

## **SLOW SMOKED BOSTON BUTT**

The following amounts were used for two 8-10 pound roasts. If you have one roast, cut the amounts in half as a starting point. (This is not rocket science and the amounts can be adjusted up or down depending on your individual preference.)

To “trim” or “not to trim” the fat from the roast?? Either way will work and if you ask 3 people you will get 5 opinions on this subject. I have used both and will likely continue to trim the major portion of the fat that is on one side of the roast. If you leave the fat, then you might want to “score” it before “brining” or injecting (if you do either) or before applying dry rub. The fat layer will tend to block the infusion of flavors from the brine or the dry rub. (Injecting through the fat layer with a small needle will clog the needle – a good reason to remove it.)

**Brine:** (Added comments – for two roasts could double the spices and herbs to give more flavor)

Water - 4 quarts (alternative is 3 qts water and one qt apple juice) Ice - 2 quarts

Sugar - ½ cup Salt - ½ cup

1 Tablespoon of each of the following powders or grinds:

Allspice Onion Garlic Sage Oregano (dried or fresh)

1 Teaspoon of each of the following powders or grinds:

Cloves Cayenne Pepper Chile Dry Mustard Adolph’s Meat Tenderizer (optional)

2 Tablespoons of each of the following dried herbs:

Italian herbs Parsley flakes

Bay Leaves - 2

Heat one (1) quart of water in a pot large enough to hold about three (3) quarts of water. Bring to near boiling. Slowly added Salt and Sugar while stirring until both are dissolved.

Lower heat setting to maintain temperature below boiling (not critical).

Add the spices and herbs while stirring to prevent clumping. (Suggest adding Italian herbs and Parsley last.)

Let the “brine” simmer for 5-10 minutes. Turn off heat and add second quart of water to the pot.

Use a large pot that will accommodate the two roast.

Add ice and one quart of water (or the apple juice) to the pot. Pour the brine into the pot.

Remove roasts from the packaging and rinse with cold water. (Score the fat with a sharp knife.)

Place both roast in the pot and arrange them so that they are barely covered with the iced water/brine mix. (Add as much of the fourth quart of water or additional ice as needed to barely cover the meat.)

(Other possibilities using smaller amounts of water and doing the soaking in a plastic freezer bag will also work.)

### **INJECTION ALTERNATIVE:**

Water - 2 cups (alternative is 1 ½ cups water and ½ cup apple juice)

2 Tablespoons of each of the following:

Worcestershire Sauce Soy Sauce

Sugar - 1/4 cup Salt - 1/4 cup

1 Teaspoon of each of the following powders:

Allspice      Onion      Garlic

Heat the water, add salt and sugar stir to dissolve. Add remaining ingredients and let simmer for several minute. Set aside and allow to cool. To avoid having “clumps” that might clog the injector needle, strain through a coffee filter and store in a jar until needed.

About 8-10 hours before starting the smoking operation, use an injector to add the mixture to the meat – injection points should be on a 1-inch by 1-inch pattern on both sides. Place the injected roasts into plastic freezer bags, eliminate as much air from the bag as is practical, seal and put into refrigerator until about one or two hours before putting in the smoker.

(Injection is simpler and requires less planning time prior to cooking. Not brining or injecting is even more simple. Some prefer to skip this step and go with a simple dry rub since this tends to produce a finished product with more “pork” flavor.)

### Waiting game

Cover the pot and place in refrigerator for 48 hours (not critical – 24 hours may be enough). Every 8 to 12 hours turn the roasts in the pot – the herbs and spices will not totally dissolve in the water and may have a tendency to settle toward the bottom of the pot. Turning the roasts will improve the uniformity of the contact of these solids with the meat while in the brine.

### Prep prior to smoking

One hour before you plan to start cooking the roast, remove the roasts from the ice water, drain and place in a shallow bowl or pan.

Sprinkle Worcestershire sauce and coat all the surfaces of the roasts. In 30 minutes turn the roast over in the pan so that the top side also has good contact with the Worcestershire sauce. (This would be a good time to start preheating your smoker.)

When the smoker temperature is up to about 225 F, remove the roast from the Worcestershire sauce and add your favorite dry rub (optional).

(Some people recommend coating the meat with yellow mustard (2 tablespoons) – plus honey (1 tablespoon per roast) – before using the dry rub. It is thought that the dry rub adheres better.)

### Smoking :

Place one roast in a shallow pan with side of about 2 inches. Put the meat in the pan on the lower grill level in the smoker. The pan will catch the juices and will serve to baste the roast during the time in the smoker. (Start with the fat side up – if you did not trim the fat as suggested at the top of this article.)

Repeat the above with the second roast except place on a higher grill level in the smoker.

Smoke for 3 - 4 hours with a temperature set point of 200 (up to 225) F. Carefully remove the pans and turn the roast over in the au jus collected in the pans. Return the pans and meat to the smoker. Repeat this process until the center temperatures of the roasts have reached 165 F. (Check the temperature at the six hour and nine hour times.)

If the temperature is close to 160 F (which it should be in 8 to 9 hours), cover the roasts (still in the pan with the au jus) with Al foil and turn the smoker set point to 250 F and leave it

until the internal temperature of the meat reaches 200 F (may take another two or three hours). (By adjusting the temperature during this step, you can “control” when the meat is ready for the meal.) This step allows the collagen to be transformed into a gelatin form which produces very tender meat.

Good alternative that produces a more well-defined “bark” on the roasts. Skip the pans mentioned above and simply place the roasts on the racks in the smoker. (If you want to collect the juices that cook out during this time, use the pans but put the roast on a small rack that holds the meat about one inch off the bottom of the pan.) If you use this, then you will want to spray (spritz) the roast with water (or water-apple juice or water-apple cider vinegar) about every two hours to help the “bark” develop.

After the internal temperature has reached 160 F, wrap the roast in heavy duty aluminum foil – carefully folds the edges to keep moisture from easily escaping – and return the wrapped roasts to the smoker for the final heating to around 200 F. This could take 5 or 6 hours.

### Finishing:

Remove the covered roasts from the smoker and let rest for at least 30 minutes or until the rest of the meal is done or it is convenient to process the meat.

### Serving:

For “pulled pork” you can use “bear claws” which are made for this process or two forks to pull the meat into strands works well. As you pull, remove excess fat and sinew as needed. Use the pulled pork in Bar-B-Que sandwiches with your favorite sauce or mix it with you favorite baked bean recipe.

The roast can also be served in slices – I typically target for ½ inch thick slices. It is better to cut across the “grain” when possible. The slices can be used as an entree with a meal or used for sandwiches. Again, remove extra fat, sinew and gristle in this step. (Slicing may be somewhat of a challenge as the meat will typically be “fall apart” tender.

The juices collected in the pans can be added to moisten either the pulled pork or the pork slices as you might desire. There will be a lot more au jus than is practical to use with the amount of pork you have. One suggestion is to refrigerate the juice and remove the fat. The remaining au jus can be used in homemade soups and as stock flavoring for cooking vegetables.

If pans are not used, there will be more than adequate amount of liquid in the foil following the final heating step.

### Practical tips:

1. You can count on having about half the weight of cooked meat as was the starting weight of the roast. As the meat cooks it loses water and fat and in the post-cooked processing, additional fat and bone are discarded.
2. Typically one pound of pulled pork will served 4 or 5 people. (Using a regular sized hamburger bun, you can get 6 sandwiches per pound.)
3. I have cooked a version of this leaving out the salt for a friend who was on a no-salt diet. It worked out quite well.