

BACKYARD BARBEQUE



Steve Geisz and Jeff Cremer share some secret BBQ recipes PHOTO BY JOHN MORAN

at your Table

by Heather Hutchinson-Schuster

A hot grill and cold drink is a great recipe for a day of barbequing in the backyard. I took some time this month to interview two gentlemen who know a thing or two about great meat and great barbeque. The "Meat King" is Jeff Cremer from Cremer's Grocery and the "BBQ Master" is Steve Geisz from Chocolate Hog BBQ and Catering. Steve and Jeff both agree that the secret of great barbeque is starting with an excellent cut of meat.

FAVORITES FROM THE MEAT KING

Cremer's Grocery is proud of their hand-cut meats and fresh ground beef. The ground beef at Cremer's is not the same as your typical supermarket selections. The ground beef sold at Cremer's is ground each day fresh from whole muscle meat, either chuck or round, and considered "Famous Lean Ground Beef." This means that it has a special rating from the USDA and is upheld to strict testing to ensure that it is 85-90% lean.

Cremer's, which has been a Dubuque staple since 1948, also sells hand-cut choice meats, chicken, pork, sausages, and their famous turkey and dressing, as well as BBQ pork ready to heat and serve. The hand-cut choice meats come from smaller wholesalers and smaller processors. The day I

visited Cremer's, the staff was busy making sausages by hand and the smell of the BBQ pork cooking was teasing me the entire time. One of the best sellers at Cremer's is actually the BBQ.

ROAST PORK LOIN WITH BALSAMIC, DIJON, AND THYME

Jeff shared with me some of his favorite recipes to make with his choice cut meats. The first recipe is for a Roast Pork Loin with Balsamic, Dijon, and Thyme. It can be prepared on the grill or in the oven, is full flavored, and can be enjoyed year-round.

- 1 bone in rib end pork loin, 2-3 lbs.
- 6 cloves garlic, mashed and finely minced
- 3 tbs. balsamic vinegar
- 1 1/2 tbs. whole grain Dijon mustard
- 1 1/2 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil (plus additional if preparing in the oven)

1 tbs. kosher salt
1/2 tsp. ground pepper
2 tsp. dried thyme or 4 thyme sprigs, leaves removed

Pat the pork loin dry with paper towels. Whisk together the garlic, balsamic vinegar, Dijon mustard, olive oil, salt, pepper, and thyme in a small bowl and smother all over the pork loin. Let it sit for at least 20 minutes (or longer in the refrigerator) as you preheat your oven or grill.

Grill Preparation:

Preheat the grill to medium high heat. If desired, use a cast iron pan, but you can also prepare this directly on the grill grates. Sear the pork loin on all sides, about three to four minutes per side. Continue to grill, rotating periodically, for about 45 minutes, or until the internal temperature of the pork loin is about 145 degrees. Allow three minutes of rest time before slicing.

Oven Preparation:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Heat two tbs. olive oil in a sauté or roasting pan. Sear on all sides, about three to four minutes per side. Place in oven and roast for 45 minutes, or until the internal temperature of the pork loin roast is about 145 degrees. Allow three minutes of rest time before slicing.

SANTA MARIA TRI-TIP

One cut of meat that Jeff likes to cook with is the tri-tip. There is a trick to carving this cut of meat. You will want to carve it going against the grain, which changes direction in this cut of meat. To help determine where to carve it, you will want to look it over before you rub and roast it. Verify the direction the muscle fibers are going on each part of the roast. After roasting the meat, slice the roast in half where the fibers change direction and then carve each piece separately.

- 1 whole tri-tip, about 2 lbs.
- 3 tbs. Cremer's Rub Me Tender

Trim silver skin. The meat may have a thick layer of fat, some of which can be sliced off,



Roast pork loin with balsamic vinegar, Dijon mustard, and thyme

PHOTO BY JOHN MORAN



Santa Maria tri-tip

PHOTOS BY JOHN MORAN



Cremer's E-Z whole beef tenderloin

but keep a good amount to help baste the meat. Sprinkle the meat with rub and massage lightly all over. Cover and refrigerate at least an hour or for as long as overnight. Remove from refrigerator an hour before cooking.

Prepare charcoal grill or heat a gas grill to high. Place roast on grill and sear one side well, six to eight minutes, checking for flare-ups. Turn the roast and sear the other side for about the same amount of time. Then lower gas to medium-high or move the meat to a cooler part of the charcoal grill. Turn meat again and cook another eight to ten minutes. Flip and cook again. A

two-pound roast will require about 20-25 minutes total cooking time. The roast is ready when an instant-read thermometer reaches 130 degrees when inserted into the thickest part of the meat.

Rest roast on a cutting board 10-20 minutes. Slice against the grain. The roast is shaped like a boomerang, so either cut it in half at the center of the angle, or slice against the grain on one side, turn the roast and slice against the grain on the other side.

To oven-roast a tri-tip, prepare meat with rub and refrigerate as instructed. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Add two tbs. of olive oil or other cooking oil to a large, heavy

ovenproof pan. On stovetop, heat on high until pan is very hot, then add tri-tip, fat side down. Turn heat to medium-high and sear roast for about four minutes. Turn the roast and put it in the oven. Cook it for about ten minutes per pound, checking with an instant-read thermometer until it reaches 130 degrees for medium-rare.

CREMER'S E-Z WHOLE BEEF TENDERLOIN

The last recipe Jeff shared with me was one that you can also pick up at his store at 731 Rhomberg Ave., Dubuque when you purchase your favorite cuts of meat and seasonings. While there, say hi to Larry and Carla who have worked there for over 35 years. You can even place your order for Christmas turkey and dressing.

4 - 4 1/2 lbs. whole beef tenderloin

Cremer's Rub Me Tender Seasoning

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Season tenderloin with Cremer's Rub Me Tender seasoning. Place tenderloin in roasting pan or on a cookie sheet. Roast tenderloin for 30 minutes or until 130 degrees internal temperature for medium rare (ten minutes additional for medium well). Remove tenderloin from oven, cover with foil tent, and let rest for 15-20 minutes. Internal temperature may increase five to ten degrees while resting, due to residual heat. Slice tenderloin into 1/4 to 1/2 inch slices. End piece will be more done and center of roast more rare.

For Kids, By Kids by Hannah Stoner

Grilled Shortcake Skewers

It is finally warming up and on many nights the aroma of people grilling out can be smelled throughout the neighborhood. This month I am sharing a grill-mazing recipe with you. This recipe is a great dessert to have at a summer cookout for the Fourth of July.

This recipe has a sweet twist. There is the tartness of pineapple and the sweetness of strawberry combined with fluffy shortcake. The fruit and cake are threaded onto a skewer and then grilled to perfection. Once everything is grilled, sweeten the dessert even more by serving the fruit and cake over vanilla bean ice cream.

Strawberries cleaned with tops cut off
Pineapple cut into chunks

Coconut pound cake (store bought or homemade)

Whipped cream

Vanilla bean ice cream

Cut fruit and pound cake into similarly sized cubes. Thread onto a BBQ skewer and grill over a medium high heat, turning occasionally until fruit is soft and pound cake is toasted, about six to eight minutes. Serve with ice cream and whipped cream. ❖



Chocolate Hog baby back ribs

FAVORITES OF THE BBQ MASTER

To further my BBQ knowledge, I went to a local BBQ Master, Steve Geisz, co-owner of Chocolate Hog BBQ and Catering. His love of BBQ began long before becoming the general manager at the Grand Harbor Resort and Waterpark. Steve and his team of regulars have been competing in BBQ competitions across the United States for the last 15 years. Most of the competitions are sanctioned by the Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS). To compete, Steve prepares four different meats: chicken, ribs, pork, and brisket. His specialty is ribs and he has won awards in pork and brisket as well.

Steve's amazing BBQ can be found at upcoming events such as the VIP tent at the Dubuque Fireworks, All That Jazz, Epworth Town and Country Days, and at the Czipar's Apple Orchard apple festival.



Pork Minks

MOINKS

Minks are half pork and half beef meatballs stuffed with cheese and wrapped in bacon. Steve was kind enough to share the recipe for these meaty, cheesy, little amazing bacon wrapped presents.

1 lb. ground beef

1 lb. ground spicy pork sausage

Tony's Cajun Seasoning, desired to taste

Jalapeno Cheddar Cube Cheese

Bacon strips, cut in half

Favorite barbeque sauce

Mix ground beef and pork together along with seasoning. Form golf ball sized balls. Flatten between wax paper. Wrap meat around a cheese cube. Wrap bacon around meatball and secure with a toothpick.

Place wood for smoking in the grill and allow to preheat for five minutes. Clean and oil the grill grates. Place meatballs on the cool side of the grill, cover and cook until cooked through and bacon has browned, about 20 minutes. Brush meatballs with barbeque sauce, cover grill, and continue to cook until sauce has set, about five minutes. Remove from grill and let rest for five minutes, then serve.

CHOCOLATE HOG BABY BACK RIBS

I asked Steve to share how he is able to continuously win awards and what his secret is to great BBQ. Steve's tip is that anyone can turn their gas or charcoal grill into a smoker. There are two different ways to accomplish this. You can put chips over the charcoal to gain the smokey flavor, or put chips in tin foil with three tablespoons of

water and set that on the racks of your grill. The temperature is very important; keep it between 225 and 275 degrees. Once the meat has smoked for two hours, it will have absorbed about as much smoke flavoring as it can, although beef can take a little bit longer.

Steve likes to shop local and support local as much as possible. He purchases most of his rubs and seasonings from Calico Bean Market on Bluff Street. He loves the Montreal Steak Seasoning for beef, the Rib Rub for pork, and the Chicken Rub. Since Steve is known for his ribs, he shared his baby back ribs recipe.

Rinse the ribs in cool water and remove the membrane from the rack of ribs. This allows the rub and smoke to penetrate better. Soak the ribs overnight in brine comprised of ginger ale, orange juice, and soy sauce. This adds moisture to the meat. Coat the meat and rub gently with Calico Bean Market Rib Rub. Heat the grill to about 225 degrees and keep it there using a digital oven thermometer placed in the grill. Add the wood to grill for smoking. Place ribs on the indirect heat side of the grill, meaty side up, and close the lid for 30 minutes. When the smoke dwindles after about 30 minutes, add another four ounces of wood chips, close the lid, and wait another 30 minutes. Then wrap the ribs in tin foil and gently spray the ribs with apple cider vinegar and spray butter. Close the lid and cook for another 30 minutes. Mist the ribs once again with apple cider vinegar and butter and cook for another 30 minutes. Remove ribs from foil and paint both sides with your favorite barbeque sauce and place directly over the hottest part of the grill to caramelize and crisp the sauce. Keep close tabs on your grill during this time, the sweetness of the sauce can cause a flare up and we don't want those ribs getting burnt. ❖



Heather Hutchinson-Schuster credits her joy of cooking to her mother and grandmother. She invites you to gather around your table and try out the recipes, tips, and tricks in her "At Your Table" column each month. Please email her at schusterchef@gmail.com with your recipes, helpful tips, kitchen tricks, and ideas for upcoming columns.