

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Rest Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 3 hours 5 minutes

Intensity Level: Moderate (3/5) — requires attention during grilling but no advanced techniques

Table of Contents



- [Introduction](#)
- [Ingredients](#)
 - [For the Ribs](#)
 - [For the Dry Rub](#)
 - [For the Barbecue Sauce](#)
 - [Optional Extras](#)
- [Equipment](#)
- [Instructions](#)
 - [Step 1: Prep the Ribs \(10 minutes | Intensity: Low\)](#)
 - [Step 2: Apply the Dry Rub \(5 minutes | Intensity: Low\)](#)
 - [Step 3: Low-and-Slow Cook \(2 hours | Intensity: Low\)](#)
 - [Step 4: Prepare the Glaze \(5 minutes | Intensity: Low\)](#)
 - [Step 5: Grill and Glaze \(20-25 minutes | Intensity: Medium-High\)](#)
 - [Step 6: Rest and Serve \(15 minutes | Intensity: Low\)](#)
- [Timing & Intensity Summary](#)
- [Nutrition Information \(per serving, based on 6 servings\)](#)

Introduction

Barbecue ribs are the centerpiece of American outdoor cooking — smoky, tender, and glazed with a sticky-sweet sauce that caramelizes over live fire. This recipe uses the classic “low and slow” method: ribs are first baked (or smoked) at a low temperature until the meat pulls cleanly from the bone, then finished on the grill with sauce for that signature char. Whether you’re using baby back ribs or St. Louis-style spare ribs, the technique is the same, and the results are reliably spectacular.

Ingredients

For the Ribs

- 2 racks (about 4-5 lbs total) baby back or St. Louis-style pork ribs
- 2 tbsp yellow mustard (as a binder — optional but recommended)
- 2 tbsp olive oil

For the Dry Rub

- 3 tbsp brown sugar
- 2 tbsp smoked paprika

- 1 tbsp garlic powder
- 1 tbsp onion powder
- 1 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp salt (adjust to taste)
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper (optional, for heat)

For the Barbecue Sauce

- 1½ cups your favorite BBQ sauce (or homemade — see note)
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce

Optional Extras

- 1 cup apple juice (for basting/moisture)
 - Wood chips (hickory or apple), soaked — for smoking
-

Equipment

- Aluminum foil
 - Baking sheet
 - Grill (gas or charcoal) or smoker
 - Basting brush
 - Instant-read thermometer (recommended)
 - Sharp knife
-

Instructions

Step 1: Prep the Ribs (10 minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Remove the ribs from packaging and pat dry with paper towels.
2. Flip each rack bone-side up. Slide a butter knife under the thin membrane covering the back of the bones, then grip it with a paper towel and peel it off. This step is essential — the membrane is tough and blocks flavor absorption.
3. Rub the ribs all over with a thin layer of yellow mustard (it acts as a binder and doesn't add mustard flavor once cooked) or olive oil.

Step 2: Apply the Dry Rub (5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Combine all dry rub ingredients in a bowl and mix well.
2. Generously coat both sides of each rack, pressing the rub into the meat. Use all of the rub — it should form a visible crust.
3. Let the ribs sit at room temperature for 20-30 minutes while you preheat the oven, or refrigerate up to 24 hours for deeper flavor.

Step 3: Low-and-Slow Cook (2 hours | Intensity: Low)

1. Preheat oven to 275°F (135°C).
2. Place each rack on a large sheet of heavy-duty aluminum foil, bone-side down.
3. Optional: splash 2–3 tbsp apple juice over each rack for moisture.
4. Wrap tightly in foil, sealing edges. Place on a baking sheet.
5. Bake for 2 hours. The ribs are ready for the next stage when the meat has pulled back from the bone ends by about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and a thermometer inserted between bones reads 195–200°F (90–93°C).

Alternative smoking method: Smoke unwrapped at 225–250°F (107–121°C) for 3–4 hours with hickory or apple wood, spritzing with apple juice every 45 minutes.

Step 4: Prepare the Glaze (5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

While the ribs cook, whisk together BBQ sauce, honey, apple cider vinegar, and Worcestershire in a small saucepan. Warm over low heat for 5 minutes until smooth and fragrant. Set aside.

Step 5: Grill and Glaze (20–25 minutes | Intensity: Medium-High)

1. Preheat grill to medium heat (about 375–400°F / 190–205°C). Oil the grates.
2. Remove ribs from foil and place bone-side down on the grill.

- 3. Brush the top generously with glaze. Close the lid and grill 5 minutes.
- 4. Flip, brush the other side, and grill another 5 minutes.
- 5. Continue flipping and glazing every 4-5 minutes for 15-20 minutes total, until the sauce is caramelized, sticky, and slightly charred at the edges. Watch closely — the sugar in the sauce burns quickly.

No grill? Broil on a foil-lined sheet 6 inches from the element for 3-4 minutes per side, glazing between turns.

Step 6: Rest and Serve (15 minutes | Intensity: Low)

- 1. Transfer ribs to a cutting board, tent loosely with foil, and rest 10-15 minutes. Resting lets juices redistribute so the meat stays moist.
- 2. Slice between the bones with a sharp knife.
- 3. Serve with extra warmed sauce, coleslaw, cornbread, and pickles.

Timing & Intensity Summary

Stage	Time	Intensity
Prep & membrane removal	10 min	Low
Dry rub application	5 min	Low

Stage	Time	Intensity
Low-and-slow bake	2 hrs	Low (hands-off)
Glaze preparation	5 min	Low
Grill & glaze	20-25 min	Medium-High (attention required)
Rest	15 min	Low
Total	~3 hrs 5 min	Moderate overall

Nutrition Information (per serving, based on 6 servings)

Values are estimates and vary by rib type, sauce brand, and portion size.

- Calories: ~620 kcal
- Total Fat: ~42 g
- Saturated Fat: ~15 g
- Cholesterol: ~160 mg
- Sodium: ~780 mg
- Total Carbohydrates: ~28 g
- Sugars: ~22 g

- Protein: ~32 g