

Virginia Smoked Pork Butt

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Ingredients:

Pork 1 large bone in Boston Butt
Spice Rub

Note these are approximate as I'm usually drinking while I make it.

- i. ~1/4 cup kosher salt
- ii. 1 cup yellow mustard
- iii. ~1/4 cup brown or turbinado sugar (I've used both and am not sophisticated enough to tell the difference in the finished product as there are too many other variables)
- iv. ~1/4 cup real (read: Hungarian) paprika. No need to spring for the fancy smoked Spanish stuff because, guess what, this is going to get smoked. FYI – American paprika is the dried parsley of spices. Boring confetti.
- v. ~1 T ground ginger (note – this not traditional. It just tastes better with it)
- vi. ~1 T onion powder
- vii. ~1 T garlic powder
- viii. ~1T ground black pepper
- ix. 1-2 t cayenne or your favorite spicy chili powder (depending on strength)
- x. 0.5 – 1 t ground coriander
- xi. 0.5 t ground anise or fennel seed (note – this is also not traditional. It just tastes better with it)

- 1 Coat one large bone-in boston butt with mustard (the mustard is like glue and won't affect the final flavor). Otherwise, when you apply the spice rub, it all falls off. NOTE: You can trim some of the exterior fat before coating if you'd like but leave at least 1/8 to 1/4" of the fat cap.
2. Apply the spice rub and place uncovered in the fridge overnight. You leave it uncovered to dry out the spices/mustard and the outer layer of the meat. This will help in bark formation later. You'll most likely have some leftover rub unless you found an extraordinarily well-fed pig.
3. The next morning (early!) start up your smoker for a 7-12 hour cook. Essentially you want indirect cooking.
4. Add Cabernet-soaked 3 year air-dried tight grain French oak BBL staves to your smoker; you can use any fruit wood: apple and peach work well. I stay away from hickory and mesquite with pork. Shoot for 2-4 fist sized quantities of wood. Big pieces are better.
5. Put the pork butt fat side down in your smoker and smoke for 4-6 hours at 225-275F until the center of the butt reaches ~150-160F.
6. Once it has reached 150-160F, rub your thumb nail on the outside of the butt. You should have a solid layer of bark that doesn't come off easily. If its still soft, wait another hour and then try again.
7. Once the bark is solid and the temp is 150-160F (you'll notice the temp stalls in that range for a while due to evaporate cooling aka the real meat sweats), carefully remove the park butt and set aside.
 - a. Now this is where you can have some fun.
 - i. If you want to add some additional sweetness – mix a cup of apple juice (I know people who use Dr. Pepper - wow) with 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar and a shot of hot sauce

- ii. If you don't want it any sweeter – mix a can of beer with ½ cup apple cider vineyard and a shot of hot sauce
 - iii. for Richer– mix the juice plus the vinegar plus a stick of butter
8. Foil wrap the pork butt and pour in the liquid magic you just created.
 9. Put the fully cocooned pork butt back on the smoker (you can let the temp drift up if you'd like but not too far past 325F) and cook until it reaches 195-205F. This works better than having to go out and baste 30 times and shouldn't affect the bark as long as it was set before doing so.
 10. Take it off, feel good about what you accomplished, open the foil and let it sit uncovered on your counter for ~10 minutes. You should still have good bark but the meat should be falling off the bone. Save the drippings or any liquid that was left in the foil.
 11. Remove the bone and any extraneous fat that didn't cook off.
 12. Shred the meat into a large dish, add back the dripping and liquid from the foil, and use some of your leftover rub as needed to season. You should have a good mix of dark, crunchy bark and tender white meat. You should also have a pronounced pink smoke ring in the outer ¼-1/2" of meat just beneath the bark.
 13. Add a small quantity of your favorite (or homemade) sauce (I am a member of the vinegar-based master race) and mix
 14. Serve on a bun with cole slaw on top. Don't sell out.