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Summer Fun

BY FELICIA L. SLIDER
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

It's that time of the year again. If May was recognized as National Barbecue Month, then you should have had plenty of time and preparation for this 4th of July to bring your culinary skills to a table near you. And yes... Americans love to bar-b-cue. According to the Barbecue Industry Association (BIA), in an annual survey, we barbecued more than three billion times in 1999.

Whether you put up tents for an old-fashioned outdoor barbecue buffet to grill it, smoke it or toss it in the oven, people from east to west, north to south, and all shades in between love to blaze it up. You can spell it barbecue or BBQ, but no matter how it rolls off your tongue, not many things express the same meaning of summer as backyard grills and smokers permeating the neighborhood air all in the name of BBQ.

That's a lot of black pepper, vinegar, tomato sauce, salt, molasses and many other ingredients. Americans love it because it's kind of like some of the ways that we want to live: casual and easy. We also think of it in the summer time because of the fact that, as we get foot loose and fancy free in the heated summer months, this American cuisine is great for the outdoors.

In beginning The Portland Observer Restaurant Guide, it is at this time of the year that we would like to recognize Portland area businesses, old and new all in the name of barbecue.

Through our interviews and word on the streets, on behalf of the Portland patrons that frequent these familiar as well as up and coming restaurants, recognize the following restaurants, owners, chefs, cooks and crew for giving tang & bang to their sauce and keeping their culinary style wild.

But first, let's get familiar with the characteristics and ingredients that define barbecue styles from specific regions

What's your flavor neighbor?

The history of barbecue sauce goes back to the 1600's, the century that marked the founding of America's first colonies. Bob Garner, in his book North Carolina Barbecue, says the art of slow-cooking game was taught to the colonist by Native Americans, who may have learned it from people in the Caribbean. During the early years of this country, BBQ's were the foundation of many major political, social and religious events. The original sauce used to tenderize and flavor barbecue meat was based on a very simple recipe: Carolina style, with vinegar and a variety of black and hot peppers. A lot of Americans think of barbecue as tomato-bases, but not until the early 1800's did people get over the misconception that tomatoes were a poisonous vegetable. Nationally brands, such as Kraft, entered the sauce picture in the mid-1900's, having dominated ever since. But like everything else, the field of barbecue sauce is always evolving.

According to Paul Kirk, author of Championship Barbecue Sauces, new styles are emerging. These include Florida-style (based on lemon and lime), Hawaiian (sweet and sour) and California/Southwest (tomato and salsa based). What of the future? The sauce industry has become so large, and the lines of distinction among specific regional styles have become so blurred, that the American Royal Barbecue Sauce Contest now defines the categories by flavor instead of by region.

Carolina (Eastern): This is the original stuff according to the BIA! Found east of Raleigh, NC, it is made with vinegar, salt, black pepper, crushed or ground cayenne, and other spices...and nothing else. This is very thin,

The A-B-C's of Q-U-E



acidic sauce that penetrates into the meat

Carolina (Western): This is the same basic recipe as Eastern Carolina, with the addition of small amounts of ketchup, molasses or Worcestershire sauce, and perhaps some spices. It has a vinegar-based flavor. It works extremely well as a marinade on chicken, shrimp, pork and beef.

Carolina (South): This region is known for its unique yellow mustard-style barbecue and is usually served with a dish known as "barbecue hash." Kentucky: Served with one of three sauces: mild tomato-based, a unique "black" sauce, or a peppery hot sauce, the favored meat for this sauce is usually lamb.

Memphis: This embraces all three of the major ingredients: vinegar, mustard and tomato.

Kansas City: Considered by many to be the center of the BBQ universe, Kansas City even has its own Barbecue Society. K.C.'s barbecue style is thick, with a tomato and sugar base. It is the basis for many of the well-known national brands, including Kraft, Heinz, Hunts, and K.C. Masterpiece.

Texas: Sauces range from thick, spice, tomato-bases to thin, hot-pepper-bases to thick and dark sauces that have a south-of-the-border flair, Texans use beef brisket and ribs, with side dishes of beans and Texas roast.

The ABC's of Q-U-E

In The Portland Observer Restaurant Guide: The ABC's of Q-U-E, we want to recognize each participating restaurant. We discovered that with each listing, there were just as many different bar-b-cue sauces as well as styles and method of cooking. So instead of categorizing each separately, from our interviews, The Portland Observer gathered a little history of spice & style from various restaurant owners and chefs here and a little info of tang and bang there, to satisfy the different taste buds out there.

• **Billy Reeds Restaurant & Bar**

2401 NE MLK, Jr. Blvd.

For restaurant hours, info: 503/493-8127

A. Applewood gives excellent flavoring to meat (i.e. Baby Back Ribs)

(Please turn to page 4)

kmhd for the love of jazz

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