



How to...

Make Perfect Pork Ribs

There are two basic kinds of pork ribs: **back ribs** and **side ribs**.

Back vs. Side Ribs

Back ribs come from the Loin section. They are the same bones that you find on pork loin chops. The bones, or ribs, are small and more rounded in cross section than those of side ribs. More tender than side ribs, with a greater meat to bone ratio, back ribs might cost a little more than side ribs.

Side ribs lie directly adjacent to the belly, running from the point at which back ribs end to the breast bone (sternum). Side ribs are less tender, contain cartilage, and tend to be less expensive than back ribs. Nevertheless they make for great eating if correctly prepared.

Buying Guide

Allow at least one pound (500 g) raw weight of ribs per person, depending on what other food is being served at the meal. Two pork back rib racks will usually serve 3 guests, while one side pork rack would serve two guests.

Rib Prep 101

Preparation: On the concave surface of all ribs is a thin, translucent membrane. This membrane is tough and will prevent any flavouring to get to the rib meat, and so should be removed. **To remove membrane** Insert a metal spoon handle under the membrane at one end of the rib rack and detach a corner. Then grab the detached flap and gently tear it away from the ribs. It should come off in one clean pull.

Pre-cooking ribs: We do not recommend that you boil your pork ribs, although this has been the accepted method for generations, but there is a better way! If using a dry rub, apply to the ribs. One back rib rack will need about one tablespoon (15 mL) of rub, a side rib rack will need two tablespoons (30 mL). In a cookie sheet or shallow roasting pan, add about 1/2 inch (1.25 cm) of water. Add a few slices of lemon or orange to the pan. Place the ribs, meaty side up, on the pan in a single layer. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and place in oven at 325°F (160°C).

Back Ribs: Cook for between 1 and 1 and a half hours, or until meat is easily pierced with a metal skewer.

Side Ribs: Cook for between 1 and a half and 2 hours, or until meat is easily pierced with a metal skewer.

Tip: At this stage the ribs can be cooled and refrigerated for up to three days but will need to be finished on either the BBQ or in the oven, see page two for more details.

Special Varieties of Ribs

"**Country Style Ribs**" are cut from the same loin portion as the back ribs but the loin meat is intact. The loin is then split open ("butterflied") to create a thick flat piece of meat. They are great for grilling or smoking. Country style ribs have more lean meat than rib bone, so will take a bit longer to cook than back or side ribs.

"**Baby Back Ribs**" are identical in every way to regular back ribs - (the name likely came from a chef trying to make his or her dish sound even more enticing)!

"**Button Bones**" are the tail section of back ribs that is usually removed and sold separately as "button bones". They can be prepared the same way as back ribs.

"**St. Louis Style Ribs**" are side ribs that have been trimmed in a certain way by the butcher - the breast bone has been removed and flank meat has been trimmed away, making them the preferred format for the barbecue.

"**Sweet and Sour Ribs**" are side ribs labelled "centre portion removed" and have had a narrow strip removed from the top portion of the rib rack.

"**Spare Ribs**" are identical in every way to regular side ribs; this term is more common in the US.



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To Finish Cooking

Ribs can be warmed after pre-cooking on the Barbecue (grilled) or in the oven. If you would like to cook your ribs without pre-cooking them you can do so in the oven, using a slow cooker or using indirect heat on the BBQ. All of these methods are included on this page.

| | Pre- Cooked | Not Pre-cooked |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Barbeque | Preheat BBQ on HIGH, then reduce heat to MEDIUM. Place ribs on the grill and baste with your favourite BBQ sauce. As soon as the ribs begin to brown, turn and baste. Continue doing this for about 20 minutes. Eventually the ribs will begin to turn a beautiful mahogany colour from a build-up of cooked sauce applied in multiple layers. Ensure that the ribs are hot all the way through. | Back ribs can be grilled without prior cooking, i.e. from raw. The best way to do this is to use the indirect cooking method. Heat BBQ to about 250°F (120°C), turn off one side and place ribs on the "off" side. If using BBQ sauce start basting after thirty minutes, and continue until ribs are cooked and tender, between 1 and a half and 2 and a half hours total. Turn ribs every 20 minutes or so. If using a rub, apply before you start grilling. If using charcoal, wait until coals have died down, bank the coals to one side, and grill on the other side. Keep the lid of the barbecue down, and try to maintain a temperature of 250°F (120°C) throughout the cooking process. |
| Oven | Place steamed, pre-cooked, ribs in a roasting tray and baste with your favourite BBQ sauce. Place in oven at 300° (150°C). Continue basting with sauce every five minutes or so, turning ribs each time, for a total of 30 minutes. | To finish in the oven, remove foil and turn oven up to broil, brush ribs with your favourite BBQ sauce and broil for about 3 minutes (if ribs are hot) or until sizzling and golden. Turn ribs over and repeat with BBQ sauce and broil again. For the ultimate ribs, repeat brushing sauce and broiling or BBQing on each side. Watch carefully when broiling, so that they do not burn. |
| Slow Cooker | | Ribs, especially side ribs, can be done in the slow cooker with great results. There are many different slow cooker recipes for ribs , depending on the type of sauce you like, but generally slow-cooked ribs are saucy and extremely tender. |