

CHRIS LILLY'S APPLE-CHERRY-JALAPEÑO RIBS

ACTIVE: 1 hr 10 min | TOTAL: 4 hr 45 min | SERVES: 4 to 6

FOR THE RIBS

- 2 tablespoons packed dark brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons paprika
- 1 tablespoon garlic salt
- 1½ teaspoons onion salt
- 1½ teaspoons chili powder
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 racks spare ribs (about 8 pounds total)
- Kosher salt

FOR THE LIQUID SEASONING AND GLAZE

- ¾ cup pitted cherries
- ½ cup apple juice
- 1 large jalapeño pepper, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup packed dark brown sugar
- ¼ cup honey
- 1 cup tomato-based barbecue sauce

1. Heat a charcoal grill and prepare for indirect grilling: Bank the coals to one side, leaving the other side empty. Set up a drip pan on the empty side. Let the fire burn down to a low heat (250°).
2. Make the dry rub: Combine the brown sugar, paprika, garlic salt, onion salt, chili powder, cayenne, oregano, cumin and ¾ teaspoon black pepper in a small bowl. Remove 2 tablespoons of the rub and set aside for the liquid seasoning.
3. Prepare the ribs: Working with one rack at a time, slide a paring knife between the bone and the membrane, then pull off the membrane. Generously season the ribs all over with salt. Generously apply the dry rub on both sides.
4. Place the ribs bone-side down on the cooler side of the grill over the drip pan. Cover the grill and cook until the meat is well browned, about 2 hours 15 minutes, adding more charcoal as needed. Transfer each rack to a large double layer of foil.
5. Make the liquid seasoning: Combine the cherries, apple juice, jalapeño, brown sugar, honey and the reserved 2 tablespoons dry rub in a food processor and liquefy. Measure out 1 cup of the liquid seasoning and set it aside for the glaze. Brush the remaining liquid seasoning on the ribs and tightly wrap in the foil. Return to the cooler side of the grill, cover the grill and cook until the ribs are tender, about 1 more hour.
6. Make the glaze: Combine the barbecue sauce with the reserved 1 cup liquid seasoning in a small bowl. Remove the ribs from the grill and unwrap. Brush the glaze on both sides. Return to the grill over direct heat. Cover the grill and cook, turning the ribs halfway through, until caramelized, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and let rest 10 minutes before slicing.

Chris Lilly

Big Bob Gibson Bar-B-Q
Decatur, AL



People's Choice Award winner and Barbecue Hall of Famer Chris Lilly has figured out how to dominate barbecue competitions: Show up early and get cooking before the other contestants. "It's all about low and slow with barbecue," Chris says. "I'm always the first person there in the morning." Chris's apple-cherry-jalapeño ribs were so popular with guests that he ended up cooking more than 170 racks! He had a sense he was winning before the night ended: "We actually had to request an extra container to hold voting tokens!" he says.

