

PALMINA

Barbecue Ribs

Paired with Palmina Dolcetto 2005

We developed this recipe to complement some of the myriad flavors in this year's Dolcetto – flavors like cocoa, lavender, smoke, bacon fat, a little spiciness.

The ribs are prepared with a dry rub, and the secret to cooking ribs is that they aren't prepared over a direct flame – use indirect heat and smoke cooks the meat to perfection. In Santa Barbara County, we have something called Santa Maria-style Barbecue - a red oak fire with a grill that can be raised or lowered to control the cooking temperature; this is perfect for ribs. But you can use a regular or gas grill as well – just set the fire on one side and cook the ribs on the other.



Pork spare ribs – about 1½ pounds per person

Dry rub (these quantities are for a whole rack of ribs – about 6 pounds)

3 tablespoons Unsweetened cocoa

3 tablespoons sugar

1 tablespoon sea or Kosher salt, finely ground

1 tablespoon black pepper, ground

1 tablespoon thyme

1 tablespoon fresh Lavender flowers and leaves (or 1/3 tablespoon of dried culinary lavender), finely chopped

½ teaspoon cayenne

½ teaspoon chili powder

Mix together the dry rub ingredients. Set aside a handful then apply the rest to the ribs at least 3 hours before cooking.

Soak barbecue oak chips in hot water for an hour.

Start your grill and let it heat up. For a charcoal grill, move the coals to one side and cover them with the soaked oak chips. For a gas grill, turn off one side and cover the lava rock on the lit side with the soaked oak chips. Put the ribs on the unlit side and let them cook for an hour or so, turning them every 15 minutes. After an hour, sprinkle the remaining dry rub on both sides of the ribs. Cook for another 10 minutes or so. The ribs have a built-in pop-up timer – when the meat has shrunk to expose about ½ inch of bone – they're done!

Serve with coleslaw with a vinegar (not creamy) dressing and perhaps grilled polenta.

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