

The debate over whether ketchup belongs in barbecue sauce has caused many a shouting match and even stirred a raucous debate in the North Carolina legislature. Some recipes omit the sugar, but I think it rounds out the flavor. Using apple juice is also a veer from the standard, but I stole the idea from my favorite North Carolina sauce, **George's**, made in Nashville, NC. It really adds depth. Since it is mostly vinegar, it keeps a long time in the fridge.

Recipe

Makes. Makes about 1 1/2 cups. Click [here](#) to calculate how much you need and for tips on **saucing strategies**.

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Takes. About 30 minutes.

Keeps. Because it has a high acid content, it can keep for months in the refrigerator.

Ingredients

- 1 cup distilled vinegar
- 1/4 cup ketchup
- 1/4 cup apple juice
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce
- 3 tablespoons light brown sugar
- 1/2 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 teaspoon finely ground black pepper

About the vinegar. *I've seen both distilled and cider vinegar used in NC. I usually prefer cider vinegar in most of my sauce recipes because it has more flavor, but in this recipe I prefer distilled. Try both on meat and see which you prefer. Lemme know.*

Method

- 1) Whisk together all the ingredients and let them sit for at least three hours to allow the flavors to meld. Overnight is better. A week is best. The locals mop it on the meat with a basting brush once every hour while cooking. If you do mop, a **good silicon brush** is best. It holds lots of fluid and is easy to clean. A lot of places still use **string mops**, but I think these are too hard to clean and potential sources of food poisoning.
- 2) Divide the sauce in two. Use one for basting. The locals mop it on the meat with a basting brush once every hour while cooking.
- 3) Take the remaining mop and serve it in a cruet on the side so your guests can drizzle on more if they wish.