

Martha McLemore's (from the BBQ Mailing List) tribute to her father, M.L.

Recipe By : (c) 1996 Martha C. McLemore - BBQ Mailing List

2 Six Packs Lone Star beer -- one on ice, the other one doesn't matter  
1 Quart cheap vinegar -- better to scrimp on the vinegar than on the beer  
1 Small bottle Tabasco -- no substitutes  
1 Large head of garlic -- peel & finely mince  
1 4 Oz Can black pepper  
1 Small Jar French's Mustard -- baby crap, he called it, but he ate it on almost everything - go figure!  
6 dried jalapeno peppers -- crushed, firecrackers, he called them.  
1 Pound butter -- melted, none of that greasy margarine, for crissake!  
1 More 6 Pack Lone Star -- on ice  
50 Pound Bag ice  
1 side of beef -- OR  
1 helluva big pig  
2 young'uns with fly swatters -- on rotating shifts  
1 Wheel cheddar cheese -- the kind that smells like work socks at the end of the day  
2 Boxes crackers  
1 Case Pik coils  
2 lawn chairs -- one for his butt, one for his feet  
Stetson -- his cookin' hat, not the one he wore to the rodeo  
1 Pair shades -- made out of welder's glass  
2 Cartons Lucky Strikes or Camels -- filters?! Real men don't smoke filtered butts, what's the matter with you, FOOL?!  
1 Zippo lighter, circa 1943 -- extra flints & fluid  
1 More Six Pack Lone Star -- on ice  
1 loud wind-up alarm clock -- the one he called "The Voice of God"  
2 50 Lb Bags mesquite or pecan chips -- soaked in water overnight in the dogs' washtub, which was actually one of those galvanized cattle troughs - nothing was too good for his 'dawgs'. (Jealous of his dogs, you say? Damn right, I was! He never hit his dogs and they didn't have to swat flies for him!)

1 Six Pack Pabst Blue Ribbon -- ice optional. Never give the good stuff to the neighbors who wandered over, but always have something to give them! M. L.'s personal Code of the West.

For those of you who like barbecue, I offer one of my late father's concoctions for basting, which I learned today is also called the mop (thanks, Richard Thead).

Empty one 6-pack of Lone Star into a 3 gallon stock pot. Add the vinegar, mustard, Tabasco, butter, peppers, garlic and a fifth of water. Bring to a high, rollin' boil to melt the butter; keep hot on the cool end of the grill.

Fire up the cooker when you get home on Friday night. Burn a couple or three mesquite logs

(his preference) to get a foot-thick bed of cherry-red coals. Close the grill to keep in the heat. Add sufficient wet chips to produce enough smoke that the new neighbors call the fire department, but not so much that you put out the fire. (Long-time neighbors just bring in the wash, close their windows and wait him out.)

When the smoke dies down so you can get near the grill, unearth the beast of honor from the washtub, rub it dry, sprinkle with the lightest coat of salt and brown sugar, lay the carcass on the grill. Quick, close the lid and prepare for the rest of the event.

Ice down the rest of the beer in the washtub. (Hell, yes, in the same water! Just add more ice; eventually the water won't be pink anymore. Besides, you don't drink the water, now, do you?)

Set up "camp," as it were. Send the kids after whatever you forgot, like the Coleman lantern, your long-sleeved shirt and the tv-trays. And the pie-screen, to keep the bugs off the cheese. Those tiny sweet pickles and another jar of mustard. And that little portable transistor radio, don't forget the extra batteries.

Every half-hour or so, check the coals and the beast. Add chips to the one and baste the other. In the beginning, it's easy to keep which is which straight, but by Saturday afternoon, when this repast is \*supposed\* to be ready, the long hours of no sleep and Lone Star have taken their toll. It was not uncommon to find wood chips charred to the carcass and the favorite basting brush singed beyond recognition. (They loved my father down at the paint store; sold him more 3" bristle brushes than any other two stores' customers combined.)

After around 3 am, those of us not on bug patrol were no longer awakened by the "Voice of God", M. L. having tossed it across the highway into the oil field. I think it gave him no end of joy to imagine that clock coming to rest next to some aged rattlesnake, vibrating the old viper out of its last 6 buttons, at least.

In the morning, the rest of us would enjoy a good breakfast then wander out to see how the sacrifice was coming along. Daddy's breakfast empties were neatly placed back into the wooden case, courtesy the second shift bug patrol, or my mother. I guess she didn't object to his drinking in public, as long as he didn't appear to be a slob about it.

He hardly ever used the full case of Pik coils. After midnight or so, no self-respecting mosquito or fly came with 100 yards of M. L. or the grill. If the beer didn't do the trick, there was always that marvelous baste simmering on the back of the grill.

Although the bugs gave Daddy's barbecue a wide berth, he had to quietly let only a few trusted friends know when he was planning to cook because his was the absolute best barbecue for miles and miles around. Even his enemies acknowledged his expertise: "That McLemore is one sorry s.o.b., but god-almighty, can that man cook!"

Around noon, the friends who were invited and the dogs' pals began to gather. You know how it is said that dogs and their owners often resemble one another after a few years of cohabitation? Well, you could certainly tell which of the 20 or so mutts criss-crossing our yard on barbecue

day belonged to Daddy. They were the ones lapping up spilled Lone Star, wolfing down stinky cheddar loaded with mustard, and the only ones all the other dogs refused to sniff.

There's a recipe somewhere in all of this, but dangd if I remember where I put it.

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