

Memphis-Style Hickory-Smoked Beef and Pork Ribs

Recipe courtesy The Neelys

*2 (about 3 pounds each) slabs pork spareribs
2 (about 4 pounds each) slabs beef spareribs
2 cups Neely's BBQ Dry Rub, recipe follows
Neely's BBQ sauce, recipe follows*

Rinse and dry ribs. Place on a clean cutting board and pull off the membrane, the thin fatty skin that lines the underside of the ribs. Trim the ribs of excess fat and meat. Liberally season both sides of the ribs with 1/4 to 1/2 cup Neely's BBQ Dry Rub. Wrap ribs and refrigerate for at least 8 hours so flavors can permeate.

Preheat grill to 250 degrees F. using hickory and charcoal. Use indirect heat (push the coals to one side of the grill).

Place ribs meatier side down on the grill away from the flame. Cook the pork ribs 3 hours. Turn and cook another hour, or until ribs bend. Remove from grill. Cook beef 2 hours. Turn and cook for 45 minutes more, or until the ribs "bend" and the meat easily separates from the bone using a fork.

For dry ribs: Sprinkle extra Neely's BBQ Dry Rub over ribs, cut between bones and serve.
For wet ribs: Coat ribs with Neely's BBQ Sauce, cut and serve.

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

Dry Rub

*1 1/2 cups paprika
3/4 cup sugar
3 3/4 tablespoons onion powder*

All ingredients to a bowl and stir until combined.

Yield: about 2 cups

Neely's BBQ Sauce

*2 cups ketchup
1 cup water
1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
5 tablespoons light brown sugar
5 tablespoons sugar
1/2 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 tablespoon onion powder
1/2 tablespoon ground mustard
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce*

In a large saucepan, combine all ingredients. Bring mixture to a boil, reduce heat to simmer. Cooked uncovered, stirring frequently, for 1 hour 15 minutes.

Yield: 3 1/2 cups

Christmas Cornish Game Hens

Recipe courtesy The Neelys

3 large carrots, roughly chopped
3 stalks celery, roughly chopped
3 large onions, roughly chopped
2 parsnips, roughly chopped
2 tablespoon salt
2 teaspoons chili powder
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
6 Cornish game hens, about 1 1/2 pounds each, rinsed and dried thoroughly
Olive oil
2 oranges, cut into wedges

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.

Spread the vegetables out evenly in 2 roasting pans.

Mix the salt, chili powder, sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl. Place the Cornish game hens on top of the vegetables in the roasting pans and drizzle with olive oil. Rub the oil into the hens and sprinkle with the seasoning mixture, remembering to season the cavity.

Place in the oven and roast for 45 to 60 minutes, or until the juices run clear. Let the hens rest 10 minutes before carving. Garnish with orange wedges.

Yield: 6 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 60 minutes

Inactive Prep Time: 10 minutes

Ease of preparation: easy

Spicy Macaroni and Cheese with Chorizo

Recipe courtesy The Neelys

*1 pound penne pasta
4 cups cherry tomatoes
Olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 package chorizo, casings removed and finely chopped
6 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
4 cups milk, warmed
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1 tablespoon hot sauce
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
2 cups shredded Monterey pepper jack
1 cup shredded sharp white Cheddar
2 (2.7 ounce) cans fried onions*

Heat oven to 350 degrees F.

Cook the pasta in salted, boiling water until al dente. Drain in a colander.

Add the cherry tomatoes to a sheet tray and drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Bake for 20 minutes, or until visibly plump and softened.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add 2 teaspoons of olive oil. Saute the chorizo in a saute pan until crisp. Remove.

Melt 6 tablespoons butter in a large saucepot over medium heat. Add flour and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Whisk in the warmed milk and bring to a boil; continue to whisk constantly as the mixture will thicken as the heat increases. Continue to stir while adding the dry mustard, salt, pepper, hot sauce and Worcestershire. Mix the cheeses together and stir into the mixture, reserving 1/2 cup for the topping. Add the chorizo and roasted cherry tomatoes.

Pour the drained pasta into the cheese sauce and mix well. Add to a 3-quart casserole dish. Sprinkle with reserved cheese.

Top the casserole with the fried onions and bake for 35 minutes.

Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour 35 minutes

Inactive Prep Time:

Ease of preparation: easy