SMOKED · MEDIUM

Cherry-Smoked Baby Back Ribs on the Kamado, 2-1-1 Method

Smoke baby back ribs from start to finish: two hours on edge in cherry smoke, one wrapped and one with sauce, at 110-120 °C measured at the grate, until they bend and read 90-93 °C between the bones.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
30 min	240 min	4	115 °C

Ingredients

- **2 ud** whole racks of baby back ribs (costillar de lomo), uncut, 1-1.3 kg each
- **1 cda** fine salt
- **2 cda** sweet pimentón de la Vera (Spanish smoked paprika)
- **1 cdta** garlic powder
- **100 ml** apple juice, for the wrapped phase
- **150 ml** barbecue sauce
- **2 cda** yellow mustard, as a binder
- **2 cda** soft brown sugar
- **2 cdta** freshly ground black pepper
- **1 cdta** onion powder
- **50 g** butter, in four pieces

Method

1 PREPARE THE RACKS

The day before, or at least 4 hours ahead, lift the membrane on the bone side with a knife tip and pull it off diagonally with kitchen paper. Mix the salt, sugar, paprika, pepper, garlic and onion. Brush the racks thinly with mustard, spread the rub evenly and refrigerate them, covered. Test them cold, on edge in the rib rack on the grate, and close the dome: if they touch it, overhang the edge or do not fit flat side by side, cut each slab in half between two bones.

2 LOAD CHARCOAL AND CHIPS

Fill the kamado's firebox with unlit Jealous Devil quebracho charcoal. Divide two or three handfuls of cherry chips, unsoaked, between two foil packets and poke four or five holes in each. Half-bury one packet a hand's width from the spot you will light, in the path of the fire, and set the other aside. Light just one spot at one side of the firebox, with the vents open, for about 10 minutes. Take the ribs out of the fridge now.

3 SET UP INDIRECT

Set the second packet against the lit coals and fit above it the Kamado Bono Media's two deflectors, together so they cover all the embers, a drip pan with a finger of water on top, and the grate. Push the ambient probe of the ThermoPro TP17H into half a potato beside where the racks will sit and run the cables out together at one point of the gasket. Close up and start closing the vents as you approach 110 °C at the grate; set the range alarm to 105-125 °C.

4 TWO HOURS OF SMOKE

Wait for the white start-up smoke to turn almost clear, 10 to 20 minutes with the chamber already steady at 110-120 °C. Stand the slabs, out of the fridge since you lit the fire, on edge in the Weber 6605 rib rack on the grate and push a probe between two bones in the centre of each. Close and do not open for 2 hours: correct the temperature only with small movements of the top vent.

5 ONE HOUR WRAPPED

Open with burping: raise the lid about 5 cm, wait about 5 seconds and open fully, wearing gloves. The bark should be set and mahogany in colour. Take the slabs out of the rib rack, set it aside and lay each one flat, meat side down, on a double sheet of foil with 50 ml of juice and 25 g of butter. Seal the parcels well, return them flat to the grate with the probes inside and cook 1 hour at 110-120 °C.

6 ONE HOUR UNWRAPPED

Burp the lid again before opening fully. Open the parcels with your face turned away, because steam escapes, discard the liquid and leave the slabs flat on the grate, bone side down. Close for 30-45 minutes at 110-120 °C so the bark dries out again. Then, burping first, brush on a thin coat of barbecue sauce and close for another 15-30 minutes, to make roughly the hour; longer in the heat burns the sugar and turns bitter.

7 CHECK FOR DONENESS

Lift each rack by the centre with tongs: it is ready when it bends about 30° without breaking and the surface cracks. Confirm with the probe between two bones, without resting the tip on bone: 90-93 °C. A toothpick should slide in between bones with only slight resistance. If it is still tough, give it another 15-30 minutes and test again; if it splits when lifted, it has gone too far.

8 REST AND CUT

Move the racks to a board and rest them for 10 minutes, uncovered. Turn them bone side up to see where each bone runs and cut between the bones with a long knife in one stroke. Close both vents of the kamado to snuff out the spare charcoal, which is good for next time. Leftovers go in the fridge within 2 hours.

Editor's tips

- If you cannot find cherry chips, two chunks of cherry or apple wood buried in the charcoal do the same job and smoke for longer; never mix more than two woods in the same session.
- The 3-2-1 guide suggests butcher paper as the starting point in a kamado: the bark suffers less, in exchange for a little more time. This recipe uses foil because the juice and butter need a sealed parcel; if you try paper, leave out the liquid.
- Adjust in half-hour steps: tough ribs call for a longer final phase; ribs that fall apart when cut call for a shorter wrapped phase. Write down the real chamber temperature, not the dome's.
- There is no need to bring the meat up to room temperature: the half hour the kamado takes to settle is enough, and USDA FSIS advises against leaving meat out for more than 2 hours.

Gear for this recipe

Kamado Bono Media 51 cm

Four hours at 110-120 °C call for a chamber that holds heat and moisture with the vents almost closed, and the thick ceramic of the Kamado Bono Media does that. According to the manufacturer, its grate measures 44.5 cm: it takes the rib rack with two slabs on edge and, in the wrapped phase, the two flat parcels, cut in half if need be. It comes with two side deflectors that, together, cover all the embers for indirect cooking, so there is no need to buy a separate stone. And it is a kamado you can buy today, medium in size, with plenty of ceramic for two racks without heating up a big cooker.

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

Jealous Devil 100% White Quebracho lump charcoal 15.8 kg

In this recipe the charcoal brings the heat and the cherry the aroma: quebracho leaves a toasted background of its own, as the wood guide explains, but the fuel's job is to hold 110-120 °C for four hours. Jealous Devil is lump charcoal from Paraguayan white quebracho, with no binders, and the manufacturer claims more than 20 hours of burn with little oxygen and little ash. The big lumps let air pass between them, which matters in the Minion method, where the fire creeps slowly from one lit spot through the unlit charcoal. A full firebox is plenty for the 2-1-1, and what is left when you close the vents serves for the next cook.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/jealous-devil-quebracho-lump-charcoal

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grillart cherry wood smoking chips, 750 g resealable bag

Cherry is a soft, fruity wood that complements pork without overpowering it, which is why it is the wood of this recipe. The grillart cherry chips come in a 750 g resealable bag and, according to the seller, are natural wood with no additives. Being chips, they burn fast: in the kamado they go wrapped in two foil packets with holes, set in place when you build the fire, one buried in the path of the embers and the other next to them, and are not topped up during the cook. That way they smoke in the first hours, when the rack is still absorbing smoke. One bag yields several sessions; if you cannot find it, a few chunks of cherry or apple do the same job.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/grillart-virutas-ahumar-cerezo-750g

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Weber Rib Rack (6605)

Two racks of loin ribs lying flat take up almost the whole grate of a medium kamado and only get smoke from above. The Weber 6605 rib rack stands them on edge for the two hours of smoke: according to Weber it measures about 34 × 20 cm and 9 cm high and holds up to five racks. Standing, the smoke washes both faces and the fat drips cleanly towards the pan. It comes out in the wrapped phase, because the foil parcels go flat. Before lighting, check with the racks in place that the dome closes without touching them.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/weber-soporte-costillas-6605

ThermoPro TP17H: 4-probe wired thermometer, -10 to 300 °C

In a four-hour smoke the number that rules is the temperature at grate height, not the dome's. The ThermoPro TP17H has four wired probes and, according to its spec sheet, a range of -10 to 300 °C with ±1 °C accuracy. In this recipe one is pushed into half a potato beside the racks, because the box does not include a grate clip, and two more go between the bones, one per rack. Its high and low range alarm warns if the chamber leaves 105-125 °C. It has no app or Bluetooth: the display stays next to the kamado, and the cables come out together at one point of the gasket, away from the hinge.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/thermopro-tp17h-4-sondas-cable

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/costillas-baby-back-ahumadas-cerezo-kamado

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