

Meat Smoking for Beginners

Today I am sharing three incredible versions of smoked pork chops and am giving you a framework that you can tweak to make the recipe your own.

Let's get started!



The key to perfect smoked pork chops lies in what I call the “5-S” process. Each step in the 5-S process is important and must be followed in order. The 5 S's are as follows:

- Selection
- Salt
- Season
- Smoke
- Sauce

Smoked Pork Chops Step #1 : Selection

A great smoked pork chop has to start with a great piece of meat. You are going to want a bone-in chop that is at least one inch thick and weighs about a pound.



The two pork chops pictured above are the only two cuts I will use when making smoked pork chops. The chop on the left is a Porterhouse chop while the chop on the right is a bone on Rib Eye chop.

These pork chops are called 20 different things across the country so don't get too hung up over the names. You will see a LOT of boneless pork labelled as "chops"; they are not chops, they are thick sliced pork loin. If you don't have a bone you don't have a chop.

You want to work with a big, thick chop. Thin chops are delicious but will dry out during the smoking step. Thin chops are perfect for hot and fast grilling. If you want to smoke a pork chop then you have to go big.

Smoked Pork Chops Step #2: Salt

Salting the pork chop is essential for two reasons; flavor and moisture. The flavor portion is pretty obvious. Salt tastes good. The moisture portion comes from the salt brining the meat. I use a dry brine process because it is so much simpler than wet brining.



Each side of the pork chop gets coated with one teaspoon of salt. The pork chops go into the refrigerator for 24 hours to let the salt work its magic. After 24 hours take the chops out of the refrigerator, rinse well with water and pat dry with paper towels.

You can get creative with the salting step. I typically use Kosher salt but will show you a smoked pork chop made with curing salt later on.

Smoked Pork Chops Step #3: Season

Here is another place you can start getting creative with your smoked pork chop technique. After the pork chop has been salted you have two flavor layers in place; pork and salt.

Now you get to add a third layer of flavor with your choice of seasonings. I use this step to put a little bite into the pork chop. Usually I simply dust with black pepper. You could also add some onion or garlic powder and even some chili powder.

Each side of the pork chop gets a little under a teaspoon of seasoning. You don't want a thick coating of seasoning on the pork chop as we want to make it easy for the smoke to penetrate the meat later.



The one thing you don't want to add at this step is any more salt. Most commercial bbq rubs are loaded with salt so stay away from them.

Smoked Pork Chops Step #4: Smoke

I set up my Weber kettle for smoking by filling a charcoal basket about two-thirds full and adding five or six lit briquettes to one side of the basket.

Keep the top vent fully open and the bottom vent about 1/4 open.

Add about a handful of wood chips to the coals and let the grill settle in at a grate temperature of around 250F.



The smoke is your fourth flavor layer. I typically use pecan or hickory for smoke. Fruit woods are also an excellent choice for smoked pork chops (apple, peach, cherry). Stay away from mesquite.

The pork chops will take about 90 minutes to reach 130F. Once you hit 130F it is time to add another layer of flavor with the sauce.

Smoked Pork Chops Step #5: Sauce

You just have to remember one word when it comes to sauce for smoked pork chops, "Sweet". Once the smoked pork chops hit 130F you are going to start putting down layers of sweetness.

Your choice of sauce is wide open.

If you want a traditional bbq flavor then Sweet Baby Ray is great. Personally I like to go with a sweeter profile. You can get some amazing flavor by melting apple or peach preserves in the microwave and using that as your sauce.



Put down a layer of sauce at 130F on both sides of the pork chops and add another layer every ten minutes until the smoked pork chops hit 145-150F.

So now that we have all of the steps laid out let's put the whole package together in a couple different smoked pork chop recipes.

Traditional Smoked Pork Chops

Salt a Porterhouse pork chop with 1 teaspoon of Kosher salt on each side of the chop and rest in the refrigerator overnight. Rinse the pork chop to remove excess salt, pat dry with a paper towel and season both sides of the chop with black pepper.



Smoke the pork chop at 250-275F for 90 minutes until an internal temperature of 130F is reached.

The chop is not going to look very pretty at this point...that's okay!



Brush the chop on both sides with melted apple preserves. Apply more apple preserves every 10-15 minutes until the pork chop hits an internal temperature of 145-150F.



You will get a nice smoke ring on these chops...



...and the meat will be incredibly juicy!



All five layers of flavor blend together into an amazing creation. Sweet, savory, smokey, salty pork. It is truly glorious.

Cured Smoked Pork Chops

This variation on a smoked pork chop utilizes Morton Tender Quick for the salt. Morton Tender Quick is a mix of salt and sugar that has a small amount of nitrates and nitrites that will “cure” the pork. The process of curing gives the pork a beautiful rosy pink color and a distinct “hammy” flavor.

Salt a bone in Rib Eye chop with 1 teaspoon of Morton Tender Quick on each side of the pork chop. The longer the pork chop is in contact with the curing salt the more pronounced the color and ham flavor will become.

Let the pork chop rest in the cure for at least one day. I let these chops rest in cure for two days.

Rinse the chops with water to remove excess salt, pat dry with paper towels and season the pork chops on both sides with black pepper.



Smoke the pork chop at 250-275F for 90 minutes until an internal temperature of 130F is reached.



Brush the chop on both sides with honey. Apply more honey every 10-15 minutes until the pork chop hits an internal temperature of 145-150F.



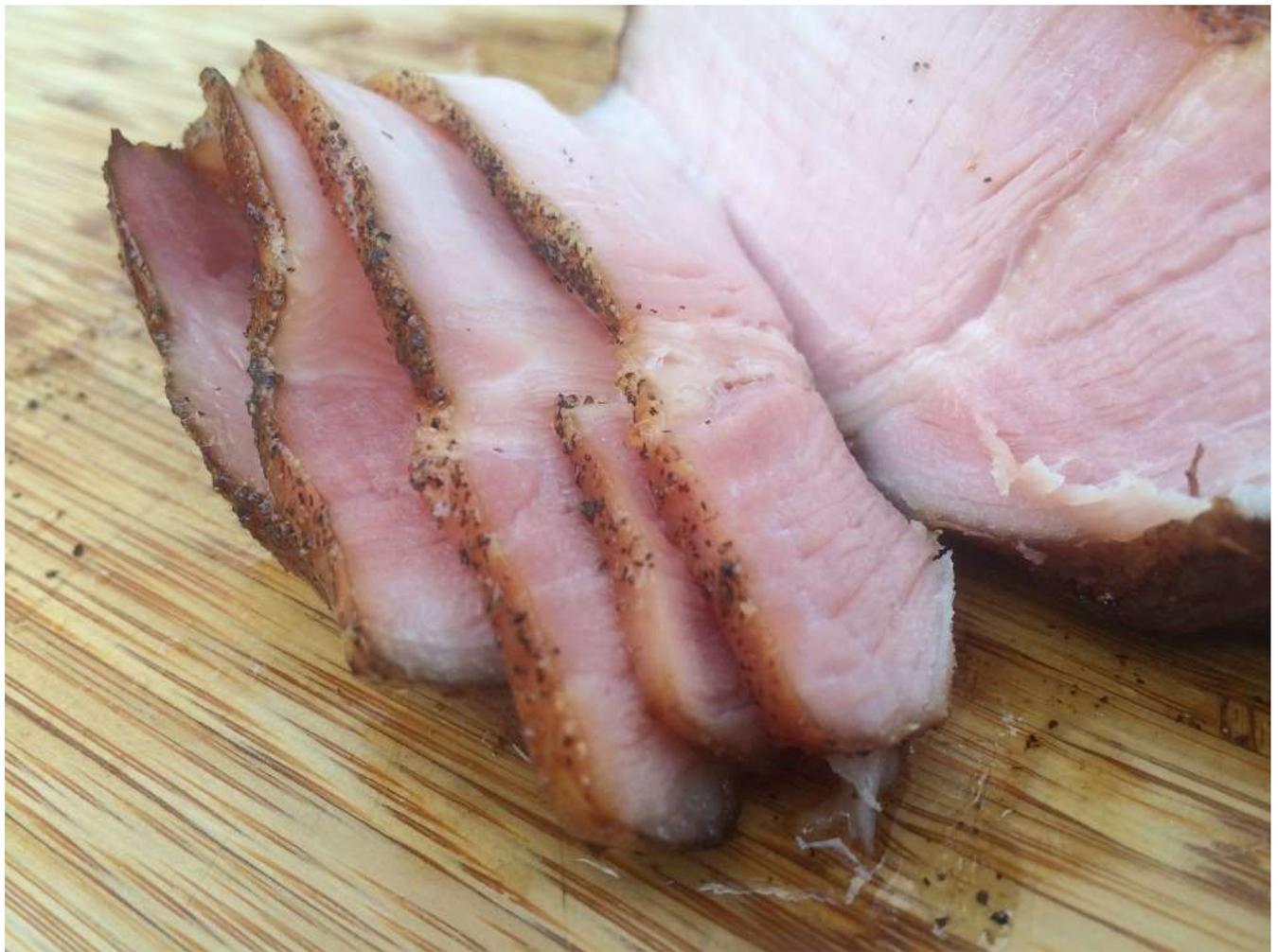
The final product is beautiful.



I just had to share this next picture..it makes me very happy..



The meat has a beautiful pink color throughout the chop and the complete flavor package was amazing.



It takes a long time to make these smoked pork chops but I think it is worth the effort.

Stuffed Smoked Pork Chops

These smoked pork chops take advantage of the size of the chops and adds a sixth layer of flavor with the stuffing.

Start by salting a Rib Eye chop overnight, then rinsing and patting dry with a paper towel. Use a long, sharp knife to slice into the chop and create a large pocket.



Here is what you want...



My favorite stuffing mix is a combination of Stove Top and Granny Smith apples. Everyone and their Uncle has their own opinion about stuffing. This is what I love.



I use a 50:50 mixture of diced apple to stuffing.



Stuff the pork chop with the stuffing and secure with a couple of toothpicks.



Season the stuffed pork chops with a little black pepper then smoke until an internal temperature of 130F. Brush the stuffed chops with melted peach preserves and let the chops keep smoking until an internal temperature of 145-150F is reached.



These are glorious.



Opening the pork chop really lets the smoke penetrate deeper into the meat. These are an amazing treat with a ton of flavor exploding all over the place!



Now you know the “5-S” model for perfect smoked pork chops! You can use my recipes or tweak things up and come up with your own signature smoked pork chop recipe.

*If you want the hardcore barbecue lessons
then sign up for the free [Brisket Boot Camp!](#)*