

## **2a - The Fourth of July barbecue : a Southern tradition**

Across the South, barbecue will play a starring role in the upcoming July 4th weekend, and newspapers and magazines are chock full of recipes, tips, and tricks to help you prepare. (Here at Southern Living, we even have a few ideas about what to wear.) Celebrating the 4th with barbecue is actually a very old Southern tradition, one that dates back to the beginning of the country.

Just after the Revolution, Americans marked Independence Day with public dinners, and in the South those dinners quickly grew into large outdoor barbecues. In 1808, for instance, the citizens of Oconee County, South Carolina, gathered in "an agreeable and natural arbor" where, as the local newspaper reported, they "partook of an elegant barbecue". . . to celebrate the anniversary of our national existence.

As settlers moved westward, those from the Southern states took their barbecue tradition with them. Texans were celebrating Independence Day with barbecue by the late 1840s, and in 1858—just five years after the city's founding—the residents of Kansas City staged their first Fourth of July barbecue, which drew 3,000 attendees and featured a barbecued buffalo.

So if you're dining on barbecue this holiday weekend, you're continuing a long, proud Southern tradition.

Robert Moss, *www.southernliving.com*, June 2015