

BBQ Pork Ribs (Applewood-Inspired)

Slow-cooked, tender, and bursting with smoky-sweet flavor.

Ingredients (serves 4–6):

- 2 racks baby back or St. Louis-style pork ribs (~4–5 lbs)
- 2 Tbsp yellow mustard (for binding)
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 Tbsp applewood seasoning blend (or mix of smoked salt + applewood rub)
- 1½ tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- ½ tsp cayenne (optional)
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- ½ cup apple juice or apple cider vinegar (for spritzing)
- ½ cup BBQ sauce of choice (or homemade)

Instructions:

1. **Prep Ribs:** Remove silver skin from back of ribs. Rub with mustard.
2. **Mix Dry Rub:** Combine all dry ingredients in a bowl. Rub generously over both sides.
3. **Preheat Grill/Smoker:** Set to 225–250 °F. Use applewood chips for smoke.
4. **Cook:** Place ribs bone-side down. Smoke 3 hours.
5. **Spritz:** Every 45–60 minutes with apple juice or vinegar.
6. **Wrap (optional for tenderness):** After 3 hours, wrap ribs in foil with a splash of apple juice. Smoke 2 more hours.

7. **Sauce + Finish:** Unwrap, brush with BBQ sauce, and cook uncovered for 30–60 more minutes to caramelize.

Texas Smoked Sausage (Grilled)

Savory, snappy, and just spicy enough to cut through the summer heat.

Ingredients (serves 4):

- 2 lbs Texas-style smoked sausage links (beef, pork, or combo)
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- Optional: BBQ glaze or dipping sauce
- Optional sides: sliced pickles, onions, jalapeños, or white bread

Instructions:

1. **Preheat Grill:** Medium heat (350–400 °F).
2. **Light Oil Coat:** Brush sausage lightly with olive oil for char.
3. **Grill:** Place on grill and cook 12–15 minutes, turning every few minutes for even sear. Internal temp should hit 160 °F.
4. **Optional Glaze:** Brush with BBQ sauce during last 2 minutes.
5. **Serve Hot:** Slice diagonally for serving or serve whole.

Red Drink – Hibiscus Tea ("Sorrel")

Why Red? Red symbolizes resilience and remembrance. After Emancipation, hibiscus tea (sorrel) became a celebratory staple — cooling, sweet, and rooted in African traditions.

Ingredients (makes ~8 cups):

- 4 large hibiscus tea bags or ½ cup dried hibiscus petals
- 5 cups water
- ¼ tsp baking soda (optional, brightens color)
- ½ to ¾ cup granulated sugar (adjust to taste)
- Optional flavors: 2-inch piece fresh ginger (sliced), 1 cinnamon stick, or zest of 1 orange
- 1 cup cold water + ice (for serving)

Instructions:

1. In a pot, boil 5 cups water; add hibiscus tea (and optional flavors) for 15 minutes.
2. Remove solids, stir in baking soda (if using) to reduce acidity.
3. Add sugar; dissolve well.
4. Transfer tea to a pitcher, add 1 cup cold water, chill.
5. Serve over ice with mint or lemon garnish.

Recipe (makes ~8 cups):

- 4 large hibiscus tea bags or ½ cup dried hibiscus petals
 - 5 quarts water
 - 3 cups sugar (adjust to taste)
 - ¼ tsp baking soda (optional, for clarity)
1. Boil water, steep hibiscus tea for ~15 min.
 2. Remove bags/petals, stir in sugar & baking soda.
 3. Chill, serve over ice with mint or lemon.

Z Sistas Tip: “Blend a little ginger or cinnamon in to honor deeper African diasporic traditions.”

BBQ Roots: After Emancipation, communal cookouts became powerful expressions of unity and freedom. Juneteenth like we know it wouldn't exist without ribs, chicken, and all the fix-ins.

a) Southern Coleslaw

Ingredients (yields ~8 servings):

- ½ medium head green cabbage, shredded (~6 cups)
- 2 large carrots, grated (~1½ cups)
- ¾ cup mayonnaise
- 2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp granulated sugar
- ½ tsp celery seeds (optional)
- Salt & pepper, to taste

Instructions:

1. Toss cabbage and carrots in large bowl.
2. In a small bowl, whisk mayo, vinegar, sugar, celery seeds, salt + pepper.
3. Combine with veggies; chill at least 1 hour before serving.

b) Classic Potato Salad (Chef John's Style)

Ingredients (~8 servings):

- 3 lbs waxy potatoes (Yukon Gold or red), cut into ½-inch cubes
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- ½ cup finely chopped celery
- ½ cup finely chopped red onion
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp granulated sugar
- ½ tsp kosher salt

- ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley

Instructions:

1. Cook potatoes in salted boiling water until tender (~10–12 minutes); drain and cool 5 minutes.
2. Combine mayo, mustard, vinegar, sugar, salt + pepper in small bowl.
3. Gently fold dressing into potatoes, eggs, celery, onion, and parsley.
4. Cover and chill 3+ hours before serving.



3. Red Velvet Cake

A Juneteenth dessert icon — bold, beautiful, and deeply rooted in Black sweet traditions.

Simple Pan Method:

Ingredients (9-inch round cake):

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups granulated sugar
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp fine salt
- 1 tsp cocoa powder
- 1½ cups vegetable oil
- 1 cup buttermilk, room temp
- 2 large eggs, room temp
- 2 Tbsp red food coloring
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1½ tsp white distilled vinegar

Cream Cheese Frosting:

- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup unsalted butter, room temp

- 4 cups powdered sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F. Grease and flour two 9-inch pans.
2. Whisk flour, sugar, baking soda, salt, cocoa.
3. Mix oil, buttermilk, eggs, food coloring, vanilla, vinegar.
4. Combine wet + dry; mix until smooth.
5. Bake 25–30 min or until toothpick comes out clean. Cool completely.
6. Blend cream cheese frosting until smooth. Frost cake layers; chill, serve.



4. Watermelon — Resistance on a Plate

Watermelon once represented Black prosperity after emancipation before becoming a racist trope. Eating it proudly today is an act of reclaiming joy and identity. 🍉

“Let it drip. Let it mean something.”



Watermelon with Tajín + Lime (Z Sistas Style)

This remix hits sweet, sour, salty, and spicy all at once — pure flavor science.

Ingredients (serves 4–6):

- 1 small seedless watermelon (cubed or cut into wedges)
- 2–3 limes (freshly squeezed)
- 1–2 tsp Tajín (or chili-lime seasoning of your choice)
- Optional: pinch of sea salt or fresh mint leaves

Instructions:

1. **Chop it:** Cut watermelon into cubes or wedges.
2. **Drizzle:** Squeeze lime juice evenly across the fruit.
3. **Dust:** Sprinkle with Tajín (light or heavy — you do you).
4. **Optional Glow-Up:** Add sea salt for contrast or a few torn mint leaves for a refreshing twist.

5. **Serve chilled.** Great on its own or as a BBQ side.