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How many people do I need to start a BBQ team?

Startin the Fire

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This is a question without a definitive answer. The easy answer is as few or as many as you like. There you go. Of course, I can not let the answer be that simple. A look around the current landscape of BBQ teams will find an assortment various shapes and sizes, and I am not talking about the pit masters waistlines. At any given contest you have team sizes from 1 person to multiple members.

Cooking a contest alone is possible, and when done with the proper amount of planning and experience, can be done very successfully. I have spoken to folks that have cooked by themselves and the consensus is they are whipped when they are done. Heck, I have 4 other people on my team and I am completely spent at the end of a contest weekend. The good thing about a single person team is you have no one to argue with, the down side is you have no one to blame when things go wrong.

A full KCBS contest requires a commitment of time, energy and cash, so my advice would be to find a couple of friends that share your interest and see if they would like to get involved. If they seem resistant at first, you could bribe them with BBQ leftovers and cold beer. If that doesn't work try convincing them that they could attain world wide notoriety along with endless amounts of fame and fortune. (A compete fabrication of course, but at this point, they are oblivious.) If they still don't bite, try begging, that worked for me. Of course, it doesn't hurt if they have deep pockets, long arms, and aren't afraid to reach.

There are no current rules stating the number of persons needed to constitute a team. Most contests ask only for the head cooks name, although occasionally, organizers ask for a list of the other team members. The good part about this setup is your team can be fluid. By that I mean, if Joe can only make it to two events this year, you can get Charlie to take his spot. Cook one event with 2 people, cook the next with 4, the choice is yours.

Once you have an interested person or two, you can then decide how you want the team to function. Some teams split the meat categories between members, each taking responsibility for an entry, start to finish. Other split the large and the small meats. Still others operate under a dictatorship, where only one person calls the shots. Either way, you need one person to oversee the entire operation, a CEO of sorts. A BBQ team is like a small office, you need a boss to take the credit when things go right, and to assign blame when they go south.

Bottom line here is get a couple of friends, that share your vision, know how to laugh, aren't afraid to work, have a little free time, and like to cook/eat BBQ, and you've got yourself a BBQ team. The only thing left to do is decide on your team name!

