

First of all, the idea for doing this comes from Alton Brown and his show Good Eats. Without his inspiration, I wouldn't have even considered making this.

Recently my good friend Martin moved back to Kansas from LA. When he left, he took his smoker with him. This left me without access to a smoker. This is A Bad Thing. Smoked food is one of life's great pleasures. I decided that I need to make my own smoker.

I should explain the basic differences between grilling, BBQing, and smoking meat. Each is a way of cooking meat, but they differ in methods and results.

Grilling is cooking meat by the direct application of high heat with a gas burner or an electric heater. Grilling is simple since temperature is easy, but doesn't bring any new flavors to the party.

BBQing is cooking meat by the direct application of heat with charcoal or wood. The burning of the fuel adds flavor to the meat. BBQing requires more skill since the flames must be managed to prevent burning or low temperatures.

Smoking is cooking meat by the **indirect** application of heat with wood at low temperatures. Low temperatures are considered around 225 . The smoke of the burning wood adds significant flavor to the

meat.

Due to the lower temperature, smoking meat takes a longer time than grilling or BBQing. Using different woods leads to different flavors being imparted into the meat.

This is the basic design of smoker.

So there you have it, a working smoker made from easily available parts.

Here's what I spent:

Trash Can w/ lid: \$12.00

Electric Hot Plate: \$13.00

Grating: \$10.00

Wood Chip Box: \$10.00 (actually, I already had this, but they are cheap if you need to buy one.)

Temperature Gauge: \$9.00

So for just over \$50, you can build a smoker.

Now that I'm a very experienced smoker with two days of smoking, here are my suggestions:

- 1) Soak the wood chips in water for 20-30 minutes before using them.
- 2) Keep an ash can ready to dump the ashes into when you put new chips in.
- 3) Take your time. Smoking takes a while. Don't be in a hurry.
- 4) After taking the meat off the grating, wrap it in aluminum foil and let it sit for 30 minutes before eating.

My thoughts: place some rocks or cement blocks in the bottom, build a small fire & let it burn down to coals, then put damp wood chips on top of the coals to replace the hot plate & chip box.