

TRAEGER TALK



RIBS RIBS RIBS

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There are probably as many ways to make ribs as there are people cooking them, and most are really good. Ribs are a great meat to prepare when first starting to barbeque and no one is ever so expert that ribs belong in their past.

Ribs can be cooked to your liking, to please your family and guests, or to compete in barbeque competition. Competition requires you to cook to a set of standards that may or may not be what you want to serve and eat. For family and guests, competition standards don't matter. All that matters is happy eaters!

The most basic thing you need to know about cooking ribs is that they need to get to about 205° to be tender. How tender they get depends on both temperature of the meat, and how long they are at those temperatures. They don't really start to tenderize at all until the meat is over 180°, and the hotter it gets, the faster they cook. How much heat transfers into the meat depends on the heat inside the grill and also any liquid in contact with the rib meat.

Most people cooking with a Traeger like smoke flavor. Stronger Smoke flavor comes from more time with the meat in contact with smoke and the moisture on the surface of the meat. If you like strong smoke flavors, you can experiment with putting the meat in the Traeger while it starts up. The initial blast of cold smoke may be just what you like. You can also use an Amazen Smoke Tube for a longer application of a bit lighter cold smoke.

I remember a poster on the wall of a pizza parlor in Grand Forks many years ago. The picture was of a sinister looking fellow with a blue face and an ugly scowl. The caption read "Some people don't like Shakey's pizza!" I am always reminded of that poster when I think of the fact that some people don't like smoke flavor. I shouldn't be, though, because what someone likes or doesn't like is up to them, not me. My job is to cook food that makes people happy.

If you or someone in your family prefers not to taste smoke, you can wrap the meat in pink Traeger paper or foil from the beginning and still enjoy delicious ribs cooked on the Traeger Wood Fired Grill. You will need to adjust the cooking time if you do that,

because wrapped ribs cook faster than unwrapped.

My favorite method of cooking ribs is also the simplest. It comprises only two steps. 1.) Apply spice rub. 2.) Put the ribs on the grill and set the temperature to 225°. At this point, you can leave. Go fishing if you want. Or paint the garage. Whatever you like. In five hours, the ribs are tender, smoky, delicious, and ready to eat. If you like sauce, it can be served on the side.



This method is my favorite because the meat is exposed to the full five hours of smoke. I rub with my standard basic rub, which is Kosher salt, pepper, garlic granules, and paprika. Traeger makes a lot of great sauces, all of which are delicious on ribs.

Probably the most popular method of cooking ribs is called the 3-2-1 method. It is also extremely simple, with only 6 steps. 1.) Apply spice rub. 2.) Put the ribs on the grill on the 180° setting, and cook for three hours. 3.) Wrap the ribs in foil or pink Traeger paper. You can add liquid at this stage if you want to experiment with honey, Dr Pepper, cider or juice, but no added liquid is necessary. 4.) Set the temperature to 225° and cook for two hours. 5.) Open the foil and drain the liquid. Apply barbecue sauce. 6.) Cook for one hour at 225° to set the sauce. At the end of the six hours, your ribs will be ready to eat.

There is plenty of room in both methods to experiment. You can use store bought rubs, or make your own. You can use any of the hundreds of sauces available from Traeger and many others, or again, you can make your own. Hickory pellets are the most popular and traditional, but pecan, or one of the available blends also work great. That's one of the great things about grilling on a Traeger Wood Fired Grill: it's an adventure. Have fun and good eating!

