



Roasting a Whole B-B-Q Pig

There are several methods of cooking a whole pig such as roasting over an open fire, burying it in the ground with hot rocks and charcoal, cooking it in the oven, or roasting in a closed cooker with charcoal or gas.

Probably the most inefficient way is over a fire or spit. The major problem with this is the loss of heat to the atmosphere and lack of temperature control. While you are heating one side of the pig the other side is cooling. This method also wastes the fuel that is being used.

Burying the pig in the ground with hot rocks and charcoal is another method of preparation. The biggest problem with this method is the lack of temperature control and knowing when the pig is done. Also, the pig must be thoroughly wrapped to prevent dirt, bugs, ect From contaminating the roast. The simplest method is preparing the pig in the oven. You have full control of the temperature. The biggest difficulty is finding an oven large enough to hold a 35# pig. A 35# pig with the head is 25-32 in. long. A 200# pig is approx. 48 in. long.

Probably the most popular method is cooking the pig in a closed drum type cooker. There are numerous types of roasters available such as commercially manufactured units, those made using 55 gallon drums, or those made from old fuel tanks. They may be fueled by charcoal, wood, bottled gas or a combination of these. You will have good temperature control if a gas cooker is fired. A temperature gauge mounted to the top of the cooker or candy temp., is a valuable aid in cooking.

How to Cook the B-B-Q Pig

The most important thing to remember when cooking a pig is **DO NOT RUSH.**!!!! Slow cooking will result in less shrinkage, more moist meat and better eye appeal. In a closed cooker the temperature **SHOULD NOT EXCEED 360°F.** You can partially open the lid of the cooker if the heat is too excessive. In a closed cooker a 35# pig will take approx. 4-5 hrs. to cook, a 200# pig will take approx 10=12 hrs.

How do you know if the pig is fully cooked? Using the internal meat thermometer, check the places where the meat is heaviest, the ham and shoulder. A fully cooked pig should reach about 170°f and held there for about ½ an hour. **DO NOT OVERCOOK!!!** An internal temp, of about 175° is maximum. At this temp, the meat will fall off the bone. Seasoning can be applied after the meat is removed from the carcass.

In a closed cooker a 200# pig will require approx. 60-80 lb of charcoal to be completely cooked. Do NOT put all of the charcoal in at one time, 15-20 lb Will be enough to start with. The charcoal should be evenly distributed in the draws. At 1-2 hr. intervals you should add more charcoal. This is where a thermometer attached to the top of the cooker is invaluable. Remember, each time the lid is lifted, valuable heat & moisture is lost. The cooker should have an easily removable pan to hold the pig and provide easy access to the fire. The pan will also provide the easy method of handling the pig once it is cooked. In a closed cooker it is not necessary to turn or rotate the pig as the heat should be fairly and evenly distributed.