

DEKE BASKIN
Deke's Bar-B-Que [Closed] - Oxford, MS

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Date: September 10, 2007
Subject: Deke Baskin, Deke's Bar-B-Que [Closed]
Location: Center for the Study of Southern Culture, The University of Mississippi
Interviewer: Tom Freeland
Length: 38 minutes
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs
Project: Southern BBQ Trail: Mississippi

Note: Tom Freeland conducted a special Brown Bag presentation on how to cook a whole hog and invited Deke Baskin to join in on the conversation. This Brown Bag lecture was held in advance of a fundraising event for the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council for which Tom Freeland cooked a whole hog. Since the subject was barbecue in Oxford, we decided to record the interview at the last minute. There is no formal introduction on the recording.

[Begin Deke Baskin BBQ Interview]

00:00:00

Tom Freeland: Well, I'm definitely at the learning stage and so I brought someone here today to—that can talk with a lot more depth in knowledge who is a lot deeper tied into the barbecue traditions in this part of the world than I could ever pretend to be. But first, I want to talk a little bit about the event this Friday that Deke is going to play—Deke Baskin will play a role in. Friday we'll be—we'll be cooking a hog at the Power Station [Powerhouse] for 24-hours beforehand. We're going to have the fife and drum band here, and there is a longstanding tradition in Lafayette County and in Tate County of staging rural picnics with fife and drum music or string band music and cooking hog and also cooking goat for those events. I'm going to talk to Deke about goat because, in my opinion, that's what Deke does best, and maybe we can arrange Friday to have a little goat on the side—as the side—cook a goat on the side if—if we're lucky as a part of the event Friday night.

00:01:05

But first I want to introduce Deke and then I want to talk about whole hog cooking. Deke Baskin has been cooking barbecue for Ole Miss [University of Mississippi] students and for the entire community in Lafayette County for over forty years. He started and learned under a pitmaster who went back about that long himself and started cooking for fraternity parties and for Ole Miss students; there was a tradition at the time that when Arkansas would play Ole Miss the week before they would cook whole hogs in the grill for the—for the students to get the

students ready for the Arkansas game. *[The mascot of the University of Arkansas is a razorback hog.]* Other than that there's not—other than that and Deke there's not really a whole hog tradition in this part of the world. Deke has carried it on, and we'll be able to talk about how he does it differently than the way I learned how through Joe York, through a Middle Tennessee tradition. I've got Deke's cookbook here, and, before I get Deke started about his past cooking hog, I want to tell you just how simple his recipe for a whole hog is. You need a 100-pound whole hog, 16 ounces of Worcestershire, 16 ounces of soy sauce, a 10-ounce bottle of apple cider vinegar and a bottle of Deke's seasoning, which he won't tell you how me makes. *[Laughs]*

00:02:24

You might be able to talk him out of some. You've got to make sure the hog is clean and try, placed on a charcoal grill, mix Worcestershire sauce, apple cider vinegar and soy sauce together, turn the hog every hour and spray every hour with sauce and sprinkle with Deke's special seasoning; must cook 24-hours. That's all there is to it; it's really simple to cook a hog. Now Deke, I want you to start. I want—tell us a little bit about your first hog and your experience starting out as a hog cooker.

00:02:53

Deke Baskin: Well, the first hog, I was really very, very young and I was cooking at the Phi Delt [Phi Delta Theta fraternity] house. At that time I was a dishwasher; I wasn't a cook. But then Mr. Jack Johnson got—that I got all my learnings—he's the one that taught me.

00:03:06

TF: Say his name again.

00:03:07

DB: Jack Johnson.

00:03:07

TF: What's his background?

00:03:10

DB: Well he was one of the best—of course he's gone on now, passed on—one of the best, man. He—he cooked for the sororities, all the big wheels around town at that time, they say, and he was just one of the best cooks—could cook anything. But that particular day it was a homecoming and they had whole hog tradition at the Phi Delt house, and he got real sick so I called him on the phone. He was—was—was going to coach me through it on the phone. Man, [*Laughs*] that hog was this color I tell you—jet black. I cried, but the guy was real nice. He said, “Deke, it's okay man. It's okay.” I mean he just—he was burnt on the outside and just raw inside. I just—but I'm—I'm, you know—and ever since then, you know, I—I just hated for something to beat me up. So I—I decided—I said, “I want to start to be the best at cooking hogs.” That was fun because you had a team, you know. At that time, we had a team. You know, all the—the freshman kids then, you know, they had tee-shirts, we made up damn tee-shirts and everybody just go and drink beer and wine and get drunk. So we stayed up all night; it was a lot of fun to get to meet a lot of peoples and just kind of—I thought—I said, “This is cool, man,” you know. Eighteen years old. This is cool getting to meet the college kids like that.

00:04:20

So we decided to—so he got real ill and then after that, he told me, he said, “Deke, you need to learn how to do something besides wash dishes.” He said, “Man, you need to go on. You can dish wash anywhere.” So I decided I wanted to be a short-order cook, so I started watching

him and following him over the years, you know, and I picked up a lot and I—after he left, I moved up in his shoes. As a matter of fact, I was one of the first head cooks over to the new Phi Delt house during that time. I think that was in 1972. That was my kitchen, they called it, and I got to be able to handle it real, real well. And we really enjoyed it.

00:04:53

Arkansas—then the house boys then, I got to meet them real good you know but they didn't—Deke was a man; I'd go out and have a beer with them, so they decided form an alliance—we going to cook a hog on Arkansas games. So we'd go down to my ex-dad-in-law, at the time, and he had a big hog farm, and pick up hogs and he'll skin them, clean them, and we'll cook them. And man, we had—again, then they started making Deke tee-shirts; everybody wanted to join the Deke alliance, and so I'd get me sometimes 15 or 20. I didn't have—there wasn't that much to do. I'd sit back and get drunk and they cooked the hogs, but it was real good. It was a lot of fun in those days—a lot of fun.

00:05:30

TF: Had the guy that you learned from—had he been a University—a fraternity house cook his whole life? Is that what he had done?

00:05:36

DB: Yes, uh-huh.

00:05:37

TF: How long had he been a cook?

00:05:38

DB: Like 25 or 30 years, you know.

00:05:41

TF: And he was doing barbecue on the side?

00:05:44

DB: He's one of the best barbecuers.

00:05:44

TF: When did you decide to focus on barbecue to make that your thing?

00:05:47

DB: Well I left—I worked there maybe 18 years and I decided—I went to the Chi Omega [sorority] house. A girl there, she was a Chi Omega and she was doing—she was writing for *The Mississippian*—1970—1982; that was 10years later I met up with Mrs. Mistilis. Angelo Mistilis [’s wife, Jodale Mistilis] And she said,” Deke—.” I was skinning house boars; it’s when the goats come in, so I couldn’t go. She said, “Deke, as good as you can cook, you need your own business.” So she said, “Well, we will help you.” So the Chi Os—the girls there—we got together and I talked with Mrs. Mistilis, and, you know the old liquor store out there? Me and Mistilis, we decided to go in, and that’s when Deke was born in 1982 with Angelo Mistilis.

00:06:32

TF: So you’re talking about Mistilis’s, the restaurant that was like a diner that was out on College Hill Road for decades?

00:06:37

DB: Yes, that's correct.

00:06:39

TF: And where—where were you in relation to that restaurant?

00:06:42

DB: We was partners at that time.

00:06:45

TF: So you were out there cooking, initially?

00:06:47

DB: Well, I started out there. That's—yeah. And—and when I was really 11 years old.

00:06:51

TF: So how long did you cook—how long were you cooking at Mistilis's before you moved to another place?

00:06:58

DB: I worked there about eight years.

00:06:58

TF: And is that when you moved to the place behind Goolsby's Barber Shop?

00:07:02

DB: Yes, uh-hmm.

00:07:04

TF: Okay, so you moved your—you moved into town?

00:07:06

DB: Uh-hmm.

00:07:07

TF: And how long were you back—back there?

00:07:08

DB: Goolsby's—five years there, uh-hmm.

00:07:12

TF: And then—and then you moved to another place out on [Highway] 30?

00:07:15

DB: Highway 30 East, that's right.

00:07:15

TF: Right. And that was—that was your—the first one you started up new—that you had a new building all set up for barbecue.

00:07:21

DB: That's right.

00:07:20

TF: Tell us about that place.

00:07:21

DB: That was a very, very nice place, and it was built up—a friend of mine’s—as a matter of fact, he’s my cousin Charlie, and he built it. And he said, “Deke, you need your own place,” and very—very nice place, a big built pit and good business. We done real good out there for, I think, about three or four years out there—real good.

00:07:41

TF: You know, you had—there was a little bit of a pool hall and a barbecue place?

00:07:44

DB: That’s right.

00:07:44

TF: Great jukebox.

00:07:45

DB: That’s right.

00:07:45

TF: Had everything but beer.

00:07:47

DB: That's right. That's right. It had the college kids on weekends. We had a lot going on there, and then it had a little picnic area right here—so it was real good, real good.

00:07:54

TF: How long did that go on?

00:07:55

DB: For like three-and-a-half, four years.

00:07:58

TF: Okay. Now I want to talk a little bit about goat. You've had a sideline of cooking goat all these years. Have—when did you start with that?

00:08:03

DB: Well, again—again the [Phi Delta Theta] house boys—somebody was ill and said, “Hey, you want to try a goat?” I said, “Yeah.” My dad-in-law was a specialist in goat, man. He could cook a goat. I mean just—have it so tender, you know, and all the girls—. So what they going to do, they were going to trick the girls. The girls didn't like goat. So we—we had Boston butt also, you know. Got the girls. They started drinking again and had the goat and they said—they got to fighting over the goat. So they said the goat was better than the Boston butt. That was fun. But yeah, those were the good ole days.

00:08:31

TF: And where did you get your goat then?

00:08:34

DB: Well down in Taylor, Mississippi. He had a little goat farm, too.

00:08:38

TF: Uh-huh. And you're real particular about goat, aren't you? About—about your source?

00:08:43

DB: I am.

00:08:43

TF: Tell me about that.

00:08:44

DB: Well you were saying about there was a place in Memphis, but I said I wouldn't go because it's a trick to it, you know. You have to have it down. It's—it's a little—I never cleaned one. My dad-in-law told me this: you have to make sure that no hair will get on it because it not—it not going to taste right. It's going to make you sick. And you have to make sure that you have it drained right—some kind of way. They put that hole—hole in it to drain it. This is really something funny about it. If it's not right, it's not going to be good.

00:09:08

TF: Well, you said something to me once about if they don't process it right, you'll find out what smelling like a goat means.

00:09:12

DB: That's right, what it means. That's true. Really, that's true. You have to be careful with it, yeah.

00:09:16

TF: Okay, tell me about differences between goat and hog, as far as barbecue. What's the first obvious difference?

00:09:22

DB: Well, you know, the hog have a lot of fat in it, you know, and the goat is all particularly lean meat—lean meat, and that's something you cook a goat and—or you cook venison or deer it's always leaner. A lot of people understand that because you can't get it tender. There's a trick, and I can't tell you all the tricks in it because you won't need me, but it's a trick in it. You have to get it tender.

00:09:43

TF: Now I've figured out some of the trick, haven't I?

00:09:46

DB: Well I told you a little bit of it, too, but I didn't tell you all of it, but I got—you're my friend.

00:09:48

TF: Do you want me—do you want me to not tell these people?

00:09:51

DB: Yeah, go ahead you can tell them because I didn't tell you all of it. *[Laughs]*

00:09:56

TF: Well, the first trick is you can't cook it the whole time over fire the way you do it.

00:09:58

DB: No, no, that's right. You have to cook it real, real slow on the fire, really—really.

00:10:00

TF: But—but you start out, and this—this is—I'm going to back up and talk about the tradition a little bit more. There's a picnic tradition out in the county [Lafayette County] that's sort of died out that you used to be a part of. Talk about that a little bit.

00:10:14

DB: You know, family reunions and you know the Fourth of July was a big thing. Everywhere you go there—in the old days we had Blues harmonica, you know, and good times—and the goat. You had to have a goat there.

00:10:25

TF: Why is that?

00:10:27

DB: I don't—you know what, I never—but everywhere you go during them days it had goat. You going to have—you going to find goat, corn liquor, *[Laughs]*—watermelon and goat, you going to find the picnic, I promise you.

00:10:36

TF: So—so—so goat would have been an essential part of a summer picnic in Lafayette County?

00:10:42

DB: Yes, sir. When you see peoples coming home from the North, they call and say, “Mama, have that goat and corn liquor.” That’s what you have to have. That’s—that’s a true fact.

00:10:50

TF: Okay. And—and then there’d be a string band playing or some sort of band playing?

00:10:53

DB: Uh-huh or somebody singing the Blues, that’s right.

00:10:55

TF: Tell me about the bands that would have been playing at the picnics in Lafayette County.

00:10:58

DB: Well Sam Langhorne was very popular then and Mr. Brooks. You might—do you know him?

00:11:01

TF: Oh, yeah, Tommy Brooks?

00:11:03

DB: Tommy Brooks.

00:11:04

TF: He—he still plays a little bit. He played with Herbert [Wiley] some.

00:11:08

DB: Right. Okay, but you have that and you know peoples just get together and just reminisce about the old days and they have a good time.

00:11:13

TF: Ever anybody play with [cane] fife and drum at these picnics or—?

00:11:17

DB: You know, they had a little—I forgot what you call it—.

00:11:23

TF: So that's something that you don't remember in this—in this county?

00:11:24

DB: Right.

00:11:26

TF: The reason I asked about that, in—in Tate and Panola County there is a picnic tradition that's going on today. Othar Turner had a continuous picnic from the mid-thirties up until he died, I guess, about three years ago. And he picked it up from someone that was, you know, considerably older.

00:11:48

DB: Right.

00:11:50

TF: I mean it's throughout the 20th Century. Part of Othar's picnic is that he would always have goat barbecue at his picnic. His—the barbecue at Othar's wasn't the thing; it was the music. His goat was not as good as yours. **[Laughs]** But I want to talk a little bit about how he cooked it and how it compared to what you'd see down here. For one thing, it's not like Texas; they don't cook it over fire the whole time. And that's consistent with how'd you cook it. You didn't—you started out simmering it in water, didn't you?

00:12:15

DB: That's right. You have to—to get it tender. You—you just cannot get it like you do a pig or, you know, ribs or something and just put it—just take it and wash it real good and season it like I do—and put it on a fire. You have to kind of marinade it and then—and kind of pour-bottle, we call it, a little bit and get it a little tender because you cannot get it tender—not enough to eat because it's all lean meat.

00:12:35

TF: Well and Othar—at Othar's they would kill the goat Friday of the picnic and they had a—a big cast iron laundry kettle. I told you that once, and you said you wished you had it.

00:12:45

DB: That's right, that's right. **[Laughs]** Yeah. That's right. Okay.

00:12:48

TF: They'd—and they'd—over a fire outdoors they'd put—fill the laundry kettle with water and put celery and onion and bell pepper and garlic and Worcestershire sauce and bring it to a boil, so I want you to talk about what you do.

00:13:08

DB: Basically, pretty much the same thing. The only thing I might cook my little longer. When you say bring it to a boil, I let mine's cook a little longer.

00:13:13

TF: Okay, bring it to a boil, and then they'd put quartered goat. They'd quarter-up the goat.

00:13:16

DB: That's right.

00:13:17

TF: And then put it in there and then cook it a couple hours.

00:13:21

DB: Yeah, uh-hmm—a couple hours till you're just about ready to come off—you feel it coming off the bone a little bit and then you want to get it out again and dry it, and you put it on your grill—on—off the fire, a slow fire and let it cook. Then you—.

00:13:34

TF: So you have the heat over here and the meat over on the other side of the grill? You don't put it directly on the meat?

00:13:39

DB: No, sir. Then you will baste it, you know, with your sauce real good for like an hour or two, and then you got a real good goat.

00:13:46

TF: What—would you put any pepper flakes or anything to spice the water while you were cooking it other than what I said?

00:13:51

DB: No more. No. I use bell pepper.

00:13:52

TF: Okay. And some—and a whole lot of Worcestershire?

00:13:54

DB: A whole lot of Worcestershire, that's right.

00:13:56

TF: What have I left out?

00:13:57

DB: You're pretty much on it. *[Laughs]*

00:14:01

TF: So—so then you put(ted) it on the—put it over—you—you cook over charcoal?

00:14:04

DB: Right. I use hickory.

00:14:05

TF: Yeah, we'll be cooking over hickory. We'll be getting the hickory. I've got a recipe I've written out that I—I may talk through on Friday. One of the ingredients in the recipe is a scant pickup truckload of hickory scraps and so that—that's an essential part of doing it the way I do it. You must go through a lot of charcoal.

00:14:25

DB: Not really. When I cook a whole hog, I go through probably about six pounds. But let me tell you a secret about this. Now you remember this. And I respect your—you know, you—you're trying to—and you—but you can't—you're not going to be able to do both of them now. Twenty years before I got that down pat.

00:14:41

TF: I mean that's why I brought you here to talk.

00:14:43

DB: And I promise you—and I promise you, 20 years you got to—you have to walk it, sleep it, and cry it to get it down. Now you said you're pretty good on that goat. That goat will trick you sometimes, now.

00:14:51

TF: Oh, I won't claim being good on the goat. [*Laughs*]

00:14:54

DB: Don't let it trick you.

00:14:58

TF: I could—I ate and enjoyed—and enjoyed the time I've tried goat, but I want to see you do it.

00:15:02

DB: We had the best time I think when we had—you remember the Taste of Oxford—that the people over—I thought that was the best goat when your daughter was here. We had a real good time on the goat. That was a good one.

00:15:09

TF: Yeah.

00:15:13

DB: Are you going to pick up one?

00:15:14

TF: We're going to have some goat Friday. I'm going to want you to show me how it's done.

00:15:16

DB: We'll do it together. That will be fun.

00:15:17

TF: Now—now I want—do you use the same sauce on goat that you use on pork?

00:15:22

DB: No.

00:15:23

TF: Why not?

00:15:24

DB: You know [*Laughs*]*—*an old guy taught me, he said, “Deke, this is—. I use—I’m going to tell you this secret, so you’ll know. I use a little mustard—close, but it’s a little mustard in it.”

00:15:35

TF: Prepared mustard or dry mustard?

00:15:36

DB: Prepared mustard. Something about it, I don’t know what it is. He said, “Deke, that’s the only way you make it taste—.” It brings out something in it, a little mustard. I use a little more—more mustard in that than on my regular sauce.

00:15:46

Audience: Do you put it in the—the mustard in the water or—?

00:15:47

DB: No ma'am, in my sauce—in the barbecue sauce. That—that's the last touch on it when you baste—when you—when you're—uh-huh.

00:15:58

Audience: For—for both or for the hog?

00:15:58

DB: Just for the—your—.

00:15:57

TF: For the goat.

00:15:59

DB: For your goat, uh-hmm.

00:16:01

TF: I remember your—your sauce that you'd use on a goat being real dark. Am I remembering that right?

00:16:05

DB: Yeah, that—that mustard—the mustard brings it, yeah, uh-hmm.

00:16:08

TF: A lot of Worcestershire sauce in it, I bet.

00:16:08

DB: Yes, a lot of Worcestershire sauce in it, too, yeah.

00:16:12

TF: You're not going to tell me too much. [*Laughs*]

00:16:12

DB: I'm going to make—I'm going to make you up some. I'll make you up some, yeah.

00:16:16

TF: I want to talk to you a little bit about how I cook a hog, and I want you to tell me what you do different.

00:16:20

DB: Okay.

00:16:22

TF: The first thing that—when we've done it, we've set up a pit with cinderblock and we set a camp—a fireplace near the pit. In other words, and we build a fire with the hickory scrap and cook it down to coals outside the pit because you don't want any direct fire anywhere near the hog the way we do it.

00:16:41

DB: Right.

00:16:42

TF: Do you have a separate fire, or do you cook your charcoal in—under the pig?

00:16:44

DB: I cook it under, but I cooks it low and I cooks it about three—about three feet, you know—close. You know that—that’s why I have somebody—.

00:16:54

TF: How do you build your pit?

00:16:55

DB: I have a pit, you know, big enough—I have one about this size.

00:17:01

TF: You have one about the size of the table. It’s for the—.

00:17:02

DB: With wheels on it.

00:17:03

TF: For the tape, it’s, what, about six-feet by about three-and-a-half—four feet?

00:17:07

DB: About five. Yeah, about five—six-feet, five, but mine’s—.

00:17:11

Audience: How deep is the pit?

00:17:12

DB: Three—three-and-a-half feet.

00:17:16

Audience: Three-and-a-half feet?

00:17:15

DB: Yes, ma'am.

00:17:16

TF: Is this on a trailer or is this a portable—?

00:17:17

DB: Yeah, uh-hmm.

00:17:18

TF: So you do a whole hog on a portable pit?

00:17:20

DB: Uh-hmm.

00:17:22

TF: Okay.

00:17:21

DB: What happens—I be going to the different sororities, you know, so I couldn't handle it, you know. People want—they want to be there and take your pictures. I have 100 pictures—everybody with an apple in their mouth. Everybody want a picture.

00:17:33

TF: Did you have a brick pit at anyplace you ran commercial barbecue other than the one out on [Highway] 30?

00:17:37

DB: That's the only one.

00:17:37

TF: So that's the only time you've had a permanent pit?

00:17:39

DB: Right, uh-hmm.

00:17:40

TF: How did that—how did that compare to having—I really like having a set pit.

00:17:46

DB: I don't like it for some reason. I guess I'm—what I'm used to. I just didn't like it.

00:17:47

TF: Why?

00:17:49

DB: I don't know.

00:17:49

TF: It's not what you're used to?

00:17:52

DB: That's right. And—and that was Deke's baby, you know, the one I'd been having for 20 years and that's—still cooks real good, you know. I had to get it redone, but it's—it's a good cooker. I call it my hog cooker, Redbud.

00:18:03

TF: Who made it for you?

00:18:04

DB: Mr. Robert Myers from the city. You remember him?

00:18:06

TF: Uh-hmm.

00:18:08

DB: Robert L. Myers.

00:18:09

TF: And you're still using that one?

00:18:11

DB: Uh-hmm.

00:18:12

TF: Can you bring it to show people on Friday when we're—when we're out there or is it—?

00:18:16

DB: Guess where it is?

00:18:18

TF: Where is it?

00:18:18

DB: Grand Rapids, Michigan.

00:18:20

TF: Oh, my God. Oh, when you moved up—when you moved up to Michigan, you took it up there?

00:18:21

DB: Yeah, yeah.

00:18:22

TF: Do you have—do you have a picture of it you can bring?

00:18:24

DB: Sure, yeah. I got a picture of it right here matter of fact—right here. Let's see—is that a good picture there? No, I got a good picture right here.

00:18:40

TF: That's his cookbook that he had printed a few years back?

00:18:43

Audience: Are there copies available?

00:18:44

DB: I'll have some available. This—this book was a bestseller at Lafayette Square in [19]'94.

Did you know that?

00:18:52

Audience: Will you have some this afternoon?

00:18:54

DB: No, ma'am. But I'm going to have some in about a week to offer that to everybody.

00:19:03

Audience: Where will we get them?

00:19:06

DB: See—I saw a picture.

00:19:07

TF: Is that—that's not it?

00:19:08

DB: No, no, turn it again.

00:19:10

TF: If he's got them this Friday, they'll be at the event Friday, and he'll be—he's—he's going to be there to tell me what I'm doing wrong. *[Laughs]* And—and in any even—any event, what we would do—we'd—we had three pieces of metal across the cinderblock and then we—we had a big metal grate and we laid out the hog on the grate, and the way the hog was prepared, its head was off.

00:19:34

DB: Hmm.

00:19:34

TF: And we split the backbone so it would lay out flat. How—so it had nothing—its head removed, feet removed and then I'd take a cleaver and go down the backbone so it would lay out perfectly flat.

00:19:44

DB: So you're not cooking the whole hog. *[Laughs]* You're not cooking the whole hog—the head. *[Laughs]*

00:19:52

TF: Tell me how you have it prepared. Tell me how it would be ready to cook for you. You're right, I cook it without the head. Would you cook it with the feet on?

00:20:00

DB: No, I cut—no, I cut it up—up to the knee. See, the thing about when the college kids—they wanted the apple in the mouth, so you had to have the whole hog. That's the whole idea.

00:20:10

TF: They want the head?

00:20:11

DB: Yeah, they want the head. We split him down the middle. You know, we split him down the middle and just put him on.

00:20:16

TF: Would he lay out flat?

00:20:16

DB: You know, we cook him on the side, see. We cook him on the side. Now, when he gets about done we—we set him up on the back so he can get real pretty and brown and that skin just comes right off of it. It's—it's the prettiest thing in the world. Yeah.

00:20:29

TF: Well, see, the way—the way we did it is we started it with the meat side down to warm it up.

00:20:33

DB: Right, uh-hmm.

00:20:35

TF: And cooked it for 12 hours with the meat side down.

00:20:37

DB: Okay.

00:20:39

TF: And then turned it over and the skin had all hardened—the fat had rendered out of the skin so it was pretty hard, and—.

00:20:45

DB: Right.

00:20:46

TF: And the skin makes this, like, bowl, and it's sort of the—the lard all gets in there with the meat, and it sort of poaches in the lard for the next 12 hours.

00:20:53

DB: Okay, it sounds good.

00:20:54

TF: Real gentle.

00:20:55

DB: Sounds good. I'm really getting excited to see it. It sounds good. But you're not cooking the whole hog. But I—.

00:21:04

TF: [*Laughs*] So I need to change the advertising this weekend for *almost a whole hog*.

[*Laughs*]

00:21:09

DB: [*Laughs*] But that going to be—hmm.

00:21:15

TF: Now tell me about your sauce for pork, what you—would you put the same sauce on a whole hog you do on a shoulder or a—?

00:21:21

DB: Oh yeah, uh-hmm.

00:21:22

TF: Tell me about it—what you'll tell me.

00:21:24

DB: Talking about Deke Sauce?

00:21:25

TF: Yeah.

00:21:27

DB: Big Star [grocery store] has some.

00:21:27

TF: What—what did you say?

00:21:28

DB: [*Laughs*] Big Star has some.

00:21:31

TF: Big Star has some?

00:21:33

DB: But that's the sauce I've been using for the last 20 years, really.

00:21:36

TF: So you can buy it at Big Star?

00:21:37

DB: Yeah. Yeah, you can buy it at Big Star. I got a dry rub there.

00:21:41

TF: So your—your dry rub and your sauce—somebody can go to Big Star and buy it. You've—
you've—they're preparing it by how you do it?

00:21:47

DB: Yes, it's Deke's—you know, what I use in my cookbook that's Deke's Seasoning. Yes, uh-huh.

00:21:54

TF: And so if I wanted to do the hog by your recipe, I could go get to the rub down at—at Big Star.

00:21:59

DB: Sure, uh-hmm.

00:21:59

TF: Is that the same rub that you'd use for a whole hog?

00:22:01

DB: It is.

00:22:04

TF: What—would you put a rub on a goat when you're cooking the goat?

00:22:05

DB: No, I—you don't put a rub on the goat.

00:22:07

TF: But you always sprinkle—.

00:22:08

DB: But I—I sprinkle some after, you know, that’s right. That’s Deke’s, again.

00:22:13

TF: Right, you’d sprinkle some of your Deke’s on any barbecue before you—?

00:22:14

DB: That’s right. I’ll have some around there Friday night for you to sprinkle, if—if you want—
if you like.

00:22:20

TF: All right. Well, anything to add about barbecue in Lafayette County?

00:22:26

DB: I do want to say this and—and I’m not talking about anybody, since over the years, and I—
I’ve been doing it for a good while. I—I look at these and, you know, I respect anybody’s
business but it—it’s—it makes it look bad for barbecue, and that’s not barbecue. That’s
roisserie.

00:22:42

TF: Why not?

00:22:43

DB: You know, barbecue is out here cooked. You know you—you go in and you put this on
your rotisserie and go to bed, that’s not barbecue. Barbecue—you look at a tradition. You go out

there and put it, and, like you said, you go out and you watch it—turn it. That’s barbecue. On—
on charcoal or the hickory. But if you put it on a rotisserie—that electric thing—this is not
barbecue. That’s the easy way out.

00:23:04

TF: So it’s got to be cooked in a—a pit over fire, or you don’t call it barbecue?

00:23:07

DB: If it’s going to be barbecue, I think so. Really, I think, you—I’m kind of disappointed—
when I hear charcoal was really—the flavor—if you put a little hickory in it but you can’t have
barbecue—charcoal.

00:23:19

TF: You’ll—we’ll see this weekend.

00:23:22

DB: That’s right. That’s why I say I’m excited about it.

00:23:26

TF: We’ve got—what we’re bringing—what we’re using is scrap pieces about this long that we
then cook down to coal before we put it under the hog.

00:23:33

DB: Okay.

00:23:33

TF: And of course the big thing is to not set the hog on fire.

00:23:35

DB: Well, I'll agree with that. [*Laughs*] Okay.

00:23:40

TF: With all that lard over charcoal.

00:23:41

DB: Well, you know—you know what my grandmother used to say? You learn something new every day, so I'm wide open. I'm ready.

00:23:46

TF: All right. I'd like to open the—to any questions anybody may have. Yes?

00:23:54

Audience: Where you can buy whole hogs?

00:23:57

TF: The first question was where can you buy a whole hog around here, and I'll say where I've gotten—gotten a hog. It's not easy, first, because meat-processing plants don't want to scald a hog. You've—you've got to have the skin on, or you can't cook it the way a whole hog is cooked. And for—the old-fashioned way of processing a hog, they would have scalded it and then scraped it, and that way the skin is left on. The meat-processing plant between here and Batesville, Pit Cox and Stan's Country Meat, which is where I'm getting them, they're—they're

very much—were not—they were reluctant to scald and leave the skin on a hog. I got one last year from them and I've gotten one again this year, and they're doing the one this weekend. I think they're going to be set up to do it more regularly, so you'll be able to get one more regularly. I'm getting about a 160-, 170-pound hog. The skin will be on and I think they're going to regularly do it in the future. I've—I've talked a lot to Dan Latham, who has bought Stan Country Meats at L&M—what—on—on—right. And the pork there, he's involved in processing it, and it's according to his specifications. And Dan—Dan is—helped me get the hog and I think will be able to help me in the future. You have to pay extra to keep the skin because of the scalding and scraping. Now I'll let Deke talk about where he gets a hog.

00:25:23

DB: Hmm. [*Laughs*] If—if you have any trouble besides—if that won't work, call me and I'll help you get one—left with the skin on, either way you want it. But it's—matter of fact, my daughter's uncle does it—James Woodson I was telling you about, out there on Rivers Hill. And we have a guy that—that will clean them for you—the whole hogs, any way you want them—the head on, the head off, or however you want it. Yes, sir?

00:25:46

Audience: Where do barbecue restaurants or people that do hogs buy—where do they buy hickory wood?

00:25:57

TF: Well the place that I'm getting it from, there's an area in Tennessee that's famous for whole hogs. Joe York has done a documentary about it [*Whole Hog*]; they'll be showing on Friday. And

they get rejects from an ax handle and implement handle manufacturer, and they get it by the truckload, and we're sending somebody up there to get a pickup truckload. What I don't know—in this area—when I was a teenager I knew of some ax handle factories in—within 30 miles of here, but I don't know. One of the things I want to find out is where somebody out there is harvesting hickory and their pieces from it, and if I just find it I'll be able to, but I don't know. Now Deke—what—what do you—?

00:26:39

DB: My brother, Rodney.

00:26:43

TF: Rodney is—?

00:26:43

DB: Yeah, he can get you some—a truckload, yeah—one of your best friends.

00:26:48

TF: That's good—he's a friend. I had no idea.

00:26:51

Audience: Tom, I would bet any of the loggers around here would save back some tops. I think all you have to do is ask one of them.

00:26:54

DB: Yeah.

00:26:55

00:27:06

TF: Okay, well there's your answer. And, Ann, you had a question?

00:27:09

Audience: Okay, what age animal do you recommend?

00:27:18

DB: You really don't want to get an old one. You—you want to get this—the tender, you know—not anything old. You know, you don't want a baby but—but you don't want no old—you don't want no Billy goat, or you don't want no old boar, nothing like that. You want to try to get in that middle, you know, like a show—they call it for a pig, you know, between 100 and 150 pounds, but you certainly don't want to old Billy goat.

00:27:43

TF: You're going to have trouble handling anything older.

00:27:44

Audience: The wild hog hunting is—is big in Alabama and—.

00:27:50

DB: Yes, ma'am.

00:27:51

Audience: And so when you get a—a male hog, is there any way in the world to get that horrible flavor out of that meat?

00:28:02

TF: My understanding about wild hogs is that if they get over a certain size, you—they're not edible. And I—I also know that people—people that are cooking wild boar cook it very differently because it's not going to have the kind of fat that a domestic pig will have.

00:28:16

DB: There you go. The same almost with your goat. That's right—you have—because—.

00:28:25

TF: I mean you—you just don't—you—they're—they're not edible over a certain size. There's areas down along the river between Vicksburg and Natchez where there—there are Russian boars that are—and the ones that are cooked down there are smaller than I'm talking about. They're like 100 pounds and they—they don't cook them over live fire the way Deke and I are talking about. They—they're much more likely to use those metal boxes, the Cajun microwave thing because it's—I don't know. It's moisture, I'm sure. It's basically—that's basically baking it.

00:28:58

DB: That's true. You're right. Could you get one?

00:29:02

Audience: Yes, sir. Do you want one?

00:29:05

DB: And do one—that Mississippi State and—and Ole Miss game is that Friday.

00:29:08

Audience: I mean I'm not the guy who does the slaughtering. But you know I can get your phone number and maybe after Thanksgiving.

00:29:15

TF: I'm real interested, too.

00:29:16

DB: Yeah, let's do one.

00:29:19

Audience: All right. The problem is they're a nuisance species and they're really destroying the native bird populations so—.

00:29:27

TF: Is it possible—is it possible to get one the end of October?

00:29:33

Audience: No. I'll—we'll talk afterwards. I'd like to talk more about it.

00:29:38

TF: Okay. That's—Deke and I are going to cook it, if you can get one the end of October.

00:29:43

DB: Yeah. And—yeah, we invited—.

00:29:43

TF: You may—you may change the menu. [*Laughs*] Yes?

00:29:48

Audience: What are the traditional side dishes with a hog—?

00:29:59

DB: With hog, you know, basically baked beans, potato salad, coleslaw, and the green beans, but, you know, peoples have different, you know, preferences—have different things but that—that’s basically what—mostly what older—30-years, 40-years—baked beans, coleslaw, and potato salad, you know.

00:30:14

TF: What if that was goat? Any difference with goat?

00:30:16

DB: No—pretty much the same. I like to do a lot of red beans and rice with my goat, you know, but peoples—you know—.

00:30:25

TF: You said spaghetti. Tell—talk about that.

00:30:26

DB: Yeah, most people want the barbecue spaghetti—a lot of spaghetti.

00:30:31

TF: Want barbecue spaghetti?

00:30:33

DB: No, just barbecue on the side.

00:30:35

TF: Okay, because that's a Memphis thing. *[Laughs]*

00:30:35

DB: A side dish, yeah.

00:30:37

TF: Okay. And at the pit—

00:30:40

DB: Corn on the cob also will be—corn on the cob will be.

00:30:43

TF: At the picnics would they have been frying fish, too?

00:30:45

DB: Yes, sir. Catfish, that's—that's—

00:30:46

TF: And hushpuppies?

00:30:49

DB: Yeah. You—you tried my hushpuppies, didn't you?

00:30:51

TF: I don't think I've ever eaten your hushpuppies.

00:30:53

DB: They called me Hushpuppy man when I was up the hill.

00:30:53

TF: I know that.

00:30:53

DB: Hushpuppy Man.

00:30:57

TF: Yes?

00:31:01

Audience: [Inaudible]

00:31:06

TF: He—he's retired—I'll let him talk but he's retired from having a store, but—.

00:31:09

DB: I'm—I'll leave a number and you can get a hold of Tom. It will probably be—I got—it will probably be from two to three weeks. I should have been here for—for opening—. We got delayed on it so but we'll have some in two or three weeks.

00:31:25

TF: Any other questions?

00:31:31

Audience: [Inaudible]

00:31:33

TF: I'm going to let Deke answer with the weight and how much, and then I'll talk about my experience.

00:31:37

DB: It's supposed to be—you—you—100 pounds of hog supposed to be able to feed 200 peoples, you know, that—you average about half a pound per person. But, you know, when you cook a whole hog, you lose a lot, too, so you—100 pounds of hog will really feed about 150 peoples, you know.

00:31:55

TF: That's—I had a 150-pounder the first time, and I'm sure I fed 125, 130 people and my wife and I ate hog for about a week. But—but it—that's about—I mean people will eat—if you have a whole hog out, they will eat a lot of it.

00:32:17

DB: It's true. And then that question, too—it all—all depends on what—what group of people you have, and, you know, a lot of college kids have a tendency to eat more. Older peoples, not. So it all depends, if you got drunk college kids, you know, it just kind of—I'm serious. It—it's hard to answer that, but that's what it's supposed to be.

00:32:32

TF: Mary Beth?

00:32:33

Audience: Can you talk a little bit about pulling the pork from a hog and what kind of—?

00:32:43

DB: Well I—I think chopped pork but, you know, peoples have different preferences. Pulled pork is good, but I've been chopping mine for the last 25 years, and I've been getting a good response on the chopped pork.

00:32:54

TF: Well let me—.

00:32:56

DB: I use Boston butt roast is what I use.

00:32:59

TF: Well on the hog, how did you serve it? How did you—how do people get it?

00:33:01

DB: Well, you know, I chop the shoulder and the—and the—I chop the shoulder and then the butt part, but the other part—she's right. Around the middle part and it's really—and you pull it; that's right—the backbone. All that's a good part; you pull a lot of that. That whole hog—a lot of it going to have to be pulled. You're correct, but the—the Boston butt part and the shoulder and—and the ham part I chopped.

00:33:20

TF: So you treat the shoulders and the hams just like you do barbecuing another kind—?

00:33:24

DB: Right. Would you like me to bring my chopping board and my big knife, too, Friday or you got something?

00:33:29

TF: You can bring it. I'll bring some but—and, actually, here's the way we've served it. When you end up cooking it with it open like that, with the skin side down, we just put a bunch of tongs out and let people come and grab the pork—.

00:33:38

DB: They pull it. Oh, okay.

00:33:40

TF: And they get to try what it's like to get a bit of tenderloin or get a bit of middling.

00:33:44

DB: Oh, I got you. Okay. Good.

00:33:44

TF: Or a bit of ham. You get to see what all the different parts, how they are that way.

00:33:50

DB: Okay, okay.

00:33:50

TF: Which you couldn't do at a restaurant or—

00:33:52

DB: That's right, that's right. Okay.

00:33:54

TF: Did you ever serve—I don't remember you ever serving a whole hog when you had a barbecue place.

00:33:57

DB: No, I—I never served it in my restaurant only because I had—you know, it was—it was always a special order for the kids or whoever, you know, uh-hmm.

00:34:05

TF: How many hogs do you think you did over the years?

00:34:08

DB: I'd say 100. 100 at least.

00:34:12

TF: Any other questions? Yes, sir?

00:34:16

Audience: I enjoyed barbecued pork and barbecued chicken out at Deke's out on Highway 6 West. How long were you there?

00:34:24

DB: Whew, I'd say about a year. That—that was my last place. That was—yes, sir. That's when I left and went to Michigan. And I—I apologize about that. My health got real bad, and, y'all, I got lupus in my lungs and now I got gout also but it really—you know and it hurt(ed) me and, you know, I didn't have help. And my wife was a nurse. She wasn't too familiar—she was a good pastry cook. But, you know, over the years, I had a lot of friends. I really enjoyed it, and I still miss it. I still does stuff occasionally with the friends that call and want something done, you know, if I can get some help, but it's kind of hard. And I appreciate you, sir.

00:34:58

TF: Any other—Mary Beth?

00:35:00

Audience: How are you passing on your tradition?

00:35:04

DB: Well my—I got my daughter here. My other son, he don't like it, so—. I need me an apprentice, anybody—I'm trying to find me somebody to help.

00:35:15

TF: Well I can't be an apprentice, but I'm trying to talk him into taking—into passing it on either through me or through oral history interviews.

00:35:21

DB: Well my—my granddad always said, “You give everything away, I need to get a little—,” you know, I need something to hold onto it, you know, and then if I pass it all away—say, well, “Deke—Deke—I need something to keep me going, too.”

00:35:32

TF: Yes, ma'am?

00:35:34

Audience: Make a profit?

00:35:35

DB: That's right.

00:35:38

Audience: For some of us with smaller families, what we need is 100 ways to cook leftover pork.

00:35:43

DB: [*Laughs*] Okay.

00:35:46

Audience: I've always liked pork, but it seems like it's healthier and leaner and it doesn't cook nearly as well anymore.

00:36:02

DB: Yeah, you—you have to—and I'm not recommending to eat it but if—like I tell my sister, you have to have fat in it. That's what helps cooks it. It really does.

00:36:10

Audience: Where do you get it?

00:36:17

DB: You know—you Kroger—you say you go to—you shop—Kroger usually have pretty good Boston butt roasts, but I—I—when I was buying mine I would order all my meat out of Shaw's out of Grenada, you know. There was a meat company down there and they also does a—.

00:36:30

TF: I'd really recommend trying Stan's, the—the tenderloin and the pork chops that they do, and they'll special order other cuts. Yeah, I'm—they'll—they'll buy—you can get thick cut pork chops. You can get tenderloin and they'll bring—bring in bigger roasts than that and it's—it's the best pork I've bought in years. Right. You can also get it—the—the place that used to be Hallowell's Farm Stand that now calls itself the Farmers Market [*Laughs*], they sell that pork, although they run out early because it's so popular, but you can get it there and you can get it out at Stan's.

00:37:09

DB: That's a secret. How you know that?

00:37:11

TF: Yeah?

00:37:13

DB: You know where it is?

00:37:15

TF: It's past the County line; it's past the turn to Sardis, farther—way farther out than that; it's Panola County—Stan's Country Meats.

00:37:24

DB: It's something new since I've been gone, huh? Okay.

00:37:26

TF: Any other questions? All right. Thank y'all.

00:37:36

[Applause]

00:37:39

TF: And Deke, I want to thank you for coming out.

00:37:41

DB: Sure, any time.

00:37:43

TF: And telling us about barbecue. And we'll see you Friday?

00:37:46

DB: Sure, I'll be there.

00:37:48

[End Deke Baskin BBQ Interview]