

# [Choosing comes to cooking, having a bone-in](https://assignbuster.com/choosing-comes-to-cooking-having-a-bone-in/)

CHOOSINGYOUR MEATOne of the questions I get asked the most is, “ What cut ofmeat should I use for pulled pork?” Most of us are probably familiar with chops or pork loin, but neither of those seem suitable for a delicious BBQ feast. So what cut worksbest, and where can you get it? Typically, when making pulled pork, you’ll want to use apork shoulder. Fair warning – this is a big piece of meat. Pork shoulders canweigh as much as 18 lbs.

, and will comfortably feed overtwenty people. If you’re not feeding an army, however, you’ll probably wantto stick to a Boston Butt. This is the top cut of the shoulder, and can weigh anywhere from 5 to 10 lbs. It’s a nicely marbled cut of meat, meaning it’s extra flavorful. Usually you can buy it with or without a bone.

Though it won’t make a huge difference when it comes to cooking, having abone-in does add more flavor. This beauty will feed a crowd of 12 or morepeople. When making pulled pork, prepare to have a lot of tasty leftovers thatcan be utilized in countless amazing dishes (more on that later). Alternatively, you can get a Picnic Shoulder, which is thelower end of a pork shoulder. This has a larger bone than the Boston Butt, which you’ll have to cut around when pulling your pork. It also has less fatmarbling and more connective tissue than a Boston Butt, so cooking low and slowis absolutely essential.

Luckily for us, low and slow is the name of the gamewhen making pulled pork! Finding these cuts in your run-of-the-mill supermarket cansometimes be tricky. But don’t worry, this can be a blessing in disguise. Broadly speaking, supermarket meats will have less flavor than what you can buyin a butcher shop, mostly because of the industrial way the meat is reared forgrocery stores. An experienced butcher will also be able to help you choosethe best cut and weight for your meal. So you’ll get a better quality meat andsome expert advice if you go to a local butcher. SMOKER, CROCKPOT, OR OVEN? So you’ve got your meat – now what? There’s more than one way to make perfect pulled pork, soit’s just a matter of finding the method that suits you and your equipment.

Chances are if you Ggoogle” How to make pulled pork”, you’ll find a lot of columns and articles by BBQ afficiandoesaficionadossinging the praises of their smokers. Smokers are designed to maintain a lowtemperature (usually around 225 degrees F) while slow-cooking meat with the aidof smoke. There’s a variety of different kinds of smokers, ranging from smallbackyard affairs to smokers big enough to cook a full hog. The benefits of using a smoker over other methods of cookingare pretty straight-forward: You get tender, slow-cooked meat infused with adelicious smoky flavor.

When cooking pork in your smoker, it’s best to stickwith hickory or maple wood chips. Though oak is a standard go-to for smokingmeats, hickory and maple will add subtle complimentary flavors to your meat. Soak your wood chips in water overnight to stop them from burning up in thesmoker, and add a fresh handful of chipsevery 30 minutes while cooking. Be sure to spritz your meat each time you addmore chips to keep it moist and tender.

A quick spritz of apple juice will dothe trick and bring out the sweet natural flavors of the meat. Before cooking your meat, let it sit for 30-45 minutes atroom temperature. If you place it on the grill straight from the fridge, itwill be too cold and the outside will burn. Placed on the grill at roomtemperature, it should cook nicely and evenly.

Once your meat is ready, place it on your smoker with thelayer of fat facing down. Allow to cook for about two hours before flippingover. Keeping your smoker’s temperature between 225 – 250 F, allow 90 minutescooking time per pound of meat.

So if you’re cooking a 10 lb. sBoston Butt, you’re looking at 15 hours of cooking. Good things come to thosewho wait! Wrap the pork in foil for the final two hours, and keep it in the smoker. Cook until your meat thermometer reads 195 – thismeans the fat has been rendered, leaving nothing but melt-in-your-mouth, tendermeat. Now, not all of us have access to a smoker or 15 hours tospend cooking.

But that doesn’t mean you can’t still enjoy some deliciouspulled pork! Crockpots and standard ovens can save a lot of time, and will still result in a beautiful bit of meat. When cooking with a Crockpot or other slow cooker, placeyour cut in the cooker with the rest of your ingredients (we’ll get to thoseshortly. Set your cooker on low and leave to cook for 8 hours. Alternatively, you can set it to high and cook for 4 hours. These times are based on a 5 lb. scut, as anything bigger isn’t likely to fit in your slow-cooker.

The outcomewill basically be the same – succulent meat that falls right off the bone! Cooking times in a standard oven are similarly speedy. Season your meat and roast it at 450 degrees F for an hour. After the firsthour, reduce your heat to about 300 degrees and place your pork in a deeproasting dish or dutch oven. Pour in your vegetables, stock, and sauces andcover with a lid or tightly-wrapped foil for another 3-4 hours. While slow-cooker and oven pork has to be smaller forpractical purposes, you don’t have to sacrifice intensely delicious flavor.

Even if you’re not using a smoker, you can still get that trademark BBQ tasteby adding a few drops of liquid smoke into your mix, or acouple of teaspoons of smoked paprika. Speaking of which, let’s talkseasonings….