

SMOKED PRIME RIB

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (ABOUT 8 LBS.) 4-BONE PRIME RIB ROAST
 - 3 TBSP. DIJON-STYLE MUSTARD
 - 2 TBSP. WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE
- 4 CLOVES GARLIC, MASHED TO A PASTE
 - 2 TSP. DRIED THYME
 - 2 TSP. DRIED ROSEMARY
- PRIME RIB RUB, OR COARSE SALT AND BLACK PEPPER, FRESHLY GROUND
 - FOR SERVING PREPARED HORSERADISH (OPTIONAL)

PREPARATION

If the roast has a fat cap more than ¼-inch thick, trim it with a sharp knife or ask your butcher to do it for you.

Tie the roast between the bones with butcher's string. (This discourages the eye of the meat from separating from the cap.)

In a small bowl, whisk together the mustard, Worcestershire sauce, garlic, thyme, and rosemary. If the dried rosemary needles are long, finely chop them before adding.

Slather the outside of the roast with the mustard paste.

Season generously with Prime Rib or Steak Rub.

Cook immediately, or refrigerate, uncovered, for up to 8 hours.

When ready to cook, start the Smoker. Set the temperature to 250F and preheat. Put the prime rib directly on the grill grate, fat-side up. Roast for 3-1/2 to 4 hours, or until the internal temperature of the meat (the tip of the temperature probe should be in the center of the meat) reaches 125 to 130F for rare, or for medium-rare, 135F. Do not overcook.

Transfer the meat to a cutting board - preferably one with a deep well so you don't lose the juices - and loosely tent the meat with foil. Allow it to rest for 20 minutes.

Snip the strings.

To carve, use a sharp knife or an electric knife to remove the rack of bone following the curvature of the meat. Then carve the meat across the grain into 1/2-inch-thick slices and arrange on a platter or plates.

Serve with horseradish, if desired.

Alternate Rub

What You'll Need

- 3 tbsps coarse salt 2 tbsps black pepper 2 tsps onion powder
- 1 1/2 tsps thyme (dried) 1 tsp cinnamon powder 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon (15 mL) pepper (white)

How to Make It: Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Apply rub mixture all over prime rib and cook as directed. If making ahead of time, store in an airtight container, in a cool, dark place. This rub will stay good for up to 6 months.

DETAILED INSTRUCTION FOR SMOKING RIB ROAST

The largest prime rib roast can be over 16 inches long—you want to have two inches on either side of the meat for the heat and smoke to pass by. This means that an 18-inch diameter smoker might just not be big enough to handle this. Plan on one bone serving two people, or about 1 pound per person. This might sound like a lot, but people won't be passing up a chance for seconds and the roast will shrink during cooking.

In addition to the prime rib roast, you will need:

- Smoker Aluminum foil Reliable meat thermometer
- Large cutting board Sharp knife Prime Rib or Steak Rub
- Disposable aluminum pan Pair of high-temperature food-safe gloves

The smoking process will take about 20 to 30 minutes per pound depending on conditions, the type of smoker used, and your level of the desired doneness. Knowledge of your particular smoker and how it runs is very important. Use the cooking time chart for prime rib to calculate the time you need. The target temperature of the meat is going to be between 130 and 150 F (55 to 65 C) and the smoking temperature is going to be 250 F (120 C).

TRIMMING: Make sure you tell the butcher that you are going to smoke the prime rib— butchers and meat markets generally think that the rib roast you buy is going to go in the oven and that you are going to cook it at a very high temperature for a short period of time before reducing the temperature to roast until done. For smoking, this process is going to be backward, and since we want smoke flavor, there needs to be a way for that smoke to get to the actual meat.

The conventional wisdom of prime rib is to leave a thick layer of fat all around the roast. When it comes to smoking meat, however, you want to expose meat to smoke. The outer layer of fat on the typical rib roast is going to prevent absorption of smoke flavor and the only parts that will have it are the ends. On a large roast, this is a problem. Also, since this roast will be slow roasted we won't worry as much about the meat drying out as we will with getting smoke flavor evenly distributed. For this reason, we want to trim away a good portion of the fat cap that sits opposite the bone-side of the roast.

The bones (provided you are using a bone-in roast) can be removed and tied back in place or cut so that there is a kind of hinge between the bones and the roast. This gives you access to season underneath the meat, but it won't give access to the meat for the smoke to penetrate.

SEASONING : The star of any prime rib is the roast itself and it doesn't need a lot of complex seasonings to make it great. You can choose to go with simple salt and pepper or add a flavorful herb-based prime rib rub. You should season generously with salt, as that is what is going to bring out not only the flavors of the meat but the smoke as well.

Apply your seasonings evenly over the meat, focusing on the top of the meat. This has the best chance of penetrating into the meat and basting over the surface. If you have cut away or

removed the bones to be tied on later, make sure to get the seasoning between the roast and the meat.

Smoking is a low-temperature cooking method and you want to start that process by letting the rib roast sit at room temperature for 2 to 3 hours before it hits the smoker. (You can wrap in plastic wrap and leave it on the counter. The plastic wrap keeps the moisture in and helps to prevent contamination.)

SMOKING: It is best to use a mild wood—stronger flavored woods like hickory or oak are going to overpower the prime rib flavor. Any fruit wood, such as cherry, will work very well with a rib roast. Keep the smoke light to medium—a heavy smoke will create an acidic flavor, particularly in the fat. Don't worry about adding wood for smoke production until the roast is ready to go on.

Smoking will not render as many juices as higher temperature roasting, but if you intend to use drippings for gravy or other purposes, place a drip pan underneath the roast and make sure that the rack the meat is sitting on is very clean. Fill the drip pan with water before you place the roast in the smoker. The drippings will pick up a strong smoke flavor so be sure to taste anything made with them before you serve.

Resting and Carving: Regardless of the path, you chose in the last step, once the roast is just short of your desired final temperature remove it from the cooker and place on a platter. Cover with a clean piece of aluminum foil and allow it to rest for about 10 minutes.

Transfer the roast to a cutting board and carve off the bones by sliding a knife along the edge of the bones. You can cut the bones into individual pieces and serve. Cut the roast to desired thickness remembering that thinner slices will dry out quickly but will be more tender and thicker cuts will remain moist longer, but may be tougher.