

Using your ProQ Water Smoker

Step 1 - Getting Started



We have used Coconut charcoal briquettes for this demo, hence the strange shape. We recommend these or charcoal briquettes as they burn for longer and more evenly than the Lumpwood charcoal we get in the UK. These have been lit by using lighter cubes, but an easier method is to use a Charcoal chimney starter.

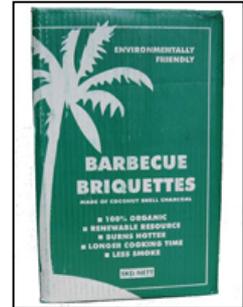


Step 2 - Ready To Load



The Charcoal is ready to cook on once it looks like the picture on the left.

*** Keep the bottom air vent fully open until the charcoal is ready.**



Step 3 - Water Pan



The Water Pan is filled with water, and on this occasion, we've tossed a few sprigs of rosemary in (there's a huge controversy surrounding the use of water pans) but I like to use it as although it may not have any influence on the flavour, it does give off some amazing aromas that waft across to the waiting guests. If you need to top up the water pan during a long cook, this can be done through the top door (be careful though as you may get steam coming off, so wear mitts). Some people replace the water with sand, but be sure to use sterilised sand if you opt for this method, as normal sand may contain some nasty chemical and you wouldn't want that getting onto your food.

*** Use hot water in the water pan, as this shortens the time for the smoker to get up to the right temperature.**

Step 4 - The Food

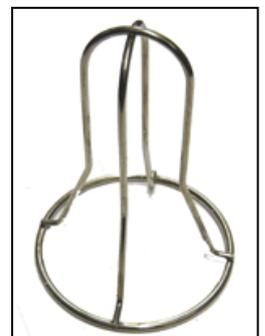


As you can see, we've placed a couple of 3.5lb Chickens on the 1st cooking level, using chicken racks (just above the water pan). Chicken racks give you a bit more capacity, if we hadn't used them, we would only have been able to do one bird/ level.

We've duplicated the process on the 2nd cooking level, so now have 4 chickens ready to smoke. The herby bits you can see are from sprinkling some Steve Raichlen (of BBQ Bible fame) Mediterranean Rub on.



*** Make sure that your meat is at room temperature before placing it in the ProQ.**



Step 5 - The Cook



Pop the lid on, **MAKE SURE THE TOP VENT IS LEFT FULLY OPEN**. Open the bottom door and toss some wood chips, chunks or dust onto the charcoal. Close the door.

If you need to adjust the temperature of the ProQ, use the bottom vent. The wider it is open the hotter the temperature. Refrain from taking the lid off to check your food, as this may increase the cooking time by 20 - 30 minutes.

I usually will check the internal temperature of the food, using a probe thermometer, after 3 hours when doing chickens. At a smoker temp of between 200 -225f they are usually done after cooking for 3.5 Hours (165 F internal temp of the meat).



*** The smoking process makes meat appear pink, so the only real way to check for doneness is by using a good quality food probe thermometer.**

Other Useful Tips

1. The ambient temperature can have a huge effect on the internal temperature of your smoker, wind is a temp killer as is snow, so bear this in mind when cooking and if possible place the unit in a sheltered spot.
2. Do not use treated wood and avoid resinous varieties. There are plenty of woods available that have been tried and tested, so stick to those.
3. Leave large joints/ whole birds to rest once you have removed them from the smoker, as this allows for the juices to re-distribute themselves which will produce a more tender result.
4. Whilst resting, large joints/ whole birds continue to cook.
5. Try different methods and foods, as everyone's tastes are different. If it's your 1st Cook, rather go light on the smoke to start with, a couple handfuls of wood chips at the beginning should do.
6. Wear BBQ mitts at all times when handling the smoker, as all the parts do get hot.

