



Pork Shoulder

from
the bestselling cookbook *Smokin' with Myron Mixon*

Pork shoulder is what they call the top of the front leg of the hog; it's not exactly a shoulder, but if you think about it, it kind of is. It is comprised of two parts: The lower (or "arm") portion of the shoulder is most commonly called the "picnic" or "picnic ham." True ham comes only from the hind legs; the picnic of the shoulder, though, is often smoked like ham, and some historians speculate that it got its nickname because it's inexpensive and thus a good cut for casual dining, not for a formal affair when a "real" ham is traditionally served, like at Easter, Thanksgiving or Christmas. The upper part of the shoulder, often called the "Boston butt," also known as a "Boston blade roast," comes from the area near the loin and contains the shoulder blade bone. It is an inexpensive cut that's packed with muscle, and so without proper tenderizing and cooking it can be unmanageably tough. However, it is well marbled and full of flavorful fat, and thus is ideal for smoking over low temperature; it is the classic meat used for all "pulled pork" in barbecue throughout the South.

At Memphis in May contests, which are the first ones Myron learned to cook for, the whole pork shoulder is always used. At KCBS contests, you can use either a whole shoulder or the Boston butt by itself. I'm used to cooking the whole thing, so that's what I usually do. History and contests rules aside, here's the best way in the world to cook a pork shoulder.

Serves 30 to 40

1 18- to 20-pound pork shoulder, including The Boston butt and picnic ham in one cut (this may have to be ordered from a butcher; in many supermarkets the cuts are preprepared)	1 recipe Hog Injection * 3 cups Jack's Old South Original Rub, or 1 recipe Basic Barbecue Rub 1 cup apple juice 1 recipe Hog Glaze
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Trim away any bone slivers from the exposed meat. Remove any visible excess fat. Square up the long sides of the shoulder to make it neat and uniform.

Place the port shoulder in a large aluminum pan. (There's no skin to hold the liquid in, as there is on whole hog, so the pan is necessary to catch the excess liquid.) Inject the shoulder with 2 to 3 quarts of the hog injection, all over the shoulder in about 1-inch squares. Let the injected shoulder sit, loosely covered, in the refrigerator for 2 hours.

Turn the shoulder upside-down in the pan, so that any excess injection that might remain in-fuses the meat. Let it sit upside-down for 15 to 20 minutes. In the meantime, heat a smoker to 250°F.

Take the shoulder out of the pan and sprinkle the rub all over it, making sure to get the area by the shank. Place the shoulder, in its aluminum pan, in the smoker and cook for 3 hours.

Remove the shoulder from the smoker. Pour the apple juice into a clean aluminum pan, and transfer the shoulder to the pan. Cover the pan with aluminum foil and place it in the smoker. Cook for 6 hours or until the internal temperature reaches 205°F.

Remove the pan from the smoker. Discard the foil. Brush the hog glaze all over both sides of the shoulder. Return the shoulder to the pan, put the pan back in the smoker, and cook for 1 more hour while adding no more heat to the smoker and allowing the internal temperature of the smoker to drop. The shoulder will effectively rest in the smoker this way.

Remove the pan from the smoker, and serve. Where Myron is from, the pork shoulder is not sliced-it's pulled apart in chunks. There are a couple of different ways to do it, with knives and tongs and such, but the very best-and easiest-is with your hands. Wearing heavy-duty gloves simply pull the meat apart gently and let your guests have at it. You can put it in a sandwich just like this, or you can chop it up after you've pulled it, if you like.

**This recipe is available in the Smokin' with Myron Mixon recipe book which can be purchased separately through the pitmasterQ3.com website.*

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