

Pulled Pork -

I have been making pulled pork since 2010 and have tried a number of different methods, all of which gave us okay pulled pork, but nothing that stood out as special. This year I changed it up bigly and the results have been excellent. I turned the process into a 2-part cook, smoking on day one, and cooking in a crock pot on day two. It's not "real" pulled pork without smoke and bark, so there has to be smoke involved. Finishing in a slow cooker gives us the opportunity to add flavors and jus which can't be had in a straight 10-12 hr. smoke session and this jus is what really sets this pulled pork apart from others. More on that later. Following is how I do it now.

I look for a 7-9 lb. **Boston Butt** but have used a Picnic. If it's a butt I remove the fat cap on one side and any other major fat deposits I see. I then use **yellow mustard** as a binder and add a **sweet rub** like John Henry's Texas Pig Rub applied heavily. I smoke this on my Weber kettle at 220-250 degrees for 3-4 hours. I usually use Hickory as a smoke wood, but I think most of the smoke woods would work fine. I have a pellet grill/smoker but the Weber yields more smoke. If I used the pellet grill, I would smoke for maybe 5-6 hours.

On day two I cover the bottom of my slow cooker with **onion slices**. Then in goes the butt, about 3 cups of **homemade chicken stock**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of **Worstershire**. I then cook on high until the meat is pullable, maybe 6 hrs. If using an instant read thermometer, it will be between 200-210 degrees; the important part is that it's pullable. Then I pull the pork on a cookie sheet removing any fat that I find. This will leave a quart or so of jus which I defat with a Fat Separator, and then reduce on the stove what remains by 50%. This is mixed into the pulled pork on the sheet. This gives pulled pork the flavor that is missing from all other methods, so don't skip this.

I'm guessing liquid smoke might be a good substitute for the smoking process, but I have no idea how much would be required because... well, I have the real thing and have never used it.

The "Carolina Mustard Sauce" below is perfect on this pork.

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