

Courtesy of Owens & Hull

STARTERS & SIDES Owens & Hull

Owens & Hull's smoked onion jam

By Sarra Sedghi · Rough Draft Atlanta, 7/16/2025

Ingredients

- [ ] 3 large sweet onions, cut into a medium dice
- [ ] 2 cups water
- [ ] 3/4 cup of apple cider vinegar
- [ ] 1 cup sugar
- [ ] 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- [ ] 1/4 cup honey
- [ ] 1 tbsp garlic powder
- [ ] 1 tbsp paprika
- [ ] 1 tbsp ancho chili powder
- [ ] 4 tbsp canola oil
- [ ] 1 aluminum baking pan (if smoking)
- [ ] Kosher salt to taste

Directions

1. Smoke the onions: If using a smoker (Big Green Egg, pellet grill, etc), get the temperature up to 250 degrees Fahrenheit using oak or pecan wood, chips, or pellets.
2. Place onions in an aluminum pan. Toss with 2 tablespoons of canola oil and a hearty pinch of salt.
3. Smoke for 1.5 to 2 hours, mixing onions every 30 minutes to make sure to get even color and/or smoke.
4. Make the jam: When onions are coming off the smoker, heat up a heavy-duty Dutch oven or pot and add in the remaining canola oil. Raise the temperature to medium heat (250 – 350 degrees Fahrenheit).
5. Once the oil is heated, add the onions, stirring constantly. When onions begin to sweat, add Worcestershire sauce and continue stirring.
6. As the onions begin sticking to the bottom of the pot, add just enough water to deglaze. Add in garlic, paprika, and ancho chili powder.

7. The deglazed onions and water will begin to reduce. Continue adding water to deglaze as onions start to stick to the bottom. Continue this process until the onions have a deep golden brown color.
8. Add sugar and stir until sugar melts into the onions. Add in the apple cider vinegar and honey, reduce heat to medium low, and continue to reduce until the mixture reaches a semi-thick, jammy texture.
9. Serve immediately or refrigerate for later use.

> Note: The smoked portion of this recipe is optional.

The story

This week, we're sharing Owens & Hull's recipe for smoked onion jam. You may recognize it from the restaurant's "Once a Week (OAW) Smoked Burger," a 1/2-pound smoked ground brisket patty that also comes topped with American cheese and special sauce. But this jam is equally great in sandwiches, pasta, or as a condiment for a cheese board.

Co-owner Bryan Hull (Secret Pint BBQ) said the onion jam is based on smoked grilled onions he made at NFA Burger's first Giving Kitchen benefit in 2023. He used that base technique to develop the onion jam for the restaurant's burger.

While Owens & Hull uses oak chips to smoke meats, Hull said that pecan, hickory, or any fruit woods will grant a similar flavor. The smoking portion is also optional, so if you choose to forgo it, start by sautéing the onions in a cooking oil of your choice. Once the onions start caramelizing and sticking to the pan, transfer everything to the Dutch oven and proceed from there.

The key to this recipe is maintaining the onions, regardless of whether you smoke them at the beginning. You won't need more than 1 to 2 tablespoons of water for each deglaze.

"Once the onions hit the pot, don't leave them unattended and have water at the ready," Hull said. "As the sugars start to cook out, they can burn really quick. You want to constantly be adding a little water to deglaze the bottom of the pan."

Hull said that all ingredients can be sourced at a supermarket, as most Publix and Kroger locations now carry ancho chili powder.

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