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Constructing Smoke Ovens

Smoke ovens are one of the most delicious ways to cook meats. The process takes longer than does ordinary cooking methods, but after the meat is done, the flavor is exceptional. One of the appeals of a smoke oven is that it is also a low-maintenance, low-energy way to cook meats, in addition to enhancing the flavor of the meat exponentially. Building a smoke oven is a simple job, as the components are very basic. A smoke oven is essentially a small, enclosed structure with a heat source where meat can be placed and smoke allowed to collect around the meats.

The first consideration when building a smoke oven is the amount of space you have available. Smoke ovens can be of any size and shape, but larger smoke ovens can be cumbersome. Usually a smoke oven is best built out of doors, away from the living quarters of the house. The smoke smell has a tendency to seep into the surrounding air no matter how tightly contained the oven is, so to prevent the clothes, furniture, and bodies of the residents from smelling constantly of smoke, it needs a place where it can be thoroughly ventilated. The smoky smell is delightful on meat, but loses much of its appeal when it is present on everything you own.

Once the placement of the smoke oven is decided upon, the next



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step is choosing both material and plans. There are numerous books and websites devoted to the subject, and often exact schematics can be bought or downloaded so that the consumer can use an already tried and tested design and list of materials to construct their smoke oven so that mistakes are minimized. Wood or metal are both common choices for building smoke ovens. The temperature never goes very high, so there is little risk of the wood catching fire or becoming charred. Many people claim that the use of wood in construction of the oven adds to the flavor of the meat.

The next addition to a smoke oven is the heating element. Usually this is an electric element rather than an open flame so that the temperature of the oven can be accurately maintained. Some people will use only an open flame to assist with the smoking process as they feel it is more authentic. This requires more supervision, so time must be taken into consideration when selecting a heating source. A moisture source must be added as well so that there is water evaporating near the meat. Otherwise the meat will become too dry and be tough to eat.

Smoke ovens are very simple to make. You can start by making a temporary one out of a wood box placed over a grill or other basic heat source. This doesn't need any special plans or training. The box will hold in the smoke that rises from the



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grill and cook the meat that way. Adding mesquite chips or other kinds of wood can alter the flavor of the meat and help you to decide if a permanent smoke oven is right for you.

Ready for **building a smoke oven** that will change the way you cook? Get your oven plans from the pros at www.smokeovenplans.com.

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