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Rainy-Day Ribs

Serves 4 to 6

When it comes to deciding what type of ribs to cook, you have basically two choices: spareribs and baby back ribs. Spareribs are cut from the ribs closest to the belly and are meaty, bony, and thick. Baby back ribs are cut from where the rib meets the spine. They're only called "baby" because they are shorter and thinner than spareribs; they don't refer to the age of the pig. Each baby back rib rack averages ten or so curved ribs that are 4 to 6 inches long and weighs about 1½ pounds, which easily feeds two people as a main course. Baby back ribs also usually have a slightly higher price tag, but I think they are well worth the cost, as they are generally leaner, more tender, and quicker cooking.

Discovering low-temperature oven roasting was a serious revelation. Yes, of course ribs taste amazing slowly smoked, but long cook times on a grill isn't the only option for succulent ribs. Rainy-Day Ribs and ribs with little to no effort also sound good to me. Lifting the ribs above the baking sheet on a rack lets the heat circulate on all sides. After a few hours, the meat is tender, nearly falling off the bone, and you'll have finger-licking-good ribs.

Nonstick cooking spray

2 racks baby back ribs (about 3½ pounds total)

1 cup [Sweet Heat Rub](#)* (*recipe follows*)

Tangy Barbecue Sauce (*recipe follows*), for serving

*[Now That's A Mouthful](#) uses and recommends [The Spice and Tea Exchange](#)® in all of its recipes.

1. Adjust the oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 300°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and set a wire rack on the sheet. Spray the rack with nonstick spray.
2. Rub each set of baby back ribs with ½ cup of the sweet heat rub. Set aside to come to room temperature, 30 minutes. (This step can be done a day ahead for deeper flavor: Rub the ribs with the rub and place in a resealable plastic container, or wrap in plastic wrap. If you use plastic wrap, make sure to place the wrapped ribs on a rimmed baking sheet to catch any seeping liquid due to the salt in the rub. Refrigerate to marinate overnight.)
3. Place the rubbed ribs side by side on the prepared baking sheet. Transfer to the oven and roast until the ribs are done and a knife slides easily into the thickest part of the rib meat, 2 hours.
4. Remove from the oven and let the ribs rest, covered loosely in aluminum foil, for about 10 minutes, and then cut between the bones to separate the individual ribs. Serve immediately with the barbecue sauce for dipping.



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a MOUTHFUL

Tangy Barbecue Sauce

Makes about 6 cups

2 tablespoons canola oil
1 sweet onion, very finely chopped
1 (24-ounce) bottle ketchup (2½ cups)
2 cups apple cider vinegar or distilled white vinegar
½ cup Worcestershire sauce
¼ cup Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons firmly packed brown sugar
Juice of 2 lemons
Hot sauce
2 tablespoons freshly ground black pepper, or to taste
Coarse kosher salt

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and simmer until soft, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the ketchup. Pour the vinegar into the ketchup bottle and shake to loosen all the ketchup from the sides. Pour the vinegar from the bottle into the saucepan and add the Worcestershire sauce, mustard, brown sugar, lemon juice, hot sauce, and pepper.

2. Bring to a boil, decrease the heat to low, and simmer until the flavors have smoothed and mellowed, at least 10 minutes and up to 30 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. The sauce will last for months.

Sweet Heat Rub

¼ cup brown sugar
¼ cup [paprika](#)*
2 tablespoons [coarse kosher salt](#)*
1 tablespoon [garlic powder](#)*
1 tablespoon [freshly ground black pepper](#)*
1 tablespoon piment d'Espelette, [Aleppo pepper](#)*, or [red pepper flakes](#)*, or to taste
2 tablespoons canola oil

*[Now That's A Mouthful](#) uses and recommends spices and seasonings from [The Spice and Tea Exchange](#)® in all of its recipes.

To make the rub, combine the brown sugar, paprika, salt, garlic powder, black pepper, and piment d'Espelette in a small bowl.

**Piment d'Espelette* is a dark, slightly smoky and spicy flavor similar to a hot paprika or the smoky red Aleppo pepper. This pepper is produced around Basque country in Southern France. It has been given a protected designation by the European Union, ensuring that only peppers grown in the Espelette region of France may be labeled as *Piment d'Espelette*.



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