

BBQ Pineapple Pork with Freeze Dried Mango Crunch

A tropical, low-and-slow smoked pork dish infused with bold Caribbean spice and sweet island flavors; perfect for warm summer nights and backyard gatherings.



Cooking Method

Low and Slow Smokehouse BBQ

Maintain a steady 115°C (240°F) in a smoker or charcoal grill using indirect heat and hardwood chunks (preferably fruit wood like guava or apple) for best results.

Flavor Focus

- **Spice Highlight:** *Aunty Jen's Caribbean Seasoning*

A balanced, bold island spice with warmth and aromatics but without overpowering heat.

- **Salt Highlight:** *Red 'Alaea Pa'akai*

Earthy, mineral-rich Hawaiian sea salt, perfect for slow-cooked meats.

Ingredients

(Serves 6–8)

- 2 lbs. pork shoulder or pork belly, **skin scored**
- 2 tbsp **Aunty Jen's Caribbean Seasoning**
- 1 tbsp **Red 'Alaea Pa'akai**
- 2 tbsp **olive oil**
- 1 cup **pineapple juice**, divided
- ½ cup **crushed freeze-dried mango**
- 12 **Hawaiian sweet rolls** or 2 cups steamed **sticky rice**
- Fresh cilantro or mint, for garnish (optional)
- Optional toppings: pickled red onions, thin-sliced jalapeños, lime wedges

Instructions

1. Prep the Pork (1 day ahead)

- Score the fat side of the pork shoulder or belly in a crisscross pattern.
- Rub the pork thoroughly with olive oil, then massage in the Caribbean seasoning and Red 'Alaea salt.
- Cover and refrigerate **overnight** to let flavors penetrate.

2. Smoke Low & Slow

- Preheat smoker or indirect grill setup to **115°C (240°F)**.

- Add fruit wood chips for aromatic smoke (e.g., guava, apple, or kiawe).
- Place pork in the smoker and cook for **4–5 hours**, or until meat is tender and shreddable.
- Baste with **pineapple juice every hour**, keeping it moist and layering flavor.

3. Finish & Assemble

- Once done, remove pork and let rest 15 minutes.
- Shred with forks, mixing some pan juices back in.
- Sprinkle **crushed freeze-dried mango** over the shredded pork just before serving—it will rehydrate slightly from residual heat and provide bright, tangy crunch.

4. Serve

- **Option 1:** Pile onto toasted **Hawaiian sweet rolls** for sliders.
- **Option 2:** Spoon over warm **sticky rice** for a hearty plate.
- Garnish with chopped herbs, a squeeze of lime, or pickled onions for brightness.

Pairing Suggestion

Serve with:

- A hibiscus iced tea or passionfruit lemonade
- Grilled corn with lime & chili salt
- Charred pineapple salsa

How to Make Freeze-Dried Mango

Best Method: Using a Home Freeze Dryer

To get truly freeze-dried mango like commercial snack-quality (crispy, shelf-stable, with preserved nutrients), you'll need a **home freeze dryer** like a Harvest Right unit.

Ingredients & Tools

Ingredients:

- **Ripe mangoes** (as many as you like)
 - Look for firm, slightly soft mangoes—Ataulfo or Kent varieties work well.

Equipment:

- Home **freeze dryer**
- **Sharp knife** and **cutting board**
- **Parchment paper** or nonstick trays

Instructions (Freeze Dryer Method)

1. **Prep the Mango**
 - Wash, peel, and slice mangoes into thin slices or small cubes (½ inch thick or less).
 - Uniformity is key for even drying.
2. **Pre-Freeze (Optional but Recommended)**
 - Lay slices in a single layer on a tray and freeze overnight.
 - This reduces workload and time for the freeze dryer.
3. **Load the Freeze Dryer**
 - Arrange mango pieces in a single layer on the freeze dryer trays (lined if needed).
 - Insert trays into the machine.
4. **Start the Freeze-Drying Cycle**
 - Set your machine according to manufacturer's instructions.
 - A typical cycle for mango takes **24–36 hours**, depending on size, moisture, and room humidity.
5. **Test for Doneness**
 - Mango should be completely dry, brittle, and *snap* when broken.
 - If it feels chewy or leathery, it's not fully dried.
6. **Store**
 - Immediately transfer cooled mango to **airtight, vacuum-sealed containers** or **Mylar bags** with oxygen absorbers.
 - Store in a cool, dark place. It can last **years** if stored properly.

Alternative (Crispy-Style) Without Freeze Dryer

Note: This is *not true freeze-drying* but can mimic the texture.

Ingredients:

- Mangoes, thinly sliced

Equipment:

- Oven or dehydrator
- Baking sheet + parchment
- Optional: fan or low-temp air fryer

Instructions (Oven “Crispy-Dried” Mango)

1. **Slice mangoes very thin** ($\frac{1}{8}$ " or less).
2. **Preheat oven to 170°F (75°C)** or the lowest setting.
3. **Place slices on parchment-lined tray** in a single layer.
4. **Dry for 8–12 hours**, flipping halfway. Keep oven door slightly open to let moisture escape.
5. Once crispy, **cool fully** and store in airtight jars. Will last up to 1 month.

Pro tip: Sprinkle mango slices with **lime zest and a pinch of chili salt** before drying for a spicy-tangy twist.