



Spit Trussing a Whole Animal Using a Needle and Twine

Securing the animal to the spit is a critical part of the rotisserie cooking operation. While there are many different ways to do this, it usually takes more than one method to ensure that the meat won't come loose and "flop around" while cooking.

Stitching the backbone of the animal directly to the spit with twine is our baseline method and used before any other. It provides a way to secure the middle section of the animal as well as bring the spine and spit together. It also helps secure the animal to facilitate the rest of the prep procedure. This technique will work as a stand-alone method for only up to a 30 lb. animal. For anything bigger, we suggest using at least one additional rigging technique (pins, forks, clamps, u-bolts, shackles, etc).

Preparation:

1. Support your spit on both ends (setting it up on a fully assembled and motor-mounted spit is recommended), about sixteen inches off of a clean work surface. This will give you enough room to work on both sides of the spit.
2. Slide/lay your choice of meat across the spit.

Important - Aligning the meat correctly at this stage is very important. Make sure that the holes in the spit are at a 90 degree angle to the ground. This will ensure that the spit pins will be properly aligned when inserted. Also, try to align the meat so that a spit hole is lined up close to the middle of both the hams and shoulder meats. If the pig must be moved off center, that is OK. Move the head closer to the end of the spit if needed.

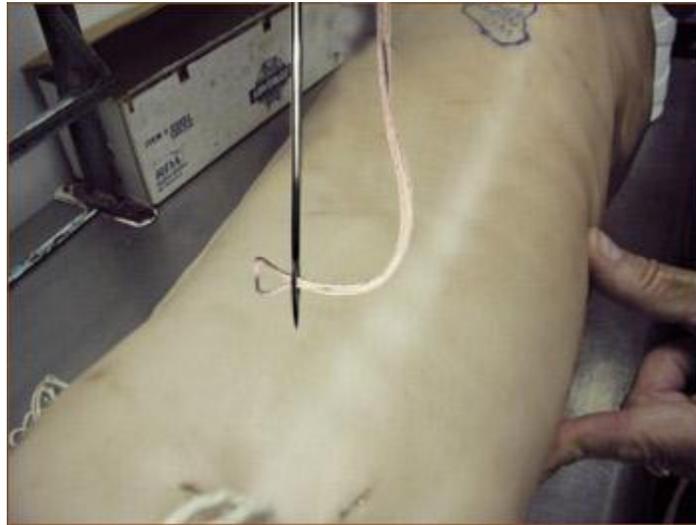
3. Cut several (at least 10) 36 inch lengths of butcher twine, which will be used to attach the meat to the spit. Fold each length in half, "doubling up" the twine.



Stitching the backbone:

1. Insert the "looped" end of the twine section into the eye of the large 14 inch needle.
2. Place the point of the needle about 1 inch on either side of the backbone and at about where the back leg starts (make sure that you are into the rib cage and not going into the leg meat) (show this with picture).

3. Drive the needle down carefully making sure to go between the ribs.



4. Look down under the animal and locate where the needle and twine are located. (be careful as the needle is sharp) and remove the twine from the needle.
5. Come back to the top of the animal and line the needle up directly across the backbone from when the first insertion was made. Feel for the opening between the ribs and push the needle through.
6. At the underside of the animal, find the twine and insert it back into the needle eye.
7. Come back to the top and draw the needle back up until the twine is all the through.
8. Remove the twine from the needle. You now should have two pieces of twine coming up from the meat on either side of the backbone.



9. Grab both pieces of twine and ***pulling as tight as you can***, tie the twine at the top. Make a double knot and cut off the excess twine. You have completed one stitch.
10. Repeat the above procedure every 3 inches or so until you run out of room. The more stitches, the better.

Securing the legs and feet

If you do not have any other hardware for securing the legs (hose clamps, shackles) then use your twine.

1. Bring the feet back to the spit and lash with a few turns of twine just above the feet, Pull very tight and tie off.
2. Once the legs have been secured, you can also pin the hams together by stitching through the meat and around the backbone, pulling tight and tying off. If you are not using pins, do this thoroughly.

Using the small needle for the belly and ears

Belly - The smaller needle (6-8 inches, eye at the dull end) can be used both for stitching the belly and for securing the ears if desired.

1. Cut a length of twine at least 4 feet and insert one end in the eye of the needle.
2. Bring the two flaps of the belly skin together at one end and insert the needle through both layers.
3. Proceed to use the cable stitching method (recommended) or just a common stitch until the end. Tie off the stitching and cut off the excess twine.

Ears - You may or may not have ears on your animal (some butchers remove them). If you do still have them, they will have to be dealt with or they will burn during cooking. One way is to stitch the back to the head so they won't protrude out and overcook. Use the above procedure (for the belly stitching) to do this. Another way is to wrap the ears in foil until the final hour or so of cooking. This will protect them, create a better appearance and make them tastier to eat.

Trussing the whole animal

The longer you cook the meat, the more connective tissues can break down and the animal literally starts to fall apart. For very heavy animals 125 lbs. and up, this is a very real concern and the whole animal needs to be trussed (especially the big bones) to prevent parts from coming loose or even falling off. Using twine for this is not the best method (the stitches will loosen as the meat shrinks over time and are very hard to tighten) but better than nothing. Using chicken wire for this is not recommended due to the zinc (poisonous) coating that may leach into the meat during cooking. The best method is to use oversized stainless steel worm-gear hose clamps that can be tightened as needed all the way through the cooking.