



7th Grade Winner

The Evolution of Texas Barbeque
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The Evolution of Texas Barbeque

Texas has a diverse culture with a rich history. When people think of Texas, they might think about the famous and delicious Texas barbeque. The barbeque is one of the many things that make Texas unique. Texas barbeque is a style of slow cooked meats such as brisket, pork, and sausage, while primarily focusing on brisket. It is important to understand where this delicious cuisine came from to preserve Texas history.

According to Southern Foodways Alliance, the Caddo Indians about 10,000 years ago cooked venison, or deer, over wood fires in Texas. Then Spanish shepherds roasted goats and sheep slowly over a fire in the 1600s. In the 1800s, Texas settlers needed a way to preserve meat, so they cooked it over wood to get a smoky flavor. Many German and Czech immigrants came to Central Texas in the 1830s and sold meat and smoked their leftovers. Migrant cotton pickers described the German meats as barbeque, creating a new popular style of barbeque in Central Texas. After the Civil War ended in 1865, beef became the most common meat in Texas, while pork and other meats were still popular.

Texas barbeque is a unique and diverse blend of cultures that vary by region. Each part of Texas has its own way of barbequing and its own unique history. According to Dickey's Barbeque Pit, East Texas barbeque began to gain popularity in the 1900s, using pork and brisket cooked low and slow with a tomato-based sauce for flavor. East Texas barbeque usually includes brisket, ribs, and sausage slowly smoked over oak wood. Dog Tired BBQ says West Texas barbeque uses a cowboy-style method. This is when meat is cooked over an open flame and doesn't take long for it to be done. This is because the cowboys did not have time to wait hours for their food to be done, so this style was more like grilling. Sausage, ribs, and pork are common meats in this region. It is cooked with many spices and sauces such as jalapenos and pico de gallo. South Texas barbeque is known as barbacoa, which slowly smokes a cow's head until the meat comes loose. They often eat the tongue and cheek of the cow. It is cooked with sauces and rubs such as garlic, chiles, and cumin.

Texas barbeque is not complete without sides. Just like the styles of barbeque, sides vary by region. In East Texas, you might find mac and cheese, okra, and banana pudding along with barbeque. In Central Texas, you might find that your barbeque comes with bread, onions, and pickles due to the German and Czech influence. Finally, South and West Texas barbeque is paired with Mexican cuisine so the barbeque might come in taco form, topped with salsa and other Mexican sides.

Some would say that Texas barbeque is more than just food: it's an experience. Barbeque has been served in Texas for many celebrations and get-togethers throughout



history. Black slaves recount cooking barbeque to celebrate harvesting on cotton plantations in Texas, and for Juneteenth. This is the holiday people celebrate slaves being free in the South. These celebrations have been around since after World War II because Americans had more money to spend and there was a greater appreciation for community gatherings. These gatherings provide an unforgettable experience along with great Texas barbeque. At these gatherings, people may play many backyard games such as football, hoesoes, cornhole, and many more. As backyard barbeques became more popular, the barbeque changed to foods that are faster to cook, such as hot dogs and burgers.

The history of barbeque in Texas has shaped many annual events and modern day barbeque. Texas barbeque is served at many Texas festivals and cook-offs. The most popular barbeque competition is the Houston Livestock and Rodeo's World Championship Bar-B-Que Contest. The Houston Rodeo is a major rodeo in Texas that includes bull riding, horse racing, a concert, and many more, including an annual barbeque cookoff. Although the rodeo started in 1932, the barbeque contest started in 1974 when only fifty teams participated. This year, more than 250 teams participated in making brisket, ribs, chicken, and fajitas. Winners may get trophies, cash prizes, and belt buckles.

Texas barbeque is not only a delicious tradition, but also a crucial part of Texas culture. Understanding its origins and evolution helps people appreciate its significance and ensures that we can both preserve and enhance this iconic culinary art for future generations. This knowledge allows individuals to continue to create new styles and techniques for this amazing Texas cuisine.