

Sometimes the best dishes come from a spark of inspiration. On a recent trip through Harrisburg, I came across a honey habanero BBQ sauce that left me thinking: *what if I built my own version from scratch?* With applewood smoke, a touch of Elijah's Ghost Pepper hot sauce, and a rib rub that packs flavor without overwhelming heat, these ribs became a signature plate worth sharing. But ribs need company. So, alongside them, I put my own spin on crispy Brussels sprouts, roasted until golden with a parmesan crunch and kissed with a little seasoning for balance. And because every great cookout deserves a touch of home, I finished the plate with mom's potato salad: creamy, tangy, and perfectly comforting. This is more than a recipe, it's a story of travel, family, and flavor coming together at the table.

## Applewood Honey Habanero Ribs with Brussels & Potato Salad

### Ingredients

- 1 rack baby back ribs
- 2 tbsp light brown sugar
- 1 tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 cup ketchup
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup honey
- 2 tbsp Elijah's Extreme Ghost Pepper hot sauce (or your favorite)
- 2 tbsp apple juice or cider (for basting)
- **1–2 tsp Grill Mates Applewood Seasoning (reserve a pinch for garnish)**
- Applewood chunks or chips for smoking

### Instructions

1. Preheat grill/smoker to 250–275°F with applewood smoke.
2. Mix dry rub (brown sugar, paprika, cayenne, garlic, onion, salt, black pepper, and 1 tsp Applewood Seasoning). Coat ribs generously.
3. Cook ribs low and slow for 2.5–3 hours, basting with apple juice/cider every 30 minutes.
4. Make the sauce: in a saucepan combine ketchup, vinegar, honey, and hot sauce. Simmer until thickened.
5. Brush ribs with sauce and return to grill for 20–30 minutes until sticky and caramelized.
6. Finish with a light dusting of Grill Mates Applewood Seasoning for a final smoky-sweet hit.



## Crispy Brussels Sprouts (Our Way)

### Ingredients

- 1 lb Brussels sprouts, halved
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp grated parmesan
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- Pinch of cayenne or chili flakes
- Salt & black pepper to taste

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Toss Brussels sprouts with olive oil, parmesan, garlic powder, cayenne, salt, and pepper.
3. Spread cut side down on a baking sheet. Roast 20–25 minutes until golden and crispy.
4. Serve hot — bold enough to stand with the ribs, light enough to balance the plate.



## Mom's Homestyle Potato Salad

### Ingredients

- 2 lbs potatoes, peeled & diced
- 3 boiled eggs, chopped
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp mustard
- ½ cup celery, finely diced
- ¼ cup onion, finely diced
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Paprika (for garnish)

### Instructions

1. Boil potatoes until tender. Drain and cool.
2. In a large bowl, mix mayo, mustard, celery, onion, eggs, salt, and pepper.
3. Fold in potatoes until coated. Chill for at least 1 hour.
4. Sprinkle with paprika before serving.



## The Flavor Story

This plate ties together all the pieces of my journey: a sauce idea sparked in Harrisburg, applewood smoke as the backbone, Brussels sprouts that became my own, and mom's potato salad to ground it in comfort.

That final sprinkle of **Grill Mates Applewood Seasoning** wasn't just for looks, it tied the flavors back to the smoke that carried these ribs from start to finish.

🍴 **Taste the Culture. Savor the Journey.** 🍴