

Memphis Dust

Rubs are spice mixes that you can apply to raw food before cooking and there are scores of commercial blends on the market. But there's no need to buy a rub when you can make your own and customize it to your taste. And they're easy to make!

Some pros leave their rub on overnight, sort of a dry marinade, which can work like a brine or a curing process. There is a reaction between the rub and the surface that helps form a nice crust, called bark, if the rub is on for at least two hours in the fridge.

Some put it right on the meat and then massage it in. Others lay down a mustard base first to act like glue, others make a wet rub by mixing it with oil because the spices dissolve in lipids, not water. I like to put a thin layer of olive oil on the meat and then sprinkle the rub on top and then rub it in.

Yield. Makes about 3 cups. I typically use about 1 tablespoon per side of a slab of Hilltop Pastures Family Farm spare ribs. Store the extra in a zipper bag or a glass jar with a tight lid.

Preparation time. 10 minutes to find everything and 5 minutes to dump them together.

Ingredients

3/4 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
3/4 cup white sugar
1/2 cup paprika
1/4 cup kosher salt
1/4 cup garlic powder
2 tablespoons ground black pepper
2 tablespoons ground ginger powder
2 tablespoons onion powder
2 teaspoons rosemary powder

Do this

1) Mix the ingredients thoroughly in a bowl. If the sugar is lumpy, crumble the lumps by hand or on the side of the bowl with a fork. If you store the rub in a tight jar, you can keep it for months. If it clumps just chop it up, or if you wish, spread it on a baking sheet and put it in a 250°F oven for 15 minutes to drive off moisture. No hotter or the sugar can burn.

2) For most meats, sprinkle just enough on to color it. Not too thick, about 2 tablespoons per side of a large slab of our ribs. For Memphis style ribs without a sauce, apply the rub thick enough to make a crunchy crust, about 3 tablespoons per side (remember to Skin 'n' Trim the back side). To prevent contaminating your rub with uncooked meat juices, spoon out the proper amount before you start and seal the bottle for future use. Keep your powder dry. To prevent cross-contamination, one hand sprinkles on the rub and the other hand does the rubbing. Don't put the hand that is rubbing into the powder.

3) Massage the rub into the meat at least an hour before cooking. Better still, rub them up, wrap them in plastic wrap, and refrigerate them overnight before cooking.

Adapted from: www.amazingribs.com