

THE LARGE QUANTITY

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barbecue



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Photo on cover by U. S. Reclamation Service

THE LARGE QUANTITY

Barbecue

The tang of the outdoors makes a picnic a pleasurable event in all except the most severe weather. Whether the group to be fed is large or small, there is nothing that promotes so much enthusiasm, breaks down reserve more rapidly, or stimulates more real fellowship and wholesome fun than a barbecue.

The method which follows is adapted to feeding large groups (200 or more) with a minimum of effort. It was developed to a high degree by R. J. Kinzer, who for many years served the American Hereford Association as secretary.

This method employs the covered pit. It not only saves labor but assures a most desirable finished product, as all of the juice is retained in the meat.

Planning the Barbecue

In arranging a barbecue, there are many details which require careful planning in advance. By careful planning, many problems can be anticipated and avoided.

If possible, a barbecue should be arranged as an outdoor event. Of course, it is always comforting if adequate shelter is available, in case of inclement weather.

Estimate of crowd. In order to plan efficiently, it is important that the estimate of the number to be fed be as accurate as possible. If tickets are sold, a deadline can be set for their purchase, and this removes all need for esti-

mates. It is usually a good practice, in any event, to overestimate requirements.

Appointment of committees. Committees with specific duties should be set up. There should be a committee on fuel, and others on grounds, preparing pit, boning and preparing meat, making coffee, serving, etc. etc.

The Menu

Early in the planning a decision must be reached as to how elaborate a menu is to be prepared. If only a barbecue sandwich and coffee are to be served, the problem is relatively simple. If a more elaborate meal is desired, naturally the planning involves greater detail.

An advantage of a simple menu, of course, is that it is easier and faster to serve. Every additional item, especially those which involve a choice, slows down the serving lines. On the other hand, additional foods are filling and make the meat go further.

Some food suggestions. Baked beans, scalloped potatoes and similar dishes are very popular ones to include in the barbecue menu. They are filling and can be kept warm easily. Potato chips and potato salad are very acceptable for hot weather barbecues. Green salads, too, are a welcome addition. Perhaps cabbage slaw is as satisfactory a salad as can be made. Pickles and relishes or barbecue sauce are often provided.

A "must" for a successful barbecue is an abundant supply of good coffee. (See page 25 for recipe on making coffee by a simple and satisfactory method.)

The barbecue buns. Barbecued meat is generally best served in a barbecue bun. The bun keeps the meat warm

and does not dry out as quickly as sliced bread. It is also easier to hold while eating. It eliminates the need for knives and forks. Buns should be ordered well in advance of the barbecue. If they can be delivered in sheets, slicing is greatly simplified. Some bakeries are equipped to slice them which, of course, is very desirable.

If there is a dessert. As often as not, no dessert is served. However, an apple or other fresh fruit in season, a cookie, or an ice cream cup or bar is sometimes included. Occasionally pie is served. It should be remembered that when serving cafeteria style there is a limit to the amount of food a person can carry.

The Meat

Any kind of meat can be barbecued, but beef is generally used. When pork is barbecued, it is important that it be thoroughly cooked. In general, a good grade of meat should be used. The top grades are sometimes excessively fat, causing heavy trimming losses at serving.

In beef, any of the thick cuts (chuck, rib, loin, round) may be used. While these cuts may be barbecued with the bone in, it is strongly urged that they be boned and rolled. This will save much time when the meat is served (and time is exceedingly valuable then); and, furthermore, there is less waste when the boning is done in advance. Even the navel end may be boned and rolled for barbecuing, but such cuts are usually marked and set aside for use later as "seconds".

Aging the meat. If good refrigeration facilities are available (34°-36°F.) to age the meat, it is suggested that cattle be slaughtered about two weeks prior to the

barbecue. Aging or ripening of good quality beef makes the meat more tender and improves the flavor. If meat is to be purchased as cuts, beef rounds may be boned as efficiently and will make as attractive servings as any cuts that can be used.

Figuring edible portion. Cattle that have been short-fed may be counted upon to yield 57 to 58 per cent, and longfeds more. In other words, a 1000-pound short-fed steer will produce about 570 pounds of carcass. Figuring that the chuck is 26%, rib 9%, loin 16%, and round 24%, these cuts make up about 75% of the 570 pounds or 427

pounds of meat suitable for barbecuing. This meat, of course, contains bone and some surplus fat. With the designated cuts from a beef of medium quality, perhaps not over 80 per cent of the edible meat could be counted upon. Thus, 80 per cent of 427 pounds would leave 341 pounds of boneless meat.

A pound of boneless meat will make four small servings, three good servings, or two liberal servings.

Boning the Meat

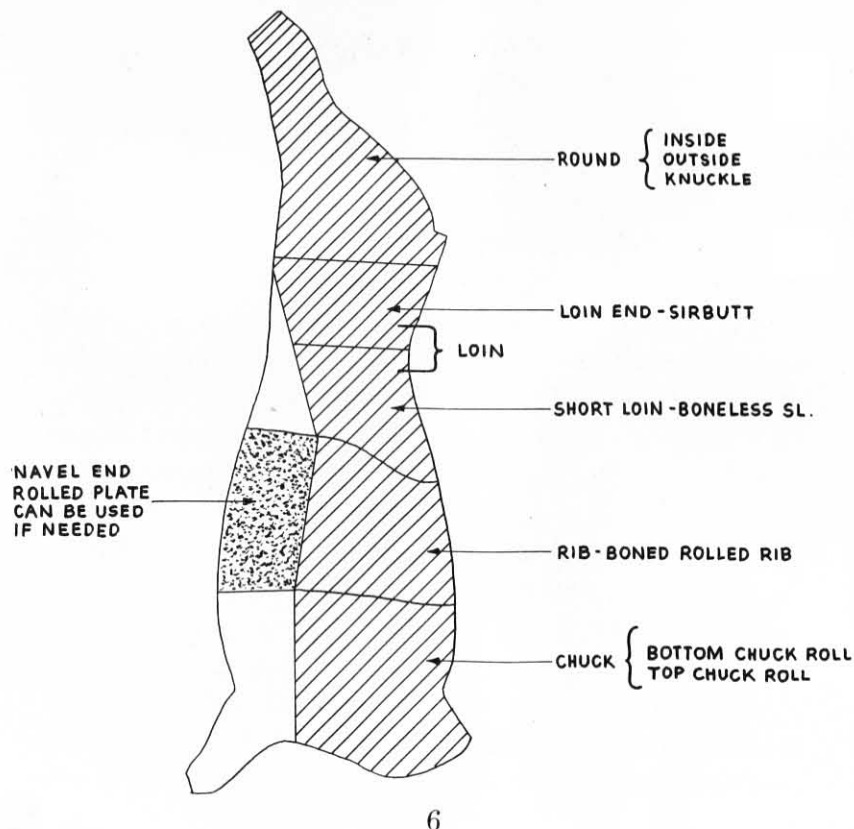
It has already been suggested that all cuts of meat be boned before roasting to save time when the meat is served. A person or persons with some knowledge of boning should be selected for this task. It is something that cannot be done by "just anybody".

There are many ways of boning a side of beef. Helpful suggestions may be secured from the manual, "*Cashing in on Beef*", (National Live Stock and Meat Board). The following method has proved very successful. The carcass is broken up into Chicago style cuts.

The round, with the rump on, is placed on the block, aitchbone up. The tail bone is trimmed off, following which the aitchbone is dissected out. A cut is made just below the patella or knee cap and upward following the thigh bone. By using a boning hook the three-cornered knuckle cut can be pulled off. The knee cap is then trimmed out. The round is split down the back and the two fleshy muscles, the "inside" and "outside" or the "top round" and the "bottom round" trimmed out. Thus, three choice boneless cuts are secured from the round.

The loin is placed on the block, bone side up. The kidney and kidney suet are carefully trimmed out, after

BEEF CHART



which the full tenderloin is removed. The loin is then divided at the pinbone into the loin end and the short loin.

The loin end is boned out by removing the backbone and the pelvic bone. The two bones are held together by a ligament (sacroiliac) or "slip joint". If the knife is run through this to separate the two bones, their removal is simplified. The boneless cut is a sirbutt, an excellent chunky cut.

The short loin contains one rib, which is removed. The lumbar vertebrae (T-bones) are next removed all in one piece. The tenderloin is now placed in the underside of the short loin with the large end forward. The thin end of the tenderloin may be folded under. The short loin is rolled up and tied.

The rib is boned and rolled in the conventional fashion.

The chuck is placed on the block, bone side up. With a narrow-bladed knife the vertebrae of the back and neck are unjointed. The back vertebrae with their attached ribs are removed. The neck vertebrae are also removed. The yellow neck ligament, or "back strap," is trimmed out. The chuck is then split flatwise just under the blade and arm bones. The under part of the chuck is rolled up and tied, making a bottom chuck roll. The blade and the arm bones are removed and the outer part of the chuck rolled and tied to form a top chuck roll.

The navel end, as suggested, may be boned and rolled. The meat is a little fibrous and, therefore, specially marked for "seconds."

Preparing cuts. In the preparation of the boneless cuts, surplus fat should be trimmed off. If left on the roasts, it will be wasted at the serving tables. It is desir-

able to make the cuts as nearly uniform in weight as possible. Cuts should not weigh in excess of 25 to 30 pounds.

Care of boneless meat. It should be recognized that boneless meat is very perishable and that it must be kept under refrigeration until placed in the pit. Boneless meat should not be piled up; it should be spread out to assure complete chilling.

Wrapping the Meat

The cuts of meat are seasoned by rubbing a little salt and pepper on the surface. The cuts are then wrapped in muslin or cheesecloth. Laundered feed, sugar, or flour sacks serve very well. Sometimes stockinette tubing can be secured.

In wrapping, the cut is rolled toward one corner of the cloth, turning in the other two corners. After wrapping in muslin, the cut is similarly wrapped in clean burlap. The roll may be tied, although skewering the burlap with wooden skewers or nails has proved more satisfactory. Small cuts, like knuckles from the round, may be wrapped two in a bundle. In packing the bundles, it is a good plan to sort the heavy ones from the lighter ones. The cooking of large cuts can be hastened by running several "bridge" spikes through the thickest parts.

The Pit

The pit should be located in some well-drained spot so that a sudden downpour will not cause surface water to drain into it. It may be ditched like a tent as an added precaution against flooding. It should be located where there

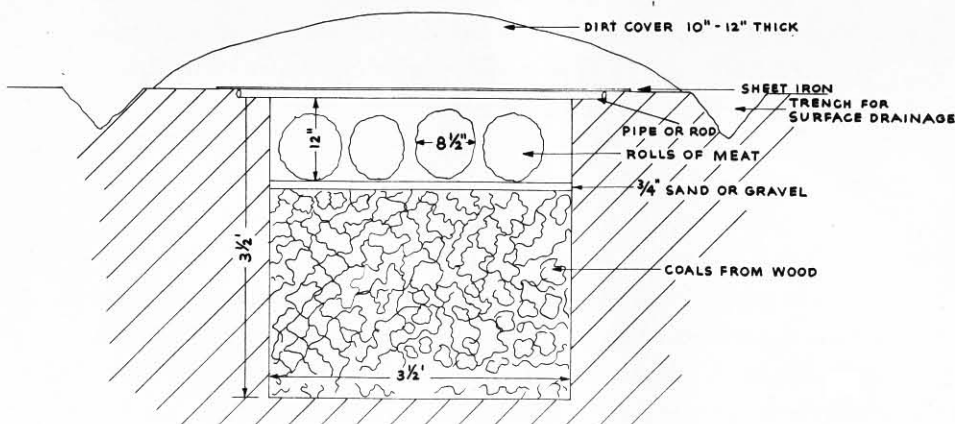
is no danger of the fire spreading to surrounding structures or vegetation.

Type of soil. The soil should be of a clay type. Sandy soil crumbles badly and caves in. When a pit must be dug in sandy soil, it should be lined with sheet iron or galvanized iron held in place by No. 9 wire fastened to “dead men”, posts buried in the ground about 3 feet from the pit wall.

Dimensions of pit. The pit should be $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide and $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep. About 6 feet of length should be allowed for every 200 pounds of meat. The end walls of the pit should be vertical rather than sloping. The long axis of the pit should be with the prevailing wind to provide the necessary draft.

Pits are rarely made more than 18 or 20 feet long. When more room is needed, it is better to make several pits. These should be sufficiently separated (at least 12 feet apart) so they can be fired. In digging the pit, the dirt should be thrown well back so as to leave ample working

DIAGRAM OF PIT



The pit should be located in a well-drained spot. It should be $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep, $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide. Allow six feet in length for every 200 pounds of meat. The dirt should be thrown well back to provide ample work space.

space around it. The use of two pits makes it possible to keep meat warm, by opening one pit at a time.

The Fuel

Good fuel is very desirable. Hard wood is preferable to soft wood, as it makes more and better coals. Avoid creosote-treated wood.

It is important to have ample fuel on hand. Usually the amount needed will be about two or three times the volume of the pit. The policy of having a surplus is always a good one, however. Running out of fuel in the middle of the night will cause considerable delay in the work at hand.

Kindling the fire. Some kindling should be provided to start the fire. Pine, brush or cobs may be used. A little kerosene or tractor fuel is helpful. Excessive kindling should be avoided, however, for this frequently forms an unburned layer of wood at the bottom of the pit.

The bed of coals. All of the fuel must be burned to coals, as it is the stored heat in the coals that cooks the meat. The fuel should be "worked up" into pieces of relatively uniform size. Chunks of unusually large diameter should be kept out, as they burn very slowly.

The bed of coals should be from 2 to 2½ feet deep. To secure a bed of coals of the required depth usually takes

about six hours, depending somewhat on the quality of the fuel.

Burning the fuel is an important job, therefore sufficient dependable help should be available.



The fuel should be uniform in size so all of it will burn down to coals at about the same time.



When the bed of coals is ready, unburned chunks of wood should be taken out.

The fire should be started in the bottom of the pit with light kindling.



The glowing coals are leveled with a rake.



About one inch of coarse, dry sand is spread over the coals.

Gravel

Sufficient concrete gravel or coarse sand should be on hand to cover the coals to a depth of about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. This gravel or sand should be as dry as possible.

Placing Meat in Pit

The coals must be well burned down and should come within a foot of the top of the pit. They should be leveled off with a rake and any unburned chunks pulled out. When the bed is all leveled, the concrete gravel or coarse sand is scattered evenly over the coals. This "kills" the fire, after which the bundles of meat are placed on the gravel. The larger bundles should be placed in the center of the



The coals ready to be covered with coarse sand.



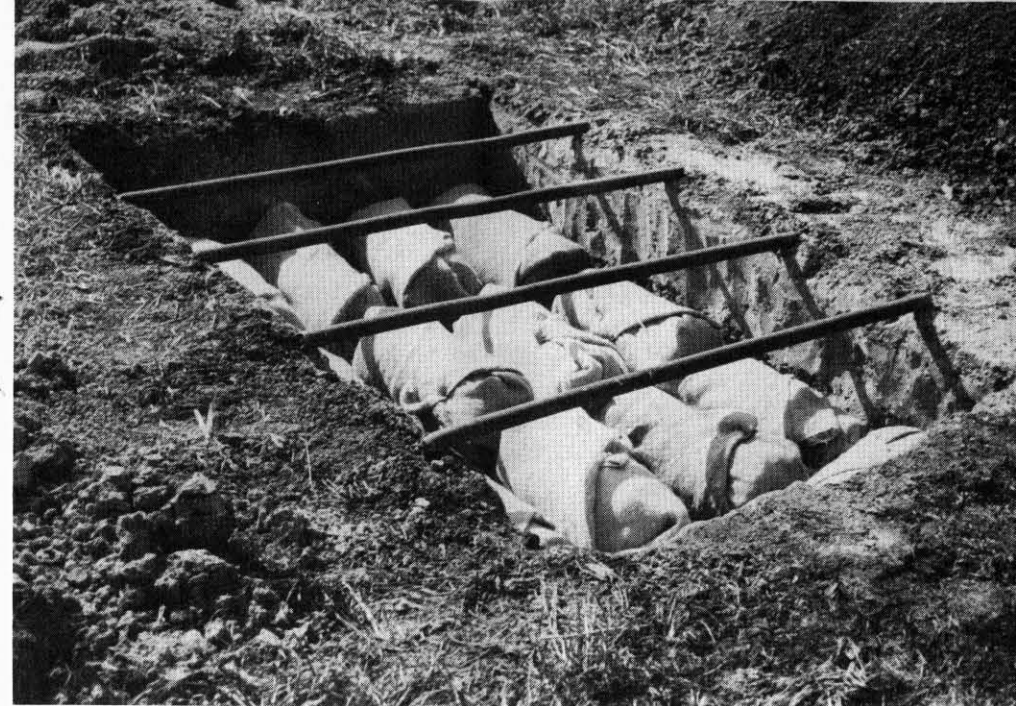
The bundles of meat, wrapped in cheese cloth and then in burlap, are placed on the sand.

pit and space should be left between the bundles to permit the heat to circulate.

Covering the Pit

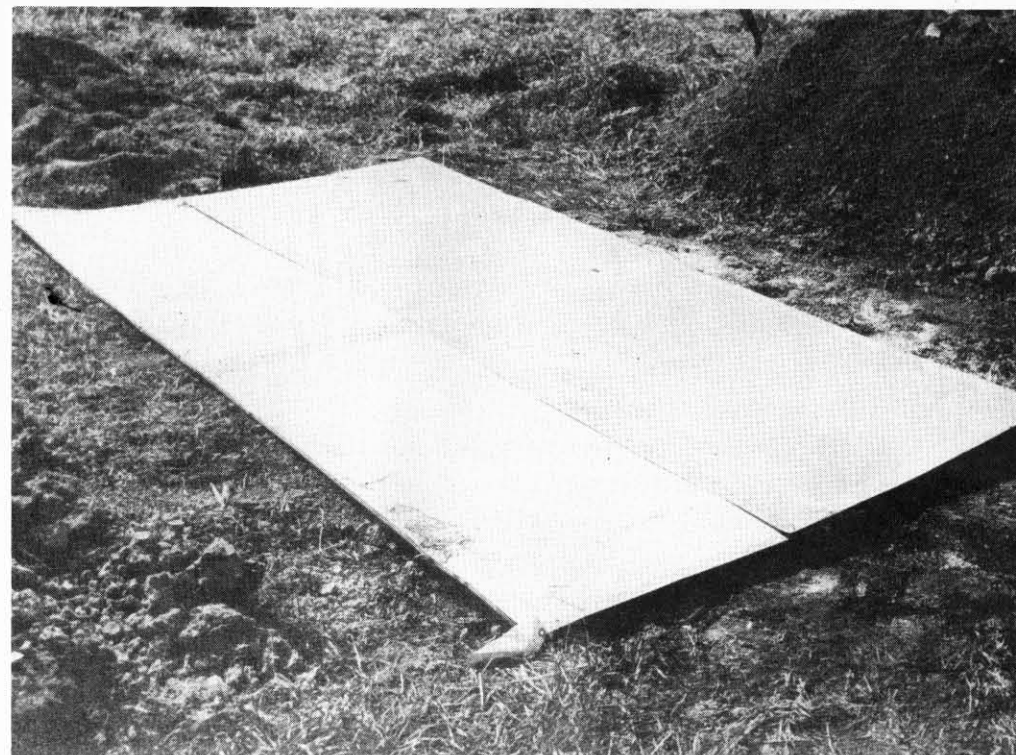
With the bundles of meat in the pit, speed is imperative in closing it in order to retain all of the stored heat possible. Here again a dependable crew is needed.

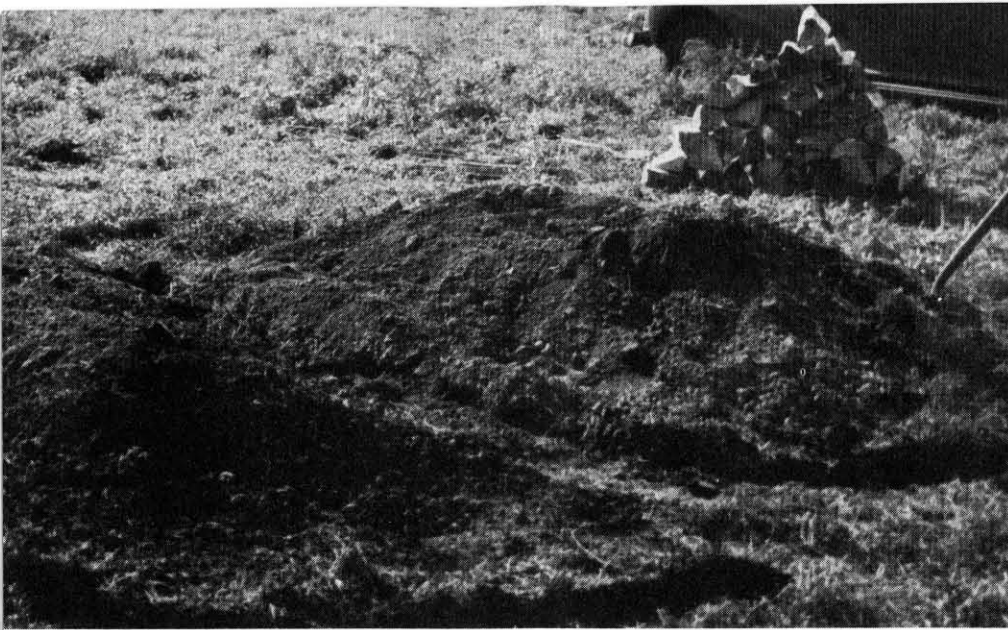
Sheet iron is probably the most satisfactory material for this purpose. Boiler plate, if obtainable, is very good. Corrugated galvanized roofing or siding serves well, if some added support is provided, such as steel posts, pipe or reinforcing rods laid across the pit at intervals. If metal covering is not available, boards may be used.



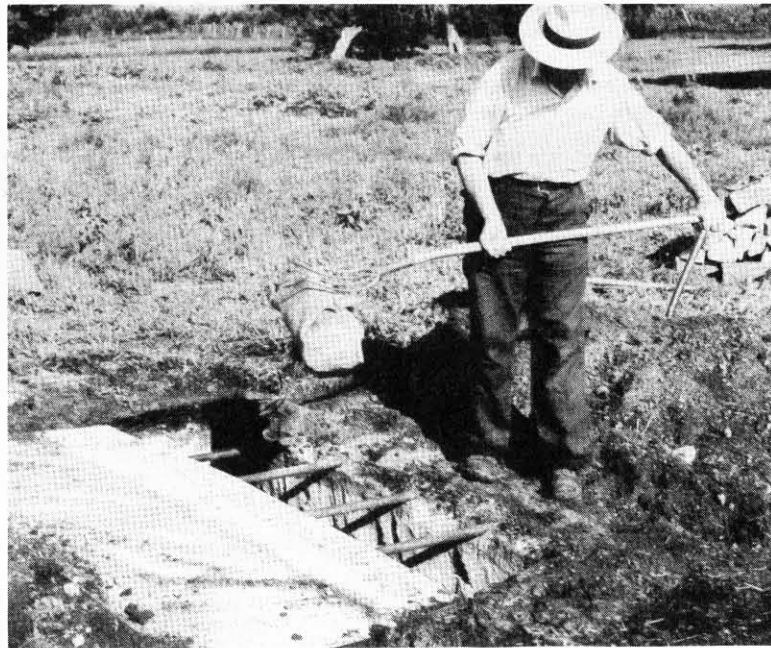
When light metal is used to cover the pit, pipes, rods, or steel fence posts are laid across the trench for added support.

Light metal, boiler plate, or boards may be used to cover the pit.





As quickly as possible after the pit is covered, from 10 to 12 inches of soil is placed on it to hold in the heat. The pit should be trenched like a tent to protect it from surface drainage.



After 10 to 12 hours of cooking, the pit is uncovered and the bundles of meat are removed, unwrapped and taken to the serving table.

In laying a metal covering, the operation is begun at one end and the pieces overlapped sufficiently. As soon as the cover is in place, the dirt is piled on it to a depth of 10 to 12 inches. This holds in the heat. Special attention should be given to sealing and packing all spots around the edge where steam escapes. When ready to open the pit, begin removing the covering at the end closed last.

One advantage of this method of barbecuing meat is that the meat requires no turning or attention during the 12 hours of cooking. This permits the personnel to utilize its energies fully for other essential preparations.

Time Schedule for Cooking

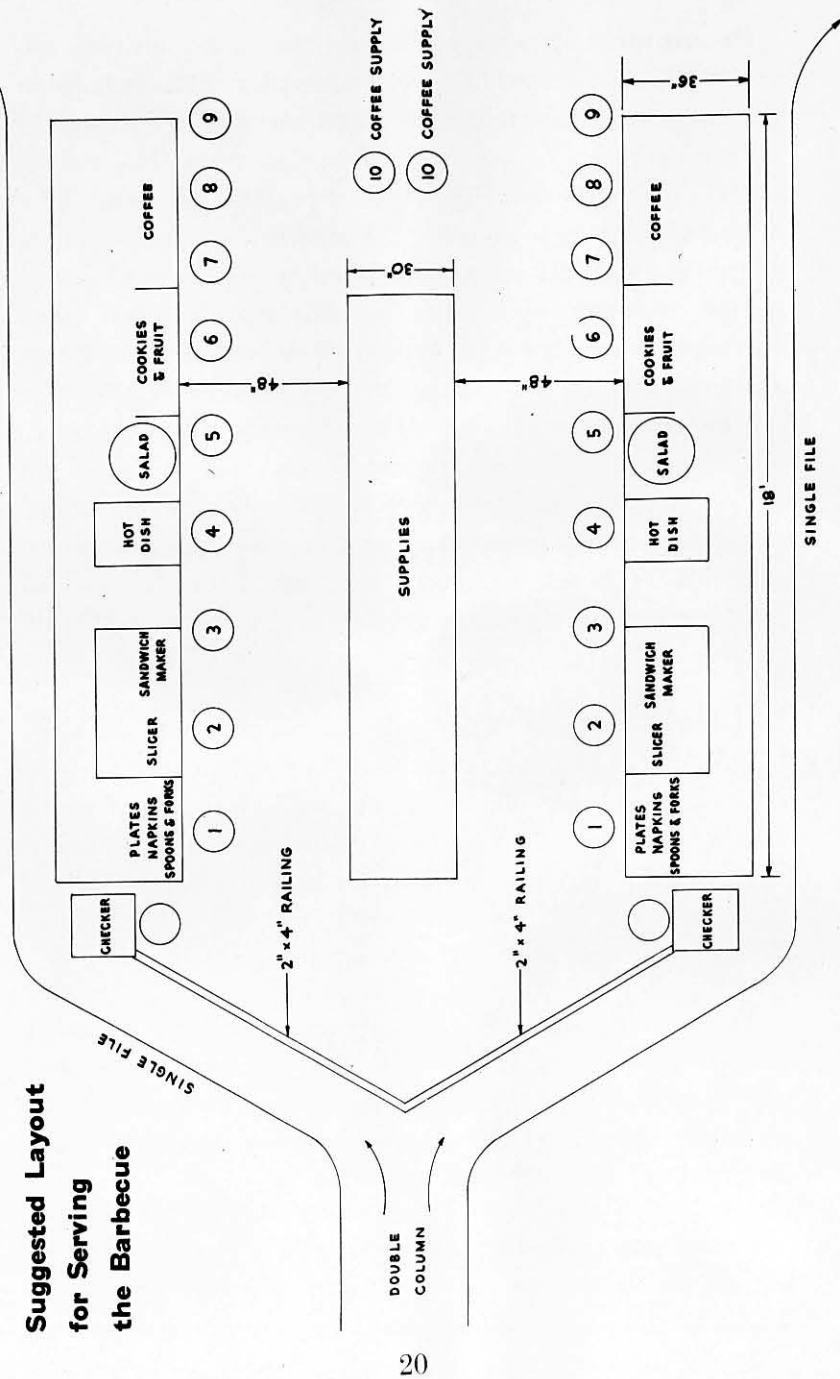
To barbecue meat, about 12 hours cooking is necessary. If a barbecue is to be served at noon, it means the meat must be put in the pit soon after midnight. Figuring that it takes about 5 hours to produce a suitable bed of coals, the fire must be started about 7:00 P.M.

To serve at about 6:00 P.M., the meat should be put on at 6:00 A.M., which means the fire would need to be started about midnight. In very cold or windy weather, some additional time should be allowed to prepare the bed of coals.

Serving

No one phase of the barbecue requires more careful planning and adequate personnel than the serving. It is impossible to set forth a serving plan which will meet all requirements. Each case is an individual one and, in making plans, the natural setting and facilities available must be taken into consideration.

Suggested Layout for Serving the Barbecue



Promptness in serving. From the standpoint of the guest, the food should be served promptly at the appointed time and with dispatch. Prolonged waiting in line should be avoided.

An ordinary line will serve 600 persons per hour. If a crowd of 2,500 is to be served, four lines should be set up so that the task can be accomplished in one hour. The committee members who police the crowd and direct them through the serving lines should be selected for their tact and good humor.

The comfort of the guest also should be considered. When he leaves the serving line he has a paper cup of hot coffee in one hand and a well-loaded plate in the other. He cannot eat in a standing position unless he sets down the coffee. Therefore, unless the weather and the ground cover permit sitting on the ground, tables and seats should be provided.

If fee is charged. There should be adequate cashiers with ample change and a place to work efficiently, if a fee is charged. If possible, the fee should be an amount which can be easily collected and patrons should be encouraged in advance to have exact change. Advance sale of tickets is to be preferred from the standpoint of simplicity and accuracy in anticipating food requirements.

The serving unit. The serving unit should be set up at a convenient place. It should be planned so that supplies may be replenished without undue cutting through lines of guests being served. The serving tables should be clean and covered with oil cloth or paper.

Use of paper goods. The serving of a barbecue can be greatly facilitated if paper goods are used throughout. China plates and cups are heavy and easily broken, and

silverware is lost or carried away. Using paper goods also simplifies the cleanup committee's job.

When meals are served on paper plates, however, special care must be taken to make the foods relatively dry. "Soupy" scalloped potatoes, beans, or cabbage slaw soon soak up the average paper plate, and make it unserviceable.

A nine-inch paper plate, a hot drink cup, a paper or wooden spoon or fork, and a paper napkin comprise a very satisfactory "setup". To save time at serving, the fork or spoon may be wrapped in the napkin. An alternative, of course, is to have everyone bring his own table service.

Serving procedure. The first attendant at the serving table passes out a paper plate, napkin, and wooden or paper spoon and fork.

Next is the meat slicer. A piece of plywood about 2½ feet by 4 feet makes an excellent cutting board. The slicer holds a roll of meat on the plywood with a large cook's fork and slices it. The meat should be sliced across the grain. Electric slicers may be used where available.

Next to the slicer should be one or two persons to make sandwiches. They place the slices of meat in buns and pass them to the guests. In making sandwiches, all scraps of meat should be utilized and not allowed to accumulate.

By all means, the sandwiches should be served as they are made. The sight and aroma of the large chunks of meat being sliced have much appeal. The meat is kept warm and the buns do not become soggy from the meat juice. Usually the buns are not buttered.

Next the hot dish, such as beans or scalloped potatoes, should be served. One person can do this. There should be an understanding in advance as to the size of the serving to be used.

Next the cabbage slaw or salad may be served by another person. One person can serve a cookie or fruit or other dessert.

Serving coffee will require about four people. One separates the paper cups, one fills pitchers with coffee, and two fill cups from the pitchers. Usually three pitchers of "white" coffee (with cream) are required to one of black, although this may vary in different localities. For hot weather, iced tea is sometimes served. Milk or chocolate milk, in half-pint bottles, is occasionally served to children, in which case straws should be provided.

Use of "island" tables. Sometimes "island" tables are set up at a distance from the main serving tables. At these "islands" the drink and dessert may be served, thus speeding the serving at the main tables. "Island" tables should be set up with salt and pepper, relishes, barbecue sauce, etc.

If ice cream is to be served, it is most desirable to serve it at a special unit. If served with the meal, it usually melts before the guests are ready for it.

Supervisors of serving lines. Over every serving line there should be a supervisor who must be ready to fill in at any position and to help out when "bottlenecks" occur. He should anticipate requirements in ample time so that the supply committee can replenish them. Frequently, one serving table may be completely out of some item while other tables may have a surplus; so there should be a liaison man to cope with these situations as they arise. As the crowd begins to wane, it is a good plan to consolidate several lines, thus conserving food and simplifying the cleanup job.

The supervisor will do well to assure his committee (usually volunteer workers) that they will be provided

for. He will set aside food for them. If a large number is to be served, provision should be made to relieve the serving personnel from time to time.

All servers should be clean and neat. If possible, they should all be provided with white aprons and caps. They should not be permitted to eat or smoke while on duty.

Supply Committee

There should be a committee to keep the serving tables supplied. The chunks of meat should be removed from the pit with a pitchfork, as needed. They should be placed on a table or box and the burlap wrapping removed. The cuts in their muslin wrappings then should be carried to the slicers in enamel trays or roasters.

It is desirable to have available some emergency supplies. Thus sliced bread may be on hand to supplement the bun supply if it should run low. A reserve supply of baked beans may be procured in number ten cans. Canned sweet potatoes, also, may be used as an emergency hot dish. Canned dill pickles are another suggestion. They may be sliced and served in place of salad.

Conservation of Leftovers

Immediate action should be taken to conserve leftover supplies. Roasted meat is very perishable, so remaining chunks should be removed from the pit at once and placed under refrigeration. They should be unwrapped and spread out to permit quick and thorough chilling. After chilling, the chunks may be cut up, wrapped in freezer paper, and frozen.

The burlap and muslin used for wrapping the meat may be laundered and used again.

Large cartons should be placed at various spots throughout the picnic grounds for the used paper goods. These simplify the work of the cleanup committee.

Coffee Making

An abundance of good coffee is essential to a successful barbecue. There is a simple way to make good coffee: Fill a 10-gallon cream can two-thirds full of water. Tie two pounds of coffee loosely in a piece of cheesecloth and place in the can of water. Turn steam line into the can until it is full. (This may be done at a creamery or other place where clean steam is available.) Place lid on the can and take it to the barbecue site. Coffee made this way keeps warm for a long time.

Barbecuing Meat in a Temperature-Controlled Smokehouse

Professors R. M. Crown and J. B. Francioni, Jr., of Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge successfully use a temperature-controlled smokehouse for barbecuing meat. This eliminates the laborious preparatory work of digging the pit, preparing the fuel, etc., and also eliminates the hazard of inclement weather.

The procedure recommended is as follows:

1. The meat is boned and cut up into pieces weighing from four to six pounds each. The cuts are tied with cord and strung to be hung in the smokehouse.
2. The cuts are soaked overnight in barbecue sauce under refrigeration.
3. The cuts are suspended in the smokehouse so that no two pieces of meat are in contact, and smoked for two hours at 160°F.
4. Following this smoking period, the meat is cooked for six hours at 200-240°F. in the smokehouse. During the cooking process, the meat must be basted by swabbing it with barbecue sauce every 30 minutes.

The following barbecue sauce is adequate for 100 to 150 pounds of meat:

Four pounds butter
Juice of 4-6 lemons, also rinds
One bottle hot, red pepper sauce
One gallon tomato ketchup
*Two quarts to one gallon rich meat stock made from
simmering bones*

Two pounds fresh or frozen okra, finely chopped
Twelve tablespoons prepared mustard
Four pounds finely chopped or ground onions
Four large sour pickles, finely chopped
Four bottles Worcestershire sauce
Two cloves finely chopped garlic
Two large, green bell peppers, finely chopped
Salt and pepper and other spices to taste

The onions, peppers, garlic, and okra are cooked slowly until tender in two quarts of cooking oil. All of the other ingredients are added except the mustard, lemon juice, rinds, and butter. Cook slowly until well done, stirring constantly. The lemon juice, rinds, mustard, the remaining two quarts of oil and two pounds of butter are added just before the sauce is taken from the fire. If one gallon of broth is used, the amount of butter may be reduced. The oily part of the sauce which rises to the top is used for basting during the barbecuing process. The remaining two pounds of butter are added to the thick bottom sauce which is served over the meat.

The following barbecue sauce is one suggested by another authority:

Two small onions
Two tablespoons vinegar
Two tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
One teaspoon chili powder
Three-fourths cup water
Three-fourths cup ketchup
One teaspoon salt

Shred the onions very fine. Mix all ingredients in a heavy skillet. Cover and simmer about forty-five minutes. Makes one pint of sauce.