



3 Hacks for Pellet Smokers

Have you ever taken flak for using a pellet smoker because of its inability to reproduce the offset smoker taste standard? Have you noticed a lack of bark or deep smoke ring on your brisket, or the absence of authentic, nuanced smoke flavor in your pulled pork? Well, we're here to show you how to impress your stick-burner buddies by smoking briskets and butts with mind-blowing flavor, bark, and color!

Smoke with Intensity!

The volume of smoke produced in a pellet smoker is much lower than in an offset style smoker, so we counter that by using pellets made from wood species with more intense smoke profiles. If you're going for authentic wood-smoked flavor, you just can't beat Cookin' Pellets!

In the world of premium fuels, Cookin' Pellets sets the bar, bar none. Their [100% black cherry pellets](#) are dynamite for poultry, their [100% hickory](#) rocks pork ribs and butts, and their mesquite-tinged [Longhorn blend](#) takes briskets smoked with pellets to another level.

Smoke Low 'n Slow...

Yes, we know cooking hot and fast is all the rage, but this mantra remains so much more than a tired cliché. To properly render collagen into juicy gelatin, briskets (and to a slightly lesser degree, pork butts) need a low-heat cooking environment for a long period of time.

Hot-and-fast fans try to compensate for the lack of this rendering process by pumping the meat full of injections loaded with phosphates. While this usually results in moist meat, there's no substitute for that silky-smooth,

lusciously rendered gelatin! Besides, the sodium content in most injections is extremely high, which often gives the meat an unnaturally soft, or even mushy, texture.

Our go-to smoking schedule for briskets and butts:

- One hour before you begin smoking, pre-heat your pellet smoker to 210° F.
- Smoke your meat at 210° until the internal temperature of the meat reaches 165–170°, about twelve or thirteen hours.
- Wrap the meat.
- Increase the smoker heat to 250° and continue smoking for about two or three hours longer, to an internal temperature of 192–195° for briskets (in the center of the flat) or 202–205° for pork butts.
- Finally, end with a 1-1/2–3-hour rest.

Smoke Cool Meats!

Cool as in the temp, not the vibe, although smoked brisket is definitely awesome! So many recipes, posts, and pitmasters tell you to leave your meat at room temperature for an hour (or two, or three) before smoking, but we disagree, in a big way.

The only benefit of doing this is that the salt and spices in the rub you applied get lots of time to sweat out and soak into the meat fibers, which adds great depth of flavor. However, there are two real downsides to this technique. First, warm meat will need less time in the smoker to reach doneness, which directly translates into less smoke flavor in your 'que. Also, a huge chunk of raw meat hanging out on your countertop for hours on end raises your risk of foodborne illness.

Our solution is to apply a rub, then wrap the meat tightly in plastic wrap before returning it to the cold, controlled environment of the refrigerator for up to twelve hours. Just make sure to apply a second light coat of rub just before adding the meat to the smoker, as the initial coat will be almost completely dissolved, and smoke particles bond better to a slightly coarse surface.

...and a bonus tip!

Smoke particles adhere better to a wet surface than a dry one. This means you can slightly boost the smoke flavor by misting briskets and pork butts with water several times throughout the cook! A small spray bottle is perfect for this. Mist the meat after four hours on the smoker and again at the eight-hour mark. You won't be able to taste the difference between water and other liquids like apple juice, so we recommend simply using water.

Get inspiration for your pellet smoker: [browse the Meadow Creek recipe library](#).