

## Pulled Pork:

It's hard to get the measure of a good pork sandwich when it's slathered in barbecue sauce; the experience becomes a sauce story. Instead, try the Cuban pork sandwich at **Clancey's Meats & Fish** ([clanceysmeats.com](http://clanceysmeats.com)) when it's featured on the sandwich roster. Butchers obviously know meat, but these guys also know how to shred it and pile it simply with just the right hit of engaging spices. **Chimborazo** ([chimborazo-restaurant.com](http://chimborazo-restaurant.com)), an Ecuadorian favorite, has a cult following for its pork sammie, which gets love from the house hot sauce. But hands down, the king of carnitas has to be the pork from **Brasa** ([brasa.us](http://brasa.us)), where there's no doubt the ingredients have been compiled by a master chef who knows soul cooking. —S. M.



CRAIG BARES

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**WINNER: BRASA**



**YOU HEAR IT OVER** and over from barbecue freaks—the more uncomfortable a barbecue joint is, the better it must be. Ted's has no seating and basically no niceties, but it's great barbecue. There's not as much smoke on these ribs, just a distinct smoke ring at the top of the meat, which is tender but not limp, textured but not chewy, appropriately moist but not slimy or greasy. The sauce is sweet plus heat, not quite as well integrated as Big Daddy's. We'd suggest the "medium" sauce, but get it on the side; otherwise, Ted Cook's floods its ribs with sauce. This competition isn't about sides, but we gotta admit the jo-jo potatoes, slaw, black-eyed peas, and corn muffins all elevate the way we feel about the place. [tedcooks19thholebbq.com](http://tedcooks19thholebbq.com)

## TED COOK'S 19TH HOLE BBQ

# RIBS VS. RIBS

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**BIG DADDY'S**

**BIG DADDY'S IS THE** St. Paul version of Ted Cook's, so its minimalist vibe has barbecue freaks on pins and needles from the get-go. Grimy commercial strip. Check. Too hot inside. Check. Seating is a stool looking at a wall. Check. Plastic everywhere, garish colors. Check. The complimentary bread in a Ziploc bag is enough to get you kicked out of most farmers' markets. But damn if these ribs don't stand out against the competition. Then serious smoke on these bad boys—you taste it, smell it, see it. They are served naked; they have nothing to hide. The texture is perfect, neither dry nor wet, neither chewy nor "fall the bone" (a dubious local benchmark, to be sure). [bigdaddysbbq-stpaul.com](http://bigdaddysbbq-stpaul.com)



**AND THE WINNER IS...** These are both great ribs, but Big Daddy's is masterful barbecue, perfected over decades by true artists. Its spare ribs are smokier and its "hot" sauce is a nuanced elixir of sweet and heat. Neither are joints you want to hang out in, but Ted Cook's is strictly a to-go operation, so it's hard to eat Cook's ribs at their best except in your car. **WINNER: BIG DADDY'S —A. P.**

