



*Achiote-and-orange  
pulled pork*

# The art of barbecue

A lesson with Santa Fe's Bill and Cheryl Jamison, masters of meat, smoke, and fire

BY AMY TRAVERSO PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNABELLE BREAKEY FOOD STYLING BY DAN BECKER

**IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE** a more fitting summer-in-the-West style of cooking than barbecuing. You get to relax on the patio, cold drink in hand, with a hint of smoke in the air and a tantalizing whiff of meat and spice. And yet barbecuing isn't quite as simple as it seems. Cooking directly over a live flame is primal and sometimes unpredictable, and every master of the grill has his or her own secrets and techniques for taming the fire. Bill Jamison and Cheryl Alters Jamison, the James Beard award-winning authors of *Smoke & Spice* (Harvard Common Press, 2003; \$17) and *The Big Book of Outdoor Cooking & Entertaining* (Morrow Cookbooks, 2006; \$25), among other titles, have

spent years developing recipes that reward diligence with delicious flavor. Like all good teachers, they remember how it feels to approach the grill for the first time. "We were both home cooks," Cheryl says in her reassuring "you-can-do-this" tone. "We learned like everyone else: through trial and error." Their research lab is the sunny patio behind the converted adobe barn they share in the hills outside Santa Fe.

It has long been *Sunset's* style to refer to all live-fire cooking as "barbecuing." This is common practice around the West, but the Jamisons, like many pros, use specific terms to describe the primary types of live-fire cooking. "These are different tech-



niques using different cuts of meat, so it seems important to make the distinction,” Cheryl explains.

First there’s direct grilling, in which smaller cuts of meat (and vegetables) are cooked quickly, right over a hot fire. It’s ideal for boneless chicken breasts, fish fillets, or meats that need a good sear, such as steak.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is barbecuing, the “low and slow” indirect-heat method that turns large cuts like pork shoulder and brisket into tender, smoky piles of meat.

In between these approaches is a hybrid one called two-level grilling, which allows you to cook medium-size pieces of meat (such as pork tenderloin or ribs) all the way through without burning the exterior. For this you need two temperature zones: one hot, one cooler. The meat is first browned in the hot zone, then moved to the cooler area to cook through.

If all these categories seem overwhelming, just remember one rule of thumb: The bigger and denser the cut of meat, the more slowly you’ll need to cook it. And by “slowly,” we mean cooked at a lower temperature over a longer time.

The Jamisons created the following recipes as tasty illustrations of these techniques, with one example each of direct grilling, two-level grilling, and barbecuing. (See “Smokin’ Sides,” page 160, for a few great barbecue side dishes.)

## Method 1: Direct grilling

### Grilled skirt steak (Arracheras)

Mexican arracheras, like Tex-Mex fajitas, are marinated skirt steaks cooked quickly over high heat to produce a nicely browned crust and pink interior.

**PREP AND COOK TIME** 40 minutes, plus at least 5 hours to marinate

**MAKES** 6 to 8 servings

Two 1- to 1¼-lb. skirt steaks, trimmed of membrane and excess fat

One 12-oz. bottle or can beer

¼ cup each fresh orange juice and lime juice

2 to 3 tbsp. chipotle hot sauce, such as Tabasco

Chipotle Pepper Sauce, plus more for serving

2 tbsp. minced garlic

1½ tbsp. coarse kosher salt

1½ tsp. ground cumin

3 large red onions, cut into ½-in.-thick slices

Vegetable-oil spray

12 flour tortillas (8 in. each), warmed

Lime wedges

1. Cut each steak in half crosswise. Put in a large resealable plastic bag. Stir together beer, orange juice, lime juice, hot sauce, and garlic, then pour over steaks. Seal bag and refrigerate at least 5 hours and up to overnight.

2. Prepare a gas or charcoal grill for medium-high heat (see “Set Up Your Grill: Direct Grilling,” right). Keep a spray bottle filled with water on hand for any flare-ups.

3. Drain meat and discard marinade. Blot dry with paper towels. Mix salt and cumin and rub into meat. Spray onions lightly with oil and set, with steaks, on a cleaned and oiled cooking grate. Do not cover. For medium-rare to medium doneness (cut to check), grill steaks 3 to 4 minutes per side if less than ½ in. thick; add 1 more minute per side if more than ½ in. thick. Turn steaks at least once while grilling (more if juice starts to pool on surface). Grill onions, turning once, until browned on both sides and cooked through, 8 to 10 minutes total.

4. After removing steaks from grill, let rest 5 minutes (so juices redistribute through the meat) before slicing. With a sharp knife at a slight diagonal, cut across grain into thin strips. Serve meat and onions with tortillas, lime wedges, and hot sauce.

**PER SERVING** 463 CAL., 33% (153 CAL.) FROM FAT; 32 G PROTEIN; 17 G FAT (5.1 G SAT.); 43 G CARBO (3.4 G FIBER); 1,345 MG SODIUM; 58 MG CHOL.

## Method 2: Two-level grilling

### Sage-rubbed pork tenderloins with sage butter

Brown these tenderloins over high heat, then finish cooking on a cooler part of the grill.

Drizzle with a simple sage-scented sauce.

**PREP AND COOK TIME** About 1 hour

**MAKES** 8 servings

2 tbsp. crumbled dried sage

1½ tsp. each brown sugar and coarse kosher salt

1 tsp. each garlic powder and freshly ground

black pepper

Two ¾- to 1-lb. pork tenderloins

6 tbsp. butter, preferably unsalted

2 tbsp. olive oil

¼ cup packed fresh sage leaves, plus sprigs for garnish, if you like

## Set up your grill: the 3 methods

### Direct grilling

**ON CHARCOAL** Ignite 75 to 85 briquets in a chimney starter (or on the fuel grate); open grill vents. When coals are coated with ash, spread into an even layer (if you like, leave a small area empty to create a cooler zone). Check heat: If you can hold your hand 1 or 2 in. above cooking-grate level only 1 to 2 seconds, that’s high heat. For medium-high heat, wait until you can hold your hand there only 2 to 3 seconds.

**ON GAS** Turn all burners to high, close lid, and heat for 15 minutes. Then adjust to desired heat.



### Two-level grilling

**ON CHARCOAL** Following instructions for direct grilling (above), light briquets. When they’re coated with ash, mound against one side of the grate into a slope (see photograph above). Allow coals to burn down until they reach desired heat level.

**ON GAS** Following instructions for direct grilling (above), pre-heat burners. If you have three or more burners, leave two adjacent burners on high and turn the remaining burners anywhere from medium to low, depending on recipe. If you have two burners, leave one burner on high and turn the other on medium to low.



### Barbecuing

**ON CHARCOAL** Light 75 to 85 briquets in a chimney starter. Fill a drip pan (roughly 8 by 6 in.) to the brim with water and set in center of fuel grate. When coals are coated with ash, use tongs to arrange in a ring around drip pan (see photograph above). Set cooking grate in place. Cover grill and use a heatproof long-stemmed thermometer to take interior temperature through lid vent. Close grill vents as needed to bring temperature down to 300° (do not close vents all the way; the fire will go out). Scatter ⅔ cup drained soaked wood chips over coals just before adding meat.

**ON GAS** If you have three or more burners, put drip pan in center under cooking grate, set grate over it, and turn outer burners to high. If you have two burners, put drip pan to one side and turn opposite burner to medium-high. Put 2 cups soaked wood chips in grill’s smoker box or wrap chips loosely in foil, pierce in a dozen spots, and put directly on one of the hot burners. After about 20 minutes of preheating, reduce heat as needed to bring grill temperature to 300°.



**1 garlic clove, slivered**

**1 tsp. mashed anchovy fillet, or salt to taste**

**Olive-oil or vegetable-oil spray**

**1.** Stir together dried sage, brown sugar, salt, garlic powder, and pepper and massage into tenderloins. Let sit, covered, at room temperature 25 to 30 minutes.

**2.** Meanwhile, prepare a gas or charcoal grill for a two-level fire (see “Set Up Your Grill: Two-Level Grilling,” page 130), with one side at high heat and the other at medium (5 seconds with the hand test).

**3.** In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, cook butter, olive oil, fresh sage, and garlic about 10 minutes; stir in anchovy and remove from heat. Let sit 10 minutes. Strain butter and keep warm.

**4.** Spray tenderloins generously with oil. Arrange on a cleaned, oiled cooking grate over high heat, angling thinner ends away from hottest part of fire. Grill uncovered, turning occasionally, until browned on all sides, about 5 minutes total. Move tenderloins to medium heat (cover if using gas) and grill, turning occasionally, until internal temperature reaches 150° and center has a touch of pink remaining (cut to check). Time depends on meat’s thickness: Thin tenderloins (about 1½ in. diameter) require 8 to 10 minutes; plump tenderloins (up to 2½ in. diameter) may need twice that long. Remove from grill, tent with foil, and let pork rest 10 minutes before carving. Cut into thin slices, garnish with sage sprigs, if you like, and serve with sage butter.

**PER SERVING** 256 CAL., 67% (171 CAL.) FROM FAT; 20 G PROTEIN; 19 G FAT (7.8 G SAT.); 1.9 G CARBO (0.1 G FIBER); 525 MG SODIUM; 86 MG CHOL.

### Method 3: Barbecuing

#### Achiote-and-orange pulled pork

*Real, slow-cooked barbecue takes time, but this dish is truly worth it. The Jamisons pile the succulent meat on bolillos or other small rolls that they’ve smeared with mayonnaise, then top with queso fresco, avocado slices, and a squeeze of lime. We also like layering the sandwiches with Chipotle Coleslaw (recipe on page 160).*

**PREP AND COOK TIME** 5 to 7 hours, plus at least 8 hours to marinate

**MAKES** 8 to 14 servings, depending on the size of your pork shoulder

**NOTES** While true barbecue is often cooked at temperatures as low as 175°, we

found it more manageable to maintain a temperature between 250° and 300° on our home-style grills. Because it’s hard to gauge such low temperatures with the hand test, we use an instant-read thermometer (choose a heatproof model that reads up to at least 400°) to monitor the temperature of the grill. Achiote paste is made from ground achiote seeds (also called annatto), vinegar, salt, and spices; it’s often sold in bar form. *Queso fresco* is a fresh Mexican cheese. Look for both of these in Latin markets and the Latin foods aisle of large supermarkets.

**One 4- to 6-lb. boned pork shoulder or butt**

#### ACHIOTE SEASONING PASTE

**3 oz. frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed**

**3 tbsp. achiote paste (see Notes)**

**2 tbsp. coarse kosher or sea salt**

**2 tbsp. coarsely ground black pepper**

**1 tbsp. each garlic powder and crumbled dried oregano**

**1 tsp. cayenne**

#### ORANGE “MOP” SAUCE

**3 oz. frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed**

**2 cups cider vinegar or white distilled vinegar**

**2 tbsp. butter**

**1 tsp. coarse kosher or sea salt**

#### COOKING AND SERVING

**2 to 3 cups cherry or hickory wood chips**

**½ cup each thinly sliced green onions and chopped fresh cilantro**

**Chipotle Coleslaw (recipe on page 160), rolls, mayonnaise, crumbled queso fresco (see Notes), sliced avocado, lime wedges, and/or hot sauce**

**1.** The night before you plan to barbecue, cut pork shoulder lengthwise into two equal pieces (to speed up cooking), removing excess fat as needed. Combine seasoning-paste ingredients in a small bowl. Massage pork well with paste, then transfer to a large resealable plastic bag and refrigerate at least 8 hours.

**2.** About 45 minutes before you’re ready to begin barbecuing, remove pork from refrigerator and let sit at room temperature (this will speed up cooking).

**3.** Combine mop-sauce ingredients with 1 cup water in a saucepan and warm up over low heat. Set aside ¾ cup sauce to drizzle over meat just before serving.

**4.** Put wood chips in a bowl, cover with water, and soak at least 30 minutes.

### To barbecue pork on a charcoal grill

**1.** Prepare grill for barbecuing (see “Set Up Your Grill: Barbecuing,” page 130). When temperature reaches 300°, lay meat on a cleaned and oiled cooking grate directly over drip pan and cover grill with lid.

**2.** Try to maintain a temperature between 250° and 300° throughout cooking (see “How to Control Your Heat,” page 131).

**3.** After 1 hour, remove lid and, using a heatproof brush, baste meat all over with mop sauce. Add 10 to 15 briquets to fire (or more if coals have burned down significantly) and scatter an additional ⅓ cup drained soaked wood chips over coals. Check water level in drip pan; add more water as needed. Cover and keep smoking meat, maintaining grill temperature.

**4.** Repeat process (mopping meat, adding 10 to 15 briquets and ⅓ cup chips, checking water level) every hour, turning occasionally, until internal temperature of each pork piece reaches 190° and meat shreds easily, 1½ hours per pound (3 to 5 hours total). If thermometer reads 190° but meat isn’t tender, cook 30 minutes more.

**5.** Lift meat from grill and wrap in a double layer of heavy-duty foil, sealing tightly. Let meat steam at room temperature for about 30 minutes, then unwrap, reserving any juices that have accumulated in foil.

**6.** When meat is cool enough to handle, pull it apart into large pieces. Discard excess fat. Shred meat with your fingers or a pair of forks. Toss shredded meat with green onions and cilantro and drizzle with reserved juices and reserved mop sauce to taste. Serve pork with Chipotle Coleslaw and your choice of condiments.

### To barbecue pork on a gas grill

After preheating grill (see “Set Up Your Grill: Barbecuing,” page 130), put meat on a cleaned and oiled cooking grate directly over drip pan. Follow instructions above for barbecuing on charcoal, starting with step 3 (ignore instructions about adding more charcoal and chips, but do add water as needed and dab and turn meat every hour). Adjust heat as needed to maintain an even temperature inside grill, preferably 250°, but you can go as high as 300°.

**PER SERVING** 481 CAL., 54% (261 CAL.) FROM FAT; 39 G PROTEIN; 29 G FAT (10 G SAT.); 12 G CARBO (64 G FIBER); 1,310 MG SODIUM; 165 MG CHOL.



## How to control your heat

**ON GAS** The beauty of a gas grill is ease of use: "You can operate it more like a cooktop, turning it down to reduce heat as needed," Cheryl Jamison says.

**ON CHARCOAL** Once the briquets are burning, you can open the grill's vents to raise the heat, or close them to lower it (air feeds the fire). If you're grilling over a two-level fire, you can move the food around from hotter areas to cooler areas as needed. In fact, it's often a good idea to keep a small corner of your fuel grate free of coals, even when direct grilling. Invariably one steak or burger or sausage will cook faster than the others, and you'll want a small warming zone to stash it in while you finish the rest of the batch.

*Grilled skirt steak (Arracheras) with a cold beer on the side*

