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Slow Fire: The Beginner's Guide To Barbecue



Synopsis

Great barbecue is as simple as meat, fire, smoke, and time. This ode to authentic meaty goodness gives barbecue beginners an essential guide to the tools, techniques, and recipes needed to make smoky, mouthwatering, fall-off-the-bone meats. And seasoned smokers will learn a thing or two, too! Ray Lampe, a.k.a. Dr. BBQ, brings decades of expertise as a barbecue master, providing indispensable wisdom alongside 68 of the best recipes he has encountered in his long and wide-ranging career, from tantalizing mains such as Competition-Style Beef Brisket to lip-smacking sides such as Bacon and Blue Cheese Coleslaw. For both stove-top smokers and regular backyard grills, *Slow Fire* makes it easy to cook irresistible slow-cooked barbecue right at home.

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Customer Reviews

If you are new to BBQ smoking in my opinion there is no one book you can buy. Everyone that writes one has a point of view. What I have found is you really need a core of three books I have found helpful and then possibly two more. Also there is a lot on the web, but there is one site I have found particularly helpful. That said if you only buy one buy this one. I have tried smoking before with bullet grills with some success, but it takes a lot of minding. I finally broke down and bought the Texas Traeger pellet grill just for smoking. I love it. Now the problem is most cookbooks on smoking do not address this type of smoker head on so if you want to learn how to really use one I have found you need to look at a variety of sources. Here is my take: Once you understand temperature in relation to smoke and timing you can translate any indirect recipe to a pellet grill or any other type of smoker. There are some tricks/tips that will enhance the cooking, but in the end it all comes down to

temperature and time. Here are the books that I have found most helpful in descending order. I would invest in all five if you are serious about this. I look at two things; technical information and recipes. *Slow Fire* by Ray "DR. BBQ" Lampe - Excellent from a technical standpoint. A great foundation in terms of understanding smoking (slow cooking) and good basic recipes. It is the first book I would buy. *Backyard BBQ The Art of Smokology* by Richard W. McPeake - Great in terms of technical. If you study this book along with Lemke's you will really get a handle on the technical aspects of smoking. The recipes are pretty basic, but that is OK if you are new at this.

I was recently sent a review copy of *Slow Fire: The Beginner's Guide to Barbecue*, the latest book from Ray "Dr. BBQ" Lampe. I've long been a fan of Ray's books, going back to his first, which I used as a guide when I started competing in barbecue cook-offs. Ray is a very accomplished trucker-turned-barbecue-man. You can read the long list of his achievements at his site. What I like about Ray is his unpretentious and no-nonsense approach to barbecue. He has strong opinions and, true to his Chicago roots, he's not bashful about telling you what's on his mind. In other words, he keeps it really real, and I dig that. It's interesting to me to see how Ray's books have continually matured through the seven years that he's been writing. *Slow Fire* really highlights that maturation. The first thing I noticed is that this is a beautiful book. The layout is pleasantly clean and the photography is gorgeous. You can immediately tell that this isn't your average barbecue cookbook. As the title indicates, this book is intended for beginners. Barbecue is a paradox. It's a simple cuisine that can be deceptively complicated and intimidating. Over time cooks have managed to complicate what started as a very simple and humble cooking process, so much so that the average Joe is afraid to tackle it. This book cuts through the smoke and gets back to basics. A beginner's book has to walk a fine line. It has to be simple and approachable while providing enough knowledge to build confidence, but not so much that it scares folks away. That is especially true in barbecue. One can very quickly get bogged down by expensive equipment, arcane terminology and philosophical arguments. That's not the case here.

I got into the hobby of smoking meats when I bought a kamado grill about a year ago. Not knowing anything about the subject, other than I love the taste of great barbecue, I thought a good book or two might enlighten me on some helpful techniques for creating some quality product. "*Slow Fire*" by DR. BBQ Lampe was the very first book I purchased. And although I've purchased several other bbq cookbooks since then, this book is always the one I keep coming back to. What am I saying? This book is about the ONLY one I really needed. The book is well put together, the recipes are

pretty simple and straightforward, and the pictures are excellent. Do what this book tells you and you'll soon be turning out food that will make you forget all about eating out at your favorite bbq joint. Seriously, I ate at a decent bbq place in Arlington, VA a while back but my very first attempt at a Boston Butt (pulled pork) had me saying to myself, "Shoot, I can do better than this". The book begins by telling about different types of smokers and continues by explaining how different types of woods affect the flavor and color of your meats. It then provides recipes for a couple of basic rubs and several different types of barbecue sauces; a couple of red barbecue sauces, my personal favorite...a yellow (mustard) bbq sauce, Dr. Pepper bbq sauce, banana ketchup (you heard me right), and some others. I've tried both of the rubs and several of the barbecue sauces. The yellow barbecue sauce goes so good with pulled pork, it'll make you want to slap yo mamma; while the banana ketchup also goes good with pork. But it wasn't something I'd make a habit of. It is different though and worth a try.

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