SMOKED · MEDIUM

Smoked Pork Belly Burnt Ends on the Kamado, Butter and Honey Glazed Cubes

Cubes of fresh pork belly with a dry rub, smoked at 120 °C with fruitwood, then braised covered in butter, honey and barbecue sauce. The last stage, uncovered, leaves them lacquered.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
30 min	300 min	6	120 °C

Ingredients

- **1.5 kg** skinless fresh pork belly, one piece of even thickness
- **2 cda** brown sugar
- **1 cda** garlic powder
- **1 cdta** mustard powder or ground cumin
- **80 g** butter, diced
- **200 ml** barbecue sauce
- **al gusto** lump charcoal, to fill the firebox
- **2 cda** sweet smoked paprika (pimentón dulce de la Vera)
- **1 cda** fine salt
- **1 cdta** ground black pepper
- **1 cda** Dijon mustard, to bind the rub
- **4 cda** honey
- **3 ud** chunks of cherry or apple wood, about fist size

Method

1 CUT AND RUB

Pat the belly dry and cut it into cubes of about 3 cm, trimming any excess hard fat. Coat them with the mustard, which acts as glue, and toss with the paprika, brown sugar, salt, garlic powder, pepper and mustard powder until fully covered. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, ideally overnight. Take the cubes out 30 minutes before cooking.

2 SET UP THE KAMADO FOR INDIRECT

Fill the firebox with lump charcoal, light one spot in the centre and, once it catches, arrange the 3 fruitwood chunks around the lit coals. Set the deflector and grate and close the lid. Stabilise the kamado at 120 °C with the bottom vent open barely a finger and the top vent half open; climb slowly and start closing the vents 10-15 °C before the mark, because the ceramic keeps heating. Do not put the meat on until the smoke turns from thick and white to thin and almost clear.

3 SMOKE THE CUBES

Spread the cubes on the grate with space between them and, if you have a wireless probe, thread two or three of the thickest cubes onto the TempSpike, pressed together, so the internal-sensing part sits fully in meat. Close the lid and hold 120 °C. Smoke for about 3 hours, without opening, until the bark is dark mahogany and firm to the touch. If the internal temperature stalls around 70 °C, that is normal: do not raise the fire. By the end of this stage it is usually around 80-88 °C.

4 PREPARE THE PAN

Meanwhile, combine the butter, honey and barbecue sauce in the Rösle pan. Once the cubes have their bark, open the kamado with burping: lift the lid about 5 cm, wait about 5 seconds, then open fully with your face turned away and gloves on. Move the cubes to the pan with tongs and toss them in the sauce to coat.

5 BRAISE COVERED

Cover the pan tightly with aluminium foil and set it on the grate, with the deflector still in. Close the lid and hold 120 °C for 60-75 minutes. From the one-hour mark, check a cube with the probe or a toothpick: it should slide in with no resistance, around 93-96 °C. If there is still resistance, re-cover and give it 15 more minutes.

6 UNCOVER AND GLAZE

Open with burping and gloves, and peel back the foil carefully because very hot steam will escape outwards. Gently stir the cubes in the sauce and return the uncovered pan to the kamado at 120 °C for 15-20 minutes, until the sauce reduces and clings to the cubes like a glossy varnish. For more colour, give it another 5-10 minutes without raising the fire, watching that the sugar does not burn.

7 REST AND SERVE

Lift the pan out with gloves and both hands and let it rest for 10 minutes so the sauce settles. Close both vents fully to put out the coals. Serve in the same pan, with cocktail sticks, and spoon over the sauce from the bottom.

Editor's tips

- Cut the cubes to an even size: small ones dry out before large ones soften. If in doubt, keep the smaller ones on one side of the grate and take them off earlier.
- Cook by feel, not by clock: the cube is ready when the probe slides in with no resistance, between 93 and 96 °C. The TempSpike reads up to 100 °C inside the food and up to 300 °C ambient with its second sensor.
- The sugar in the sauce burns above roughly 150 °C. If the cubes darken too much while glazing, take the pan off and lower the fire before returning it. The temperature problems guide helps if the chamber runs away.
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Leftovers reheat in an oven at 150 °C covered with a splash of water or stock, or go into scrambled eggs or a sandwich the next day.

Gear for this recipe

Kamado Bono Media 51 cm

This recipe needs a kamado that holds a steady 120 °C for about five hours and can fit a 41 cm pan with the deflector in. The Kamado Bono Media is 51 cm across according to its listing, so the Rösle pan, about 47 cm on the diagonal, fits with room to spare. The ceramic mass holds temperature without checking every five minutes, which is what the first two stages require. Honest drawback: at 120 °C the vents sit barely open and a small overshoot at start-up takes time to correct; climb slowly.

mikamado.es/en/kamados/kamado-bono-media-51

Grill Republic premium cherry wood chips 1.5 kg

Smoke is half the flavour of burnt ends, and pork rewards a gentle fruitwood. The Grill Republic cherry chunks come in a 1.5 kg bag and smoke without overpowering: three fist-sized chunks on the coals are enough for the three-hour smoke stage. Honest drawback: they are chunks, not charcoal, and you need a separate lump charcoal base to hold 120 °C; and if you put them all in at once you get a white, bitter smoke.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/grill-republic-cerezo-chunks-1-5kg

Rösle 25233: high-sided 18/10 stainless steel tray

The cubes need a high-sided tray to braise in their own sauce. The Rösle Universal Pro Pan is 18/10 stainless steel, 41 x 22 cm, 5 cm deep and 3 litres according to the listing, enough for one layer of cubes from 1.5 kg of belly before cooking. It goes in the dishwasher and also works for marinating and serving. Honest drawback: it is shallow at 5 cm, so with a lot of sauce you have to stir carefully, and with a diagonal of about 47 cm it needs a grate of 46 cm or more.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/rosle-fuente-universal-pro-barbacoa

Fiskars X7-XS: 35.5 cm small axe for fine wood

Cherry or apple wood sometimes comes as logs or big pieces that will not fit in the firebox. The Fiskars X7-XS axe is 35.5 cm, weighs about 640 g and comes with a storage sheath; its maker says it handles branches up to 7 cm. That is enough to split a chunk to fist size. Honest drawback: it is a small axe, not for thick logs, and dry fruitwood is hard; split small pieces with controlled strokes and eye protection on.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/fiskars-hacha-pequena-x7-xs

ThermoPro TempSpike TP961: 150 m wireless Bluetooth probe

With five hours of cooking, opening the lid every half hour wrecks stability. The TempSpike TP961 probe (the ThermoPro brand is becoming TempPro) is wireless over Bluetooth 5.2 with a 150 m range, and its second sensor reads up to 300 °C in the chamber, so you see the cube's internal temperature (up to 100 °C) and the kamado's at once on your phone. It is waterproof (IP67) and the booster runs on 2 AAA batteries. Honest drawback: real-world range drops with ceramic and walls in between, and with 3 cm cubes you need to thread two or three in a row so the internal sensor sits in meat.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/thermopro-tempspike-tp961-inalambrico

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/burnt-ends-panceta-ahumada-kamado

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