

Tejas Smokers™

P.O. Box 4158
Houston, Texas 77210-4158

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You have just purchased one of the finest wood smokers available. In the next few paragraphs you will learn how to correctly break in, use, and maintain your new smoker. Good cooking!

GETTING STARTED

It is important to correctly break in your new *Tejas Smoker*. Wipe out the excess oil from the barrel and cooking grates. We suggest that you then coat the inside cooking areas with a cooking oil. (barrel, grill, vertical smoke box, but not the firebox.) Then start a fire in the firebox using the “STARTING THE FIRE” directions that follow. You do not put water in the bottom of the barrel during this procedure. Allow your smoker to reach approximately 300°F and maintain this temperature for four hours. This will burn out impurities and allow the oil to season the smoker in the same way as you would break in a cast iron skillet. Taking these measures will help ensure that your first cookout will be a great one.

FILLING THE WATER RESERVOIR

Each *Tejas Smoker* has a water reservoir in the bottom of the smoking chamber. This source of water keeps meats moist and flavorful. Simply close off the drain (with the cap provided or optional ball valve) and fill the reservoir with several inches of water. Be careful not to overfill or water will run over the dam into the firebox. Do not move the pit after introducing water into the barrel reservoir.

STARTING THE FIRE

It is best to start your fire with charcoal or a gas log lighter. (If you are using a gas log lighter read “GAS LOG LIGHTER INSTRUCTIONS” now). You do not want to soak your wood or charcoal with lighter fluid, because the wood is where you get the smoke flavor. Don’t use any lighter fluid. Open the firebox door and lid. This will allow plenty of air to reach the charcoal. After the charcoal is hot add the wood. We suggest oak or pecan for a mild flavoring...**NEVER USE RESINOUS WOODS LIKE PINE OR CEDAR..** Use old, dried-out oak or pecan (preferably aged one year) wood. This wood will give you a long and even burn. Use of green wood (wood with sap) will produce a bitter smoke flavor in the meats. Avoid this. Very recently cut wood may coat your pit with an undesirable black residue which will affect future cookouts and impart a bitter flavor to the meats. This is especially true of green (recently cut) mesquite. We do not recommend soaking your logs with water prior to cooking. Close the firebox lid and door and open the three-port air intake and smokestack damper to the full open positions. This is your smoker’s hottest position. Allow the fire to come to a good burn and to heat up your smoker. When you have clear or wispy smoke you are ready to put the meat on the cooking grate. After the temperature has reached approximately 300°F, cut back the air intake and smokestack exhaust to the half-open to one quarter-open positions. These adjustments should reduce the temperature to the ideal reading of 225°F. The exact positions will vary from pit to pit and vary with the amount and kind of wood used. Every pit has its own “personality”. You will have to become familiar with yours.

GAS LOG LIGHTER INSTRUCTIONS

With the barrel lid, firebox door, and firebox lid wide open, light a single rolled up paper towel and place it on top of the lighter pipe. **STAND CLEAR** and slowly open the valve on the L.P. tank. Adjust the resulting flame to four inches in height. Then arrange the wood atop the flame. In ten to fifteen minutes your fire should be burning well and the gas can be cut off.

CONTROLLING THE TEMPERATURE

Tejas Smokers are designed to be regulated by the sliding air intake. The cover flap on top of the smokestack is a rain cap and not a temperature control. Keep that chimney cap open at all times when using the smoker pit. ***THE BARREL OF THE PIT SHOULD NEVER BE HEATED TO TEMPERATURES ABOVE 300 °F!*** The recommended barrel cooking temperature is 225 degrees for everything except brisket (200 degrees) and poultry (chicken, turkey, fowl) at 275 degrees. Everything else cooks at 225 degrees. You will learn three settings for your sliding air intake on your firebox, i.e., 200, 225, and 275 degrees.

CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE OF YOUR SMOKER

Cleaning the barrel grills of your smoker is simple and easy; while the smoker is still hot, simply use soapy water. Actually all you have to really do is empty the water and grease. Leave the drain open and wash everything out with a water hose. You can also remove the firebox grates for cleaning; but you must wait until the smoker cools. It is better, however, to leave the grates covered with grease until the NEXT time you intend to cook. This way they are protected by the grease from rusting. It is not necessary to clean the inside barrel walls. All that is required is to drain the grease and water and that is best done when the smoker is still hot. Be careful when draining so you do not splash hot grease and water on yourself. A drain valve greatly helps. Use a bucket and dispose of properly. The grease and smoke residue that coats the inside walls of the barrel seasons the smoker and prevents it from rusting. The grease coating on the wall is where your pit develops its “character” over time. As it develops “character” the quality of your barbecue will improve.

Your *Tejas Smoker* comes equipped with a clean-out tool. The smoker is designed to allow ashes to fall through the fire grate to the bottom of the firebox. To clean the firebox, allow the smoker to cool, then use the clean-out tool to rake the ashes out of the firebox. **THIS MUST BE DONE AFTER EVERY USE.** Use of an ash pan makes this chore easier. Moisture (through rain, high humidity, condensation, or through splashing water when cleaning the barrel grates) will react with the residue ash and start a corrosive reaction that may shorten the lifetime of your smoker. It is important to routinely wash out the bottom of the firebox with a water hose after removing the residue ash. Dry out the firebox after washing and spray the walls with a cooking oil. If you have used charcoal in the bottom grate of the smoker barrel for grilling purposes, then you should also open the drain and **thoroughly** wash out the barrel with a water hose. Be sure to oil all the hinges on a regular basis. Keep your pit painted and in good condition. The use of a second ash pan as a firebox lid baffle can greatly reduce the need for having to repaint the top lid of the firebox. Lack of proper maintenance of your smoker will void the warranty.

A FURTHER WORD TO THE WISE

A smoker by its very nature **gets hot and stays hot.** Never touch the smoker with your bare hands while in operation. Keep *your* cookout a safe one!

☺ CHILDREN MUST BE KEPT AWAY FROM THE SMOKER AT ALL TIMES. ☺

You may contact us by telephone, snail mail, or by e-mail. We answer e-mails right away! Let us know how you are doing and we particularly welcome your suggestions and favorite recipes.

(713) 932-6438 or www.tejassmokers.com

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