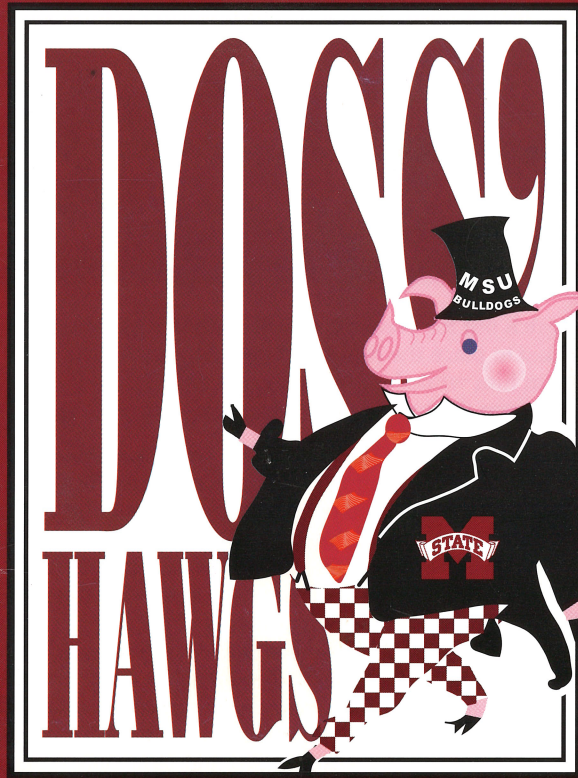


Equipment for Cookin' Hawgs

- Hawgs
- Single-bladed ax and hammer
- Apple, caps, shades, and bandaids
- 32 concrete blocks for a pit that's 5 blocks long (4 blocks long will also work), 2 blocks high, and 3 blocks wide (for 2 hawgs it's at least one more wide, maybe two); a dozen bricks
- Grate, rods and steel (fine) grate (We use the fine grate in the bottom of the pit to hold the coals off the freezer foil.)
- Two sawhorses
- Large piece cardboard and the small tarp
- Charcoal cooker and small fireplace shovel
- Leather gloves and rubber gloves
- Lawnchairs (more important than the hawgs)
- Crowbar for apple
- Large heavy duty trash bags
- Sauce and pastry or paint brush
- Knives and 3 to 4 big pans
- Horseshoes
- Heavy duty aluminum foil
- A.M. coffee
- Yard Guard™ and Off™
- Paper towels
- Chainsaw with chain on properly
- Tool box
- Charcoal and lighter
- Pam™ (used in step 7)
- Lights
- Big tarp(18' x 24', 12 oz, bought from CO-OP by Charlie for \$98 on 11-6-91)

-David Whitfield



A Twenty Step Guide to

How We Cook Hawgs in Mississippi

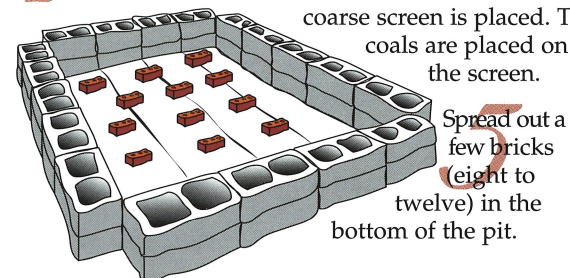
This will be the most important thing you will ever read, so pay attention.

1 Have the slaughter-house clean the hawg but have them leave on the head, all feet, and tail (a cap goes on the tail). Also tell them not to damage the ears (some slaughter-houses think they have to suspend the hawg by grabbing them with some sort of hanging device around the base of the ears, but we have found that they can do this without harming the ears). Also, if you can remember, have them prop the mouth open with a stick because an apple must go in the mouth, and most humans are not strong enough to open the mouth for this purpose.

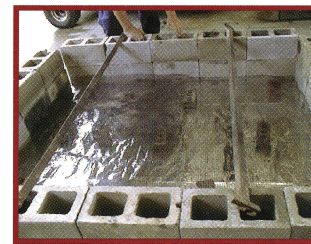
2 Hawgs in the weight range of 80-120 pounds dressed (where dressed means a hawg that has been cleaned but has the head, feet, and tail attached) usually cook best. We've cooked hawgs as large as 396 pounds dressed, but we don't recommend it. The amount of meat per person will depend on the group. An all-men group will consume a good bit more than a mixed group, particularly if the people in the mixed group have never attended one of these. If they have attended one previously and found that the hawg didn't kill 'em, then they will eat more. We suggest one pound of dressed hawg per person.

3 We do not dig a pit in Mississippi due to the clay. Build a pit of concrete blocks two blocks high, five blocks long, and four blocks wide (for two hawgs) on flat ground or slightly sloping ground which will help drain the grease away. This takes a total of 36 blocks. If you are short a few blocks, you can get by with 32 blocks by making the pit four blocks long.

4 Line the bottom of the pit with freezer foil, not regular aluminum foil as it is too thin. Put freezer foil on the bottom and then brick on which a coarse screen is placed. The coals are placed on the screen.



5 Spread out a few bricks (eight to twelve) in the bottom of the pit.



Freezer foil on the bottom, bricks, coarse screen on top of brick. Coals will go on top of screen.

6 Place a fine steel grate (or coarse screen) on the bricks in the bottom of the pit. This will prevent large grease fires if you pay attention and immediately put out the small fires which start when grease drops down on the hot coals. (Doss likes to use a water (squirt) bottle for this. I think that's cheatin' and should be done by using the small coal shovel to spread the coals away from the small fires.)

7 Place the rods across the top of the blocks with another piece of fine steel grate on top of the rods. The hawg will go on top of this grate. (Actually we now use a steel grate that has long lengths of small sized angle-iron down each side that reaches across the pit and the hawgs go directly on this grate.) Spray the top grate with Pam™.

8 When the hawg arrives, start two or three pounds of charcoal in the charcoal cooker. (This cooker is used only to get the coals ready to place under the hawg.)

9 Prepare the hawg do the following: Rip-out the kidneys and any extra tubes, etc. (like the aorta) that the hawg will no longer need. Take the single bladed ax and hammer and start splitting the backbone so the hawg will lay flat on the grate. (This method of cookin' is called butterfly cookin', so you want to open

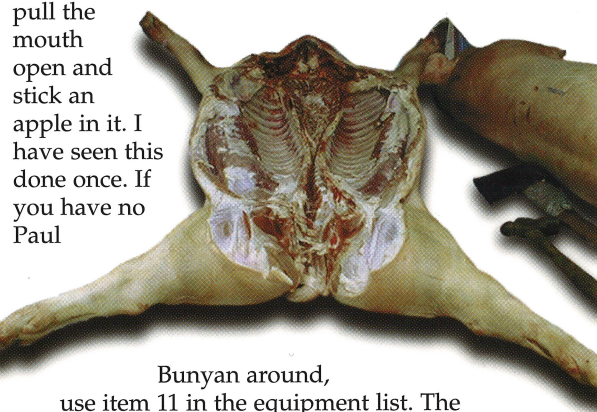


We use this extra cooker to continually start fresh coals.



This is the pit set-up for two hawgs.

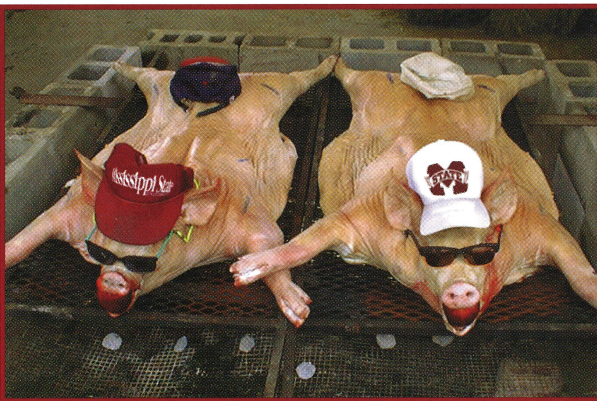
him up so he will lay-out (like a flyin' squirrel.) DO NOT CUT THROUGH THE SKIN or you will have BIG-TIME problems later on. In fact, don't cut the skin in any way, or poke any holes in the skin. After you get the hawg laid-out, the apple is next. Have your stoutest guy or gal



Bunyan around, use item 11 in the equipment list. The apple is necessary because he will bite the apple when he is done.

After the hawg is prepared, lay him belly down on the grate. Place a new Mississippi State hat on his head between his ears, shades on his eyes, and an Ole Miss baseball cap on his rear end. If he has a bullet hole between his eyes, he will need a bandaid here. The hawg won't cook without these items.

Now take pictures with the bosses up front and the real workers in the rear, or better yet with the real workers not even in the picture. The reason for the pictures is that all night long you will swear you are getting nowhere in cookin' this hawg, but 24 hours later you can prove



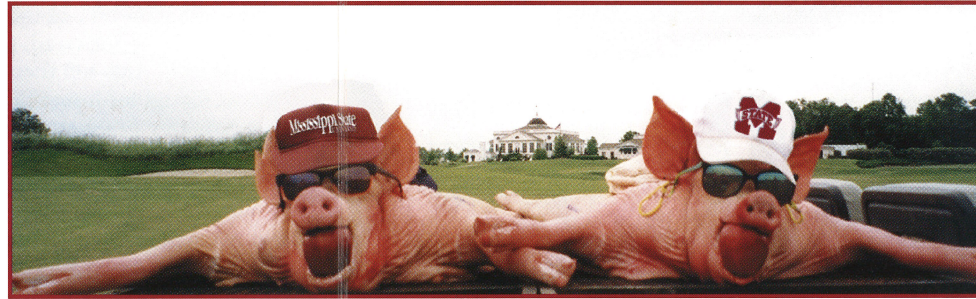
Bert and Ernie. You must name the hawks. They refuse to cook without personal identities.

you started with a raw hawg. The reason for the bosses being up front is because they will be there anyway. Besides, this may encourage them to pay for everything, and they are of no use for anything else.

You are ready to start cookin' now. Use the small coal shovel to place 2 to 3 coals under each ham and each shoulder. (NO MORE COALS THAN THIS!)

You will now start getting verbal abuse about how the hawg won't cook, it will be raw, any fool would know better, etc. Tell them fine, they don't have to eat any of it tomorrow. Then replenish the charcoals you took out of the charcoal cooker and head for the beer cooler. (You only have to start the charcoal once. After the first time, simply spread the hot charcoal out and add new charcoal. Then when the new charcoal gets ready it will be about time to put more coals under the hawg. I would guess this works out to be about every 30 to 40 minutes. More on this in instruction number 16 below.)

Say you want to eat the hawg(s) at 5 P.M. on a Saturday. (All that follows is relative time based on this assumed eating time of 5 P.M. For any other eating time, apply a suitable forward or backward shift operator.) We usually pick the hawg up and get him to the site by at least 4 P.M. on Friday. You should be able to get him started cookin' by 4:30 or 5:00 P.M. on Friday. The hawg is to be turned over only once. He will probably need to be turned over on his back between 8 A.M. and 10 A.M. on Saturday at that "moment-of-perfection," and I don't know how to describe to you what that "moment-of-perfection" is, so just turn him at 9:41 A.M. on Saturday. With regard to turning, the best hawg turner is Terri Swafford from Tullahoma, Tennessee. (She ain't bad lookin' either.) She can turn a hawg by herself and not lose a foot, rib, or anything. Then there is Boss Doss. When he turns a hawg, he loses legs, ribs, and hams, and this is when he has help to boss around. It's worse when he is by himself. So, don't do what Boss Doss does, do what Terri does. Problem is, Terri won't tell how she does it. So, I won't tell either. (You'll need a little mystery to look forward to.) Oh well, I'll tell you how to do it after all. Just scoot the hawg over to one side on the grate and just turn him all at once (but



watch out for breaking a well-cooked leg). Boss Doss likes to place the hawg between two grates and then turn him while he (the hawg, not Doss) is tied between the two grates. This works—but it's cheatin'.

After starting the hawg at 5 P.M. on Friday, continue cookin' him by adding coals now and then. You can leave him uncovered on the pit for viewing until around 10 or 11 P.M. Friday night. Then you need to cover him. We cover the hawg (or hawks) with one large piece of cardboard that does not touch the hawg anywhere except the feet and ears. Over this cardboard place a small tarp that covers the pit. This is essentially your \$5,000.00 cooker. (We used to use sheet iron for this but Oscar cut our special piece of sheet iron in two and nailed both pieces to Doss's goat pen. Boss Doss shot Oscar. Wish old Doss hadn't shot Oscar now because the cardboard works much better.)

The rate at which coals are applied comes, I suppose, from experience. For the entire 24 hours of cooking, you should use slightly less than one pound of charcoal per pound of hawg. For example, for a 100 pound dressed hawg (including head and feet, we would buy 100 pounds of charcoal, but we would probably only use around 70 to 85 pounds of charcoal. The key to cookin' is to START SLOW and don't ever get much faster. Just be PERSISTENT. It is a low-temperature/long-duration cooking process. Every time one of our cookers have described to someone else how to cook a hawg, they usually cook too fast and ruin the hawg.

After the hawg is turned over, grease will drip, or even run at times, so one should not put the coals where the grease drips. (Actually it will begin dripping long before it's turned but the greatest danger of significant grease fires occurs after turning.) We usually place the coals more around the edges after turning. This will not hurt the cooking rate because the cardboard and tarp will be like an oven. This

locating of hot coals is, of course, to prevent grease fires. We have never had a large grease fire since we started using the raised steel grate on the bottom of the pit. Before the use of the steel grate we had some big-time grease fires that even Ward would love. (We caught the 396-pounder on fire. He looked like the Empire State Building burnin' up. We had to submerge him in a creek to get the fire out.)

Also after the hawg is turned you should baste (or pour) barbecue sauce on the bottom side of the hawg which is now turned up. This doesn't get any barbecue flavor into the meat, it only keeps the meat from getting dry on this side, so any kind of sauce will do. We usually serve the barbecue sauce on the side, so that people can have hot, or mild, or whatever they want, or whatever you have to offer. Repeat this basting every couple of hours.

When the hawg is done (by definition he is done at 5 P.M., and at this time he will bite the apple in two) pick him up by using the rods or sucker rod grate and move him to a place in the food line on the saw horses. Use two cutters, or pullers, on either side of the hawg. The best thing to do if the hawg is cooked properly is for these pullers to put on the rubber gloves (the thicker the glove the better because the meat will be hot) and simply pull the meat off and pull it apart. Do not use swine experts or veterinarians for this, as they don't seem to know the difference between a ham and a tenderloin. Be careful to not break the skin, the grease (which you will not notice dripping through) can ruin a good pair of Justin™ boots in no time.

20 Eat.



Grace Cliett liked this. Said she now won't even have to buy a tombstone for ole Charlie, just change the date on this one!