SMOKED · ADVANCED

Carolina-style smoked pulled pork

Eight hours of patience, a five-and-a-half-kilo pork shoulder and North-Carolina vinegar — this is what a kamado does better than any other fire.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
30 min	480 min	8	110 °C

Ingredients

- **5.5 kg** whole bone-in pork shoulder with fat cap
- **3 cda** kosher coarse salt
- **2 cda** smoked Pimentón de la Vera
- **1 cdita** ground cumin
- **3 trozos** cherry wood chunks
- **250 ml** cider vinegar (Carolina sauce)
- **3 cda** yellow mustard (binder)
- **2 cda** brown sugar
- **1 cda** coarse-ground black pepper
- **1 cdita** garlic powder
- **2 trozos** hickory wood chunks
- **8 ud** brioche buns

Method

1 STEP 1 · RUB THE NIGHT BEFORE

Combine salt, brown sugar, paprika, pepper, cumin and garlic powder. Brush the shoulder with yellow mustard — only as a binder — and coat generously with the rub on every side. Wrap in cling film and refrigerate 12-24 hours.

2 STEP 2 · STABILISE THE KAMADO AT 110 °C

Light only one zone of charcoal (Minion method) and install the ceramic deflector for indirect cooking. Stabilise at 110 °C for 30 minutes, until the smoke runs clear and blue — never white or thick. Pull the shoulder from the fridge while you wait.

3 STEP 3 · FIRST SMOKE

Place the cherry and hickory chunks on the coals. Sit the shoulder fat-side up on the grate, push the probe into the thickest part without touching the bone, close the lid and forget about it for the first 4-5 hours.

4 STEP 4 · SPOT THE STALL

When the core hits 70-75 °C (around hour 5-6) the temperature flatlines for 1-2 hours. That is the famous stall: surface evaporation is cooling the meat. Do not panic and do not open the lid — this is the cue to prep the wrap.

5 STEP 5 · WRAP IN BUTCHER PAPER

Pull the shoulder onto two sheets of unwaxed butcher paper and wrap tightly, sealing the seams underneath. Return to the kamado fat-side up. The internal temperature will start climbing again.

6 STEP 6 · PULL AT 96 °C

Cook for another 2-3 hours until the probe reads 96 °C internal and slides in like through butter in several spots. If you feel resistance, give it 30 more minutes. The surface should carry a dark, firm bark.

7 STEP 7 · ONE-HOUR REST

This is non-negotiable. Pull the wrapped shoulder, sit it in an empty cooler with a couple of towels and rest for 60 minutes. The juices redistribute and the fibre relaxes — skip it and the meat will be dry no matter how well you cooked it.

8 STEP 8 · SHRED AND SERVE

Open the paper over a tray to catch every drop of juice. Pull out the bone (it slides clean) and shred with two forks or heat-resistant gloves. Toss with the Carolina vinegar sauce and serve on brioche buns with a quick cabbage slaw.

Editor's tips

- If you cannot find unwaxed butcher paper, double-layered parchment works as a stand-in, but you lose about 10 °C of bark crispness.
- Do not mix more than three different woods. Cherry plus hickory works; adding mesquite is too much and turns the bark bitter.
- Budget 4 kg of briquettes or 5 kg of lump charcoal for an 8-hour cook on a 21-inch kamado.
- The Carolina sauce takes 5 minutes: 250 ml cider vinegar, 1 tbsp brown sugar, 1 tsp red pepper flakes, salt and pepper. Better on day two.
- Leftovers keep 4 days in the fridge in a sealed container with the paper juices, and steam-reheat beautifully.

Gear for this recipe

Big Green Egg XL

The XL takes a 6 kg shoulder with room and fuel to spare for an 8 h low-and-slow.

mikamado.es/en/kamados/big-green-egg-xl

Jealous Devil 100% White Quebracho lump charcoal 15.8 kg

Extra-dense quebracho for 8 h without refuelling.

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

Grill Republic premium cherry wood chips 1.5 kg

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

Inkbird IBT-26S WiFi + Bluetooth thermometer

Dual chamber and core readings to ride out the stall with the chamber at 110 °C.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/inkbird-ibt-26s-wifi

Bryco Goods: untreated pink butcher paper, 45.7 cm × 53.3 m with dispenser box

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/bryco-goods-papel-carnicero-rosa-46cm-53m

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Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/pulled-pork-ahumado-carolina

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