

BBQ Pork Sandwiches Menu

From Mel's Kitchen Cafe

www.melskitchencafe.com

All the recipes have been modified to feed groups of about 20 (except for the French Bread rolls recipe; read the note below the recipe title). Keep in mind, this is just an average number. You'll want to adjust the recipes accordingly if you are feeding more than that or if the 20-ish people are big eaters/little eaters. Use the table and the recipes together – all make-ahead instructions are in the table but you may want to fill in the little details; I included the main instructions.

Have fun!

The Plan

	BBQ Pork Sandwiches	BBQ Sauce	Coleslaw	Buns (if using homemade)	Tri-Color Pasta Salad	Honey Lime Fruit Salad	Cheesecake Chocolate Chip Bars	Chocolate Frosted Brownies
Up to a Month in Advance							Make bars. Let them cool completely. Cut into squares and freeze in an airtight container.	
One Week in Advance		Make BBQ Sauce and refrigerate.						
Two Days in Advance	Make Pork in slow cooker. Cool and refrigerate.		Make dressing for coleslaw. Refrigerate.				Make Cheesecake Chocolate Chip Bars and refrigerate (only if you didn't make them in advance and freeze).	
24 Hours in Advance			Chop all the veggies/cabbage for coleslaw; store covered, separately, in the refrigerator.	Make rolls according to recipe. Let them rise. Shape them and place them on baking sheets covered with greased plastic wrap. Refrigerate overnight.	Make Tri-color pasta salad, storing pine nuts separately. Reserve ¼ cup of the dressing to toss with the salad before serving. Refrigerate.		Take Cheesecake Chocolate Chip Bars out of the freezer (if made in advance and frozen) and put in the refrigerator.	Make Chocolate Frosted Brownies. Let cool completely. Store covered in the refrigerator (don't cut into squares yet).
4-6 Hours Before Serving	Reheat pork in slow cooker on low (or high, depending on time) with the BBQ sauce.			Take rolls out of refrigerator. Let them rise until puffed/nearly doubled. Bake.				
Two Hours Before Serving						Prepare Honey Lime Fruit salad. Cover and refrigerate.		Take out Chocolate Frosted Brownies from the refrigerator; cut into squares. Cover at room temperature until ready to serve.
One Hour Before Serving			Mix coleslaw ingredients with dressing. Cover and refrigerate.		Toss Tri-color pasta salad with extra dressing to moisten. Top with toasted pine nuts.		Take Cheesecake Chocolate Chip Bars out of refrigerator and keep covered at room temperature.	

The Recipes

Slow Cooker BBQ Pulled Pork Sandwiches

**You will need two 5-quart slow cookers or you might be able to make it work with one large slow cooker (7-8 quart). Also, if you are feeding more adults than children, you might consider cooking 10 pounds of pork and increasing the other ingredients just slightly.*

Ingredients

- 8 pounds boneless pork shoulder or pork butt roast
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups water
- 3 tablespoon hickory flavored liquid smoke
- 4 cups barbecue sauce (my homemade version is below; can be made 1-2 weeks in advance)

Directions

1. Rinse the pork shoulder and pat dry. Rub salt and pepper over the pork and place in a slow cooker. Add water and liquid smoke. Cook on low setting for 10 hours until the pork is very tender.
2. Remove the pork from the slow cooker and discard the remaining liquid. Shred the pork using a couple of forks. Place the meat back in the slow cooker along with the barbecue sauce and continue to cook for another 20-30 minutes until the pork is warmed through. Serve on buns with extra barbecue sauce.

The Best Barbecue Sauce

Ingredients

- 2 cups ketchup
- 2 cups tomato sauce
- 1 1/4 cups brown sugar
- 1 1/4 cups red wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup unsulphured molasses
- 2 tablespoons butter, cut into small pieces
- 4 teaspoons hickory flavored liquid smoke
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon celery seed
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper

Directions

1. In a large saucepan, over medium heat, mix together all the wet ingredients and then add the seasonings. Bring to a boil then reduce the heat to low and simmer for at least 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. The sauce will thicken as it simmers (and then as it cools). I try to plan ahead and simmer for at least an hour. Use the sauce to brush onto meats the last ten minutes of grilling or for any other recipe where barbecue sauce is used.
2. Once cooled, the sauce can be frozen. Thaw in the refrigerator and use as needed.

My Favorite Coleslaw Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 bell pepper, red or green, coarsely chopped
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 large carrot, chopped (or 6-8 baby carrots)
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley leaves
- 1 head of cabbage
- 1 cup mayonnaise, light or regular
- 1 teaspoon seasoning salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon-pepper seasoning
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar

Directions

1. Using a food processor, gently process the bell pepper, onion, carrot, and parsley, being careful not to over process. The mixture should be in small pieces but not mushy.
2. Cut 1/2 of the cabbage into chunks and place in the food processor and process lightly, again making sure the mixture doesn't become mushy - it should be in small, fine pieces.
3. Slice the remaining cabbage into thin strands.
4. In a large bowl, toss together the cabbage and the processed vegetables.
5. In a separate small bowl, mix the mayonnaise, seasoning salt, black pepper, sugar, lemon-pepper and vinegar together and allow to stand for 5 minutes.
6. Combine the mayonnaise mixture with the vegetables, folding until the cabbage and vegetables are evenly coated. Chill for 1 hour. The coleslaw is best served within 1-3 hours as the leftovers tend to get watery and the flavors lessen after a long stay in the refrigerator.

French Bread Rolls for Buns

**A safe bet is to make 3-4 batches of these rolls (or if you have a big enough mixer, make two double batches or one quadruple batch). This is the only recipe I didn't increase accordingly. Decide if you want 36 or 48 rolls (one batch makes 12) and make as many you think you'll need.*

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups warm water
- 3/4 tablespoon instant yeast (or 1 tablespoon active dry yeast)
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups all-purpose flour, give or take a few tablespoons

Directions

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer or in a large bowl by hand, combine the warm water, yeast, sugar, oil, salt and 2 cups of the flour (if you are using active dry yeast instead of instant yeast, let the yeast proof in the warm water and sugar for about 3-5 minutes until it is foamy and bubbly before adding the oil, salt and flour). Begin mixing and continue to add the rest of the flour gradually until the dough has pulled away from the sides of the bowl. Judge the dough not by the amount of flour called for in the recipe but in how the dough feels (see a tutorial on working with yeast here). The dough should be soft and smooth but still slightly tacky to the touch.
2. Knead the dough in the stand mixer or by hand until it is very smooth and elastic, about 5 minutes in a stand mixer or 8-10 minutes by hand. Lightly spray a large bowl with cooking spray and place the dough in the bowl. Cover the bowl with lightly greased plastic wrap. Let the dough rise until it has doubled (this usually takes about an hour).
3. Lightly punch down the dough and turn it out onto a lightly greased countertop. Divide the dough into 12 equal pieces and form the dough into round balls. Place the rolls on a lightly greased or silpat-lined baking sheet about an inch or two apart. Cover the rolls with lightly greased plastic wrap taking care not to pin the plastic wrap under the baking sheet or else the rolls will flatten while rising. Let the plastic wrap gently hang over the sides of the pan to fully cover the rolls but not press them down. Let the rolls rise until doubled, about 45 minutes.
4. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Bake for 12-14 minutes until lightly browned and cooked through.

Tri Color Pasta Salad

Ingredients

- 2 (12 oz. packages each) tri-color rotini pasta, cooked and drained
- 6 roma tomatoes, diced
- 2 cans black olives, sliced
- 1/3 cup red onion, finely diced
- 1 1/2 cups parmesan cheese
- 10-12 fresh basil leaves, cut into strips
- 1/2 cup basil pesto
- 1 1/3 cups creamy Caesar dressing
- 3-4 teaspoons sauté spice (equal parts black pepper, salt, and garlic powder)
- 1 cup toasted pine nuts

Directions

1. Cook pasta and coat with Caesar dressing while warm. Add the rest of the ingredients (minus the pine nuts) and toss.
2. Top with toasted pine nuts. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Honey Lime Fruit Salad

Ingredients

- 3 (20 oz.) can pineapple chunks, drained well
- 3 cans mandarin oranges, drained well
- 5-6 ripe kiwi, peeled and sliced into thick half moons
- 3 cups green grapes, halved
- 3 cups strawberries, quartered
- Zest from 3-4 limes, about 3 tablespoons
- 6 tablespoons honey
- 3 teaspoons poppy seeds (optional)

Directions

1. Combine the fruit in a medium-large serving bowl. Add the lime zest and poppy seeds, if using, and gently toss.
2. Drizzle the honey over the fruit and again, gently mix until the fruit is evenly coated with the honey. Serve.

Cheesecake Stuffed Chocolate Chip Cookie Bars

Ingredients

Chocolate Chip Cookie Layer:

- 12 tablespoons butter (1 1/2 sticks), melted and cooled slightly
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 1/8 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 cups chocolate chips

Cheesecake Filling:

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line a 9X13-inch pan with aluminum foil and lightly coat the foil with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. For the cookie layer whisk the melted butter and sugars in a large bowl until combined. Add the egg, egg yolk, and vanilla and mix well. Add the flour, salt and baking soda, folding into the dough with a rubber spatula; do not overmix. Fold in the chocolate chips until combined. Press half of the dough onto the bottom of the prepared pan. It will be a thin layer, so use lightly moistened hands to press the dough into a thin even layer, filling in any holes with a bit of cookie dough from the bowl.
3. For the cheesecake filling, mix the cream cheese and powdered sugar together with an electric mixer on medium-high until light and fluffy, 1-2 minutes. Add the egg and vanilla and mix until well combined. Spread the cheesecake filling over the layer of cookie dough in the pan.
4. Using the remaining cookie dough, flatten tablespoon sized amounts of cookie dough in your hands into flat disc shapes, about 1/8- to 1/4-inch thick. Place these discs over the top of the cheesecake layer, pressing very lightly to adhere them to the cheesecake layer. It's ok if there are small spaces; the entire top doesn't need to be completely covered just make sure it is mostly covered with cookie dough.
5. Bake the bars for 35-40 minutes until very lightly browned on the edges. Remove to a wire rack to cool completely. Refrigerate until chilled, 1-2 hours. Cut into squares and serve. Store covered in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

Chocolate Frosted Brownies

Ingredients

For the Brownies:

- 1 cup butter
- 6 ounces unsweetened chocolate chopped (about 1 cup)
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

For the Frosting:

- 12 tablespoons butter, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4-6 tablespoons milk or cream

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line an 9X13-inch-square baking dish with foil, letting the excess hang over the edges (this helps to make "handles" for lifting out the brownies after they have cooled). Lightly grease the foil; set aside.
2. In a medium-size microwave-safe bowl, combine the chocolate and butter for the brownies. Microwave for 1-minute increments at 50% power, stirring in between, until the chocolate and butter are melted and smooth. Whisk in the granulated and brown sugars. Whisk in the eggs and the vanilla extract. Add the flour, baking powder and salt. Fold the dry ingredients into the chocolate mixture with a rubber spatula until combined. Stir in the chocolate chips.
3. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 20-25 minutes, until a thin knife or toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean or with a few moist crumbs. Remove the brownies from the oven and allow them to cool completely.
4. For the frosting, using an electric mixer (handheld or stand mixer), cream together the butter, cocoa powder, and salt on medium speed for about 2-3 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and add the powdered sugar. Mix on low speed to incorporate the sugar. Add the vanilla and milk, starting with a couple tablespoons and adding more as needed to adjust the consistency. Increase the mixer speed to medium-high, beating until smooth and fluffy.
5. Spread the frosting onto the cooled brownies. Store the brownies in an airtight container, or tightly wrapped, at room temperature or in the refrigerator (I highly, highly, highly prefer my brownies chilled in case you care) for 3-5 days.