

Where's the best barbecue in central Pa.? A restaurant critic's favorite spots

May 14, 2015 - By Mimi Brodeur - [LINK](#)

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Warm weather brings out smoky scents from backyard barbecues. But if you'd rather not fuss around the grill, head to one of these area barbecue hot spots. I've listed them in order of my personal preference.

[Road Hawg BBQ](#)

42 S. Main St. Duncannon.

Call ahead orders: 717-834-4247 Catering inquiries: 717-580-0033

facebook.com/pages/Road-Hawg-BBQ/

It's a small place with a big nod to Pittsburgh sports teams. Go Steelers! "In 2001 we started out catering and selling barbecue at fairs," said owner Keith Walters. "Then we had a semi-full time operation along 11/15 working out of a trailer. What started out as a hobby grew into a monster." Meats are dry rubbed with house blend of spices, then slow-smoked over quarter split hickory logs.

[Read more about Road Hawg BBQ](#)

Pittsburgh-style sandwiches slip barbecue choices of pulled pork, sliced beef brisket, grilled chicken breast or chopped beef BBQ between thick, soft-fresh Italian bread slices and layers of provolone cheese, fresh cut crisply deep-fried fries, homemade coleslaw and thick cut tomato slices. Wet and messy, this combination spills apart with every bite.

[Road Hawg was the winner of the 2013 PennLive BBQ Brawl. Check out what our judges had to say about it.](#) Candy-sweet, heat rubbed St. Louis ribs have smoky-pink meat beneath charred, crunchy crust. Feminine size fingers of baby back ribs peel off rather than fall completely off bones with moderate, tooth-tender resistance. If you haven't tried the brown sugar and molasses simmered baked beans, you haven't gone to Road Hawg heaven.

[Shakedown BBQ](#)

668 Firehouse Rd, Grantville,

Tel: 717-469-4167

facebook.com/pages/ShakeDown-BBQ

Lost but not forgotten, anyone that's been to this bucolic barbecue setting will remember exactly what they sunk their teeth into here. The short, concise menu is a guarantee that everything is cooked fresh, not frozen.

[Read more about Shakedown BBQ](#)

Known for its wood-grilled and applewood smoked meats, hefty testosterone packed sandwiches showcase moist handfuls of pulled pork, ultra-moist pulled chicken and well-seasoned chargrilled beef brisket. Tres Hombres (\$14) puts hair on your chest with its manly combo of pulled pork, smoked sausage, bacon, Anna Mae's luscious homemade coleslaw (with peppery bite) and BBQ sauce. Wednesdays and Thursdays are the only days to chomp down oversized smoked wings, \$13.95/dozen. Check out the line-up of music on their website.

[Momo's BBQ & Grill](#)

307 Market St., Harrisburg

Tel: 717-230-1030

[facebook.com/MoMosBBQandGrill](https://www.facebook.com/MoMosBBQandGrill)

Folks are living it up, high on the hog at this sparsely decorated, dark barroom close to the Whitaker Center. Emphasizing the "bar" in barbecue, a book of craft beers and descriptions come with smoke-ringed, barbecue-focused menus. More than a dozen folks dangle feet and sip brews at the 50-foot counter.

[Read more about Momo's](#)

Don't expect the meat to drop off the bone. It's overcooked if it does. Instead bite through tooth-resistant pink-smoked baby back ribs (half rack for \$15.99). Meat is tender but not so tender that it slips off the bone before it slips through your lips. Favorites here are Momo's sliders (\$8.99) heaping with pulled pork, pulled chicken and chopped brisket and Alabama white sauce scribbled half BBQ chicken (\$11.99).

[Official Barbecue and Burger](#)

6295 Lyters Lane, Harrisburg,

Tel: 717-564-2152

officialbbq.net

This neighborhood locale is out of sight, but that doesn't stop customers from seeking this place out. The short and focused menu features well-made items. Signature wings (six for \$6) are rubbed with special piquant sauce and then slowly smoked. Homemade barbecue sauce gets slathered over the wings before they are grilled and sprinkled one more time with special seasonings. The outer skin is crisp and veil-thin and interior chicken meat tastes spicy and moist.

[Read more about Official Barbecue and Burger](#)

Another reason customers have been seeking out this clandestine find are the big oversized half-pound Angus burgers (\$7). The patties are as full sized as grill-toasted buttered buns. Thick, rounded patties bulge out and around the bun like inner tubes. My burger had a crown of melted extra-sharp cheddar cheese. Dill pickles, pickled jalapeno, ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise oozed out with every firm grip of the burger. Crisp bacon adds the final wisp of crisp, smoky flavor.

[Dickey's Barbecue Pit](#)

6520 Carlisle Pike, Silver Springs Twp.

Tel: 717-458-0515

[facebook.com/Dickeys.Barbecue.Pit.Mechanicsburg](https://www.facebook.com/Dickeys.Barbecue.Pit.Mechanicsburg)

Who needs advertising when the smoke from the restaurant is vented straight out of the roof and into the parking lot? The smell of Texas-barbecue wafts from the tail end of the strip mall into people's cars. Every piece of meat from ham and Italian-marinated chicken to pork butt and ribs are cooked on the premises. Stick to house favorites pork ribs and brisket, which are consistently favorably cooked and well-seasoned (not too salty). Smoky, pulled pork needs extra sauce to moisten and flavor the otherwise characterless meat -- it's the texture of store bought shredded hash browns. I found prices to be high for the amounts dished out.

[Read more of what Mimi has to say about Dickey's Barbecue Pit](#)

For a quick barbecue fix, drop in to this friendly and fast barbecue chain. Meats are sold by the pound or as meals. Around the holidays they smoke whole turkeys but right now the turkeys are quartered then smoked.

Need more barbecue in your life? [Check out the results of the PennLive BBQ Brawl.](#)