



## PITMASTER AMY ANDERSON

Initially Amy Anderson competed on the national barbecue circuit as a team of only one. She called herself Smokin' Bullet, because her cooker of choice was "the bullet," otherwise known as the Weber<sup>®</sup> Smokey Mountain Cooker<sup>™</sup> smoker. That was thirteen years ago. Since then she joined forces with her mother and changed the team name to Mad Momma & the Kids, winning the World Championship together in Ireland in 2000. Melanie Tapia came aboard next and helped the team win state championships in Washington, California, Arizona, and Idaho, always cooking on the bullet.

Amy and Melanie, now running their own restaurant, Ranch House BBQ, have some advice for anyone looking to make award-winning Pacific Northwest-style ribs: Add dried chunks of cherry and apple wood, along with a little mesquite, to the burning charcoal. It's a sweet, mild combination that complements the rub and sauce in this recipe.



### Ranch House BBQ Ribs

Prep time: 30 minutes  
Grilling time: 4 to 5 hours

4 slabs baby back ribs

#### Rub

2 tablespoons Lawry's<sup>®</sup> Seasoned Salt  
1 tablespoon granulated sugar  
1 tablespoon pure chile powder  
1 tablespoon sweet paprika  
1 teaspoon ground black pepper  
1 teaspoon garlic powder  
1 teaspoon onion powder  
1 teaspoon dry Italian seasoning

¼ cup yellow mustard

4 fist-size dry chunks apple/cherry/mesquite wood (not soaked)

#### Sauce

1 cup ketchup  
⅓ cup cider vinegar  
2 tablespoons light brown sugar  
4 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce  
1 tablespoon honey  
1 tablespoon molasses  
½ teaspoon garlic powder

1. Prepare the smoker (see page xx) by lighting 3 paraffin cubes inside the charcoal chamber. Pour in enough unlit charcoal briquettes to fill a chimney starter 1½ times and spread out the charcoal evenly. Open the bottom vents completely. Wait until the charcoal is covered with gray ash, about 20 minutes.
2. Using a meat thermometer or dull knife, slide the tip under the membrane covering the back of each rack of ribs. Lift and loosen the membrane until it breaks, then grab a corner with a paper towel and pull it off (see page 114).
3. In a medium bowl mix the rub ingredients. Lightly coat both sides of each rack with mustard. This will help the rub stick to the meat. Sprinkle the rub evenly all over the racks. Let the racks sit at room temperature for 30 to 40 minutes before cooking.
4. When the charcoal is covered with gray ash, put the



water pan in place and fill it about ¾ full with warm water. Put the 2 cooking grates in place. Put the lid on, open the top vents completely, and insert a thermometer into one of the top vents. The temperature will rise to 350°F and higher. When it does, close the bottom vents completely. The temperature will slowly fall between 225°F and 250°F. When it does, open the bottom vents about halfway. Add two of the wood chunks to the charcoal and immediately close the door to maintain the temperature.

5. Place the racks in the rib rack, then place the rib rack in the middle of the top cooking grate, bending the ends if necessary to fit them on the grate. Close the lid. Be sure the bottom vents are open at least halfway. Let your ribs smoke. Maintain a temperature between 225°F and 250°F until the meat shrinks back at least ½ inch from the ends of at least several bones, 3½ to 4 hours. After the second hour, add the remaining wood chunks. If the temperature runs too high, close the bottom vents a bit. If the temperature falls too low, open the vents. If the vents are already open all the way, add 8 to 10 charcoal briquettes to the lit charcoal. Don't add charcoal unless it is already covered in gray ash (light it in a chimney starter). Carefully add the hot charcoal through the door into the charcoal chamber using long-handled tongs.

6. While the racks are smoking, make the sauce. In a saucepan combine all the sauce ingredients. Whisk until

smooth. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Remove the saucepan from the heat.

7. After the meat has shrunk back from the ends of the bones in several places, it is time to brush them with some sauce. Remove the rib rack from the smoker and put the lid back on to maintain the temperature. Lay each rack of ribs on a large work surface and lightly brush them on both sides with sauce (see photo below). Then return the racks to the rib rack, arranging them upside down as compared to how they were cooking earlier. Return the rib rack to the smoker and let the racks cook until the meat is so tender that when you pull two adjacent bones apart the meat between them tears easily, 30 to 60 minutes. If desired, brush the ribs with a little more sauce. Serve warm.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

