

Watermelon Ribs

WORDS BY WILLIAM HARWOOD

Years ago, senior pitmaster George Harvell of Loveless Café was working on a movie set when a Cajun chef tossed watermelon onto the ribs Harvell was braising. At first nonplussed, Harvell was soon persuaded; watermelon ribs were good.

Now, some twenty years and many iterations later, watermelon ribs are even better. Harvell has perfected the Loveless's watermelon ribs to the point that they sell out every Thursday. To replicate them at home, smoke some ribs, (or buy some), slather with your favorite BBQ sauce and top with watermelon chunks. Cover and cook low and slow for 3 hours.

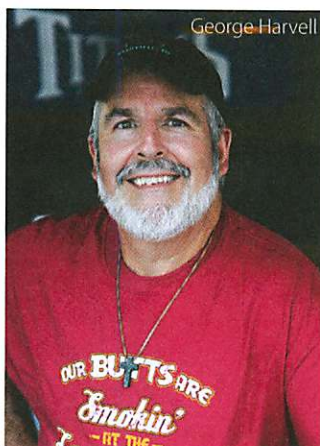


Photo Ron Manville, courtesy of The Southern Foodies Guide to the Pig by Chris Chamberlain

Loveless Cafe's Signature Rub

This is a superb rub for pork butts, pork loins and chicken. It makes 3 cups. Keep in an airtight jar.

Seasoning Mix:

- 1/4 cup seasoning salt
- 1/4 cup granulated garlic
- 1/4 cup chili powder
- 1/4 cup black pepper (ground)
- 1/4 cup paprika
- 1/2 cup whole oregano (dried)
- 1/8 cup onion powder
- 3/4 cup cajun seasoning
- 1 cup dark brown sugar

Watermelon RibsRibs:

- 2 slabs pork spare ribs (St. Louis cut / 3# avg./12 bone)
- 2 cup rub seasoning
- 32 ounces BBQ sauce
- 1 pound watermelon (rind removed), cut into cubes

1. To make signature rub, combine first eight ingredients, mix well. Add brown sugar and mix well, removing any lumps.

2. Liberally season both sides of the ribs with seasoning mix. Grill, roast or smoke ribs until 90-95% done. Cut the ribs into three-bone sections. (This can be done ahead)

3. To make the ribs place the BBQ sauce into a 4" deep roasting pan. Slather the rib sections in the sauce and "shingle" them into a row in the pan. Cut the watermelon into 1-2" cubes and place over the ribs. Cover the pan and place in a slow oven (250 degrees) for approx. 3 hours.

Serves 4-6

Of course, if you want, you may also simply head over to Loveless Cafe' on Thursday for some of George's Watermelon Ribs. (But get there early!)

Loveless Café

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