



## BACON BAKLAVA

SERVES 6 TO 10

In Greece and the Middle East, baklava is as common a dessert as ice cream is in our country. This is my interpretation of this layered pastry, made with bacon instead of the classic pistachio nut filling.

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### Butter, for greasing the pan

**¾ cup white sugar**

**¾ cup honey**

**1 cup water**

**1 Tbsp lemon juice**

**2 cups fried-until-crisp, cooled and  
chopped bacon (about 1½ lbs raw bacon)**

**1 cup lightly packed brown sugar**

**½ tsp ground cinnamon**

**1 lb frozen phyllo sheets, thawed**

**1 cup butter, melted**

Prepare your grill for indirect cooking or smoking on medium heat. Grease a 9- × 13-inch baking pan with butter.

In a small saucepan, combine the white sugar, honey, water and lemon juice. Bring to a boil on low to medium heat, and cook this syrup for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until syrupy. Allow the syrup to cool to room temperature.

In a small bowl, combine the bacon, brown sugar and cinnamon until well mixed.

Unwrap the phyllo pastry and cover the sheets with a damp dish towel to keep them from drying out. Place the melted butter in a small bowl. Using a pastry brush and working quickly, place 1 sheet of phyllo in the baking pan, and brush it liberally with butter. Sprinkle the bacon mixture over the pastry and then add another layer of pastry. Repeat the layering of pastry, brushing with butter and sprinkling with bacon until you have used all but one of the phyllo sheets. Set the last sheet on top and brush with the remaining butter.

Using a very sharp knife, cut the baklava into 2-inch squares or if you want a more traditional shape, cut into diamonds. Set the baking pan on the cool side of your grill, close the lid and bake or smoke until crisp and brown, 30 to 35 minutes. Remove from the heat. Pour the syrup mixture over the baklava and allow to cool to room temperature. Serve family-style, and watch as your guests lick the tasty syrup from their fingers.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Our BBQ team, House of Q, was at the Cowboy Cookoff and BBQ Competition at the Cloverdale Rodeo a few years back. For the chef's choice category, where the cooks have open domain as to what they cook for the judges, each team was supplied with bacon. They could do whatever they wanted with it. Anything. There were many different types of dishes submitted, including bacon roses and bacon tacos. I decided to do a dessert. I replaced the traditional pistachios in Baklava with crisped bacon, smoked it in my smoker, cut it up and sent it off to the judges. We didn't win that day—maybe the judges were smitten by the bacon roses—but my guests loved it, which is always a Pitmaster's greatest reward.