well. Portion into freezer-safe bags or containers and freeze for up to 3 months. To reheat, thaw in the refrigerator overnight if frozen, then gently warm in a saucepan on the stovetop with a splash of apple juice or broth to keep it moist, or in the oven covered with foil. It's fantastic for quick weeknight meals.
18. **More Recipes You Will Love:** If you enjoy hearty, flavorful, and comforting meat dishes that feed a crowd, explore these other Chefmaniac favorites:

19. For a taste of the South, my This Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo Is My Favorite Bowl Of Southern Comfort is a must-try.
20. For another incredibly tender and easy-to-make meat dish, check out These Easy Turkey Wings Are My Favorite Comfort Food For Lazy Sundays.
21. Final Thoughts: Smoking a pork butt is a journey, and the destination is always a triumphant feast of tender, smoky goodness. While it requires time, the minimal hands-on effort and the incredible flavor payoff make it a deeply rewarding experience. Master this recipe, and you'll have the perfect pulled pork for sandwiches, tacos, or simply enjoying straight off the plate.
22. What's your favorite wood to use for smoking, and what's your go-to way to enjoy pulled pork? Share your tips in the comments below, and don't forget to follow Chefmaniac.com for more delicious recipes!

SWAPS & NOTES

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TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/perfect-smoked-pork-butt-tender-flavorful-easy-bbq/>