Beginner's Guide To Barbecue

A Refresher for the Rest of Us:

Become a Master of the Grill Today!

Contents

A. Why is Barbecuing So Popular? 3

B. Seven Smart Barbecue Tips and Tricks 4

1. Buying Meat for Smoking or Grilling 5
2. Washing or Soaking Meat and Poultry 5
3. Marinating Properly 6
5. Lighting the Charcoal Correctly and Safely 7
5. Searing, Flipping, and Poking 8
6. Adding Flavor During Grilling 8
7. Stay Near the Grill While Cooking 8

C. The Grills 9

What You Should Know About This Equipment 9

What to Consider When Buying a Barbecue Grill 10

The Different Types of Grills 12
The Benefits of Gas Grills 14
The Particulars of Natural Gas Grills 15
Your First Charcoal Grill 16
Barbecue Smokers – Function and Features 17
D. Basic Barbecue Accessories 18
E. Proper Care For Your Grill 20
F. Be A Smart Barbecue Grill Owner – Plan Ahead 22
Menu 22
Weather 23
The Meat and the Side Dishes 23
The Grill 23
G. Doneness Versus Safety 24
Beef 24
Pork 25
Ground Meat and Poultry 25
Combination Dishes 25
No More Guesswork 25
H. Grilling Guidelines - Charcoal Grilling vs Gas Grilling 26
I. Most Common Barbecuing Mistakes and How To Eliminate Them 27
J. Barbecue Rubs, Seasoning and Spices 29
K. Plan A Perfect BBQ Party 30
L. Plan A BBQ Clambake Party 31
M. Plan Your Chicken BBQ Party 32
N. An Aloha Kebabs Party 34
O. Some Tasty BBQ Recipes 35
Pork Ribs Kansas City Style 35
Apricot-Glazed Pork Chops 36
The Ultimate Chicken Barbecue 38
Grilled Shrimp Tacos 40
Parmesan-topped Mussels 41
P. Cooking Vegetables on the Grill 42

Q. Preparing Different Kinds of Barbecue Sauces 45
R. Professional Barbecue Products..... 46

A. Why is Barbecuing So Popular?

Barbecuing is a great American tradition. Each year, according to researchers, at least 90% of families attend at least one barbecue party or celebration. About 40% of families delight in throwing parties that center around the idea of barbecuing. With statistics like that, one must wonder why barbecuing is such a popular event and tradition.

First, barbecuing or grilling allows you to create a meal that is unmatched by any other type of cooking. The grilled smell and taste will perk up even the pickiest meat eater.

A variety of meats and side dishes are used when barbecuing. Traditionally, families cook pork, beef, chicken, and fish on their grills. When visiting your local grocery store, look for meats that are specifically cut and packaged for barbecuing. This food is so popular that many stores have special cuts of meat for this purpose. If you do not find prepackaged meats, then chances are spices, marinates, and kits for grilling are somewhere nearby.

Traditional side dishes include potato salad, beans, and coleslaw. These sides work well with the variety of meats available and are easy to prepare and store until it is time to eat. But millions of BBQ lovers today try many other vegetables and side dishes—the limit is only your imagination!

Your traditional condiment bar should include at minimum: pickles, relish, and onions.

Different types of grills will present different types of flavors. Charcoal and smoker grills present a natural “smoked” flavor which is one of the most known tastes of barbecuing. Smokers even allow you to control slight changes in the flavor of the meat by using different types of wood. Alternatively, propane grills allow grillers to cook their meals faster, but still have a grilled flavor.

Grills come with many different types of cooking surfaces. These different cooking surfaces include a BBQ surface, a flat grill, and a ribbed grill. Some grills even offer these surfaces as non-stick, which allow you to cook a whole array of foods that you

would not be able to cook on a grill otherwise. You will be able to cook your whole meal, including side dishes if you plan correctly. Some gas grills even contain a Wok-type surface for cooking pasta and rice dishes. Some even have a full rotisserie set that allows you to cook rotisserie chicken.

Another reason barbecuing is so popular is the fact that it gives you a reason to hold a party or celebration.

Outdoor parties not only allow your guests to be present during the cooking of the meal, but also give them the opportunity to be with friends, usually in a more casual atmosphere.

Themed parties are always fun for your family and guests. Festive decorations can be found at any local party or general store. You may also consider purchasing decorations that can be stored and reused at a different time, such as reusable tablecloths and Tiki torches. Give your clambake a beach theme by adding tropical music, and you may even consider adding some sand.

Finally, barbecuing is popular because it can be considered a hobby as well. Barbecuing, like anything else in life, takes time and practice. It can be fun to play and experiment with different techniques and recipes. Once you have developed a like for barbecuing, then you can focus on creating your own variations on traditional recipes and ideas.

Barbecuing is typically thought of as a summer event, but some diehard fans of BBQ will not think twice about breaking out their barbecue grills right in the middle of winter.

B. Seven Smart Barbecue Tips and Tricks

Barbecuing is not as simple as putting meat on stick and roasting it over a fire. Although this might work well with hot-dogs or marshmallows in campfires, meats are a different species, much harder and requiring longer time to cook! To a novice in the art, it can be downright confusing and frustrating. The task of cooking meat on an open fire can be really tricky. It takes a lot of patience and know-how to be able to come up with a really great barbecue dish.

Below are basic ‘tips and tricks’ to start learning everything you can about making good barbecues.

1. Buying Meat for Smoking or Grilling

Always keep in mind that buying good raw material when you're buying meat for the barbecue will help you get a great finished product.

Below are some tips for choosing wisely :

More fat is more flavor. A piece of meat that is well-marbled will certainly fare better on your grill or smoker than a leaner cut. For slow cooking, the "luxury cuts" such as filet are exactly wrong. Look for the cuts that come from the working areas of the animal and have more fat stores.

Fresher is better. Poke the meat you're buying (if it is wrapped). The meat should bounce back after you move your finger away. But if it doesn't, it's more likely that the meat had been on the shelf for too long.

The red liquid is a bad sign. The red watery substance you see pooling in a package of meat mean that the meat got too warm. The taste won't be as good as with meat that has been properly refrigerated.

2. Washing or Soaking Meat and Poultry

Washing raw poultry, beef, pork, lamb, or veal before cooking it is **not** recommended. Some consumers think they are removing bacteria from the meat and making it safe. But new research demonstrates that tiny droplets of watery germs tend to splash onto counters, cloths, dishes, backsplashes, etc. For safety, use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature. Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops can be cooked to 145°F. All cuts of pork should reach 160°F. All poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F.

Additionally, soaking poultry in salt water or brine is a personal preference and serves no purpose for food safety. If you choose to do this, however, preventing cross-contamination when soaking and removing the poultry from the brine water is essential.

3. Marinating Properly

For maximum flavor, it is best to marinate overnight whenever possible.

Never use extra virgin olive oil for marinating because it burns and smokes on contact with the heat. Best to use light olive oil, or vegetable oil and save your extra virgin bottles for your great sauces and salads.

Use a strong plastic bag when marinating. This should be tied securely to prevent leakage when it's time turn them. If not, use non-reactive containers such as glass, or stainless steel and remember to always cover food tightly with cling film.

Just before placing the meat on the barbecue grill, shake off any excess marinade to prevent burning or flaring and to avoid the smoky bitter flavor.

Alternatively, lightly seasoning your meat will work well, and will not have any adverse effects.

Always use a fresh, clean serving plate for the newly cooked meat. For safety, never use the same dish you used for marinating. This could cause the spread of many unwanted germs. Do not handle cooked meat with the same utensils that you used when it was raw.

4. Start with a Clean Grill

The amazing fish that you cooked last week was indeed tasty, but unless you want a hint of fish with your hot dogs, you need to clean your grill before cooking. It is recommended that you clean your grill each and every time you use it. Wait until it cools down, and then clean the surfaces with baking soda and the racks with grease fighting dish soap and water.

Before you begin cooking, spray your cooking area with a nonstick cooking spray. This will prevent your meat from sticking when you are rotating or removing it. If your meat sticks and tears, you will lose a large amount of juice, and your meat may dry out.

5. Lighting the Charcoal Correctly and Safely

Start with lighting the fire without using fire lighter chemicals, (if you do, you will taste them in your food). Simply scrunch up three or four pages of newspaper and place in the barbecue trough beneath a good handful of kindling. Place charcoals on top, and you are now set to light the paper. Sprinkle charcoal on top like you are building a bonfire.

Put the barbecue rack above and keep this burning for 15-20 minutes. When smoke has abated and the embers are glowing, you are all set to grill. Charcoal of good-quality normally lasts up to an hour.

Place your hand directly over the grill bars to check the temperature, rake the coals around a little but don't take too much time trying to adjust it. Never place food on the grill until the temperature is correct. The fluctuation in temperatures will cause your food to dry out or burn. If you are using a charcoal grill, make sure that the coals are completely gray before putting the meat on the grill. This will allow the temperatures to level out.

5. Searing, Flipping, and Poking

Searing your meat will lock in the juices and taste, but you do not want to cook your meat at that temperature for the whole time. Once you have seared both sides, reduce the heat to medium. This will ensure that your meat is full of flavor and tender.

It is best to flip your meat or vegetables with tongs or a spatula, rather than a fork. This will avoid losing juices during turning. Try to limit the flips. It is best to flip each item only once during the grilling process. Never press down on burgers or chicken (or anything) using a spatula while grilling. This only squeezes out the juices and once they're gone … they're gone!

Never poke your meat while it is cooking. Poking holes in meat will cause the juice inside to leak out into the bottom of the grill. Not only will this make your food dry and unappealing in the end, but it also could potentially ruin your barbecue grill. At the very least, it will cause a build-up of unwanted grease and juices on your grill, which will make cleanup harder.

6. Adding Flavor During Grilling

The best time to add barbecue sauce is during the last part of cooking time, when you are already sure that the meat is cooked. Barbecue sauces often have sugar as one of the ingredients. Cooking meat with barbecue sauce can be really tricky because sugar tends to burn easily. So, you really have to make sure that you cook the meat first before you add sauce, then lower the heat to avoid burning the sugar.

For great smoky flavor, soak some wood chips such as hickory, oak, or other hardwoods (not treated lumber!) in water for a while, then throw them onto your charcoal and cover the grill.

To fill grilled foods with herb essence, toss herbs directly onto the lighted charcoal while grilling. But if you're using a gas grill, soak the herbs in water, and put them on the grate before putting the meat on top of them.

7. Stay Near the Grill While Cooking

For safety's sake and for best barbecue results, always stay near the grill for as long as you are grilling. In most barbecue parties, guests would normally huddle around

to give their “chef's advice” to the host. Of course, barbecuing is also partly theatre. If this all sounds good, what are you waiting for? *Ready, get set, grill!*

C. The Grills

What You Should Know About This Equipment

If you want to make great barbecues, you should have the equipment that will help you put together a mean barbecue meal. Like most products in the market, there are BBQs that can be bought cheaply. You should, however, be careful with these inexpensive products because you’ll never know how they will perform. If you end up throwing into the landfill site in three years and buying another one, was it really so cheap?

If you are really serious in making barbecues, you should buy the best equipment that you can currently afford. This way, you can be assured of using it for a long time.

One piece of equipment that is already a permanent fixture in any barbecue party is the grill. Grills have a heat source, which can either be gas, electric, or charcoal; a cooking grate; and of course a body that holds it together. The most basic grill, of course, is the one that uses charcoal. This is the traditional type of barbecue grill, which people have for centuries used for cooking outdoors in various locations.

The flavor is also more authentic when cooked over charcoal. This is why most chefs prefer these kinds of grills despite the fact that they can be rather inconvenient, slow, and messy.

Another type of grill is the one that uses either natural gas or propane. Similar to gas kitchen stoves, gas grills have burners above which food can be cooked. There are even some types of gas grills that also let you roast. Gas grills in America often

have lids that keep the heat inside, while Australian gas grills do not have lids and will let you cook food more directly over the flame.

One thing though that you should take note when buying a gas grill is the fact that you will need a lot of space to store it. Unlike charcoal grills that you can place virtually anywhere, gas grills take up a lot of space.

Another type of grill is the electric grill, which is often found on patios. Most people, however, do not opt for this because of the lack of authenticity and flavoring. There is also what people call the pellet grill, which uses consistently sized hardwood pellets for the heat. What is good about pellet grills is that they can smoke and grill at the same time.

What to Consider When Buying a Barbecue Grill

So you find that you want to begin grilling and hosting awesome barbecue parties. The only problem is, you have not bought your barbecue grill yet. When purchasing your first grill, you will find that you have a large array of options available to you. It may seem overwhelming at first due to the almost endless possibilities and options available. The best way to decide on what type of grill is right for you is by educating yourself about them.

Cost

Barbecue grills can range from extremely cheap to very expensive depending on the type and features available on it.

If you are looking for a cheaper grill, then you should probably consider a charcoal grill. While larger charcoal grills are available, smaller grills can be purchased for as little as $10 to $15 at your local department store. Fancier, larger charcoal grills can be purchased for about $60 to $75. Charcoal grilling requires purchasing charcoal and kindling wood (or lighter fluid) each time you cook, so you must remember this when considering the cost.

Propane grills are slightly more expensive, starting around $100 dollars for small, simple models.

A smoker grill is slightly more expensive than a propane grill, starting at about $130.

Natural gas grills are on the higher end of cost. The mechanical part of this grill makes it larger and more complex. Natural gas grills are meant to be hooked up to your home gas line. Typically, these grills start at about $300.

Multiple fuel grills are the most expensive at about $450 and up. Multiple fuel grills allow you to grill using one or a combination of fuels.

Ease of Use

The easiest grill to use is by far the natural gas grill. Natural gas grills are designed to hook directly into your home's natural gas line, eliminating the need to purchase a separate fuel source. Natural gas grills are also one of the easiest grills to clean since you do not have to worry about cleaning out the charcoal or wood.

The next in line would be the propane grills, as they have similar features of the natural gas grills. The only issue keeping propane grills from being equal to natural gas grills is the fact that you must provide the propane somehow. This usually means hauling and handling propane tanks.

The hardest grills to use are charcoal and smoker grills. Both types of grills require additional purchases of supplies, and then require extra cleaning once grilling is complete.

Flavor

If you are concerned with flavor, you first choice should be a charcoal or smoker grill. Both of these grills allow you to replicate a true "smoked" flavor. Smokers are especially nice because you can also control the flavor by changing the type of wood or wood chips you use. This is good if you are wanting to slow cook your meat.

If you are wanting to cook something a little quicker, you may want to stick with the charcoal grill. A charcoal grill will cook quickly if you want it too, and it will still provide a good "smoked" taste.

Space

Finally, the space you have available should be a consideration. When your grill is not in use, you must have a proper place to store it. Charcoal and propane grills are ideal for smaller areas such as apartments and city homes. If you have a large amount of space available, then you may benefit from the larger options.

The Different Types of Grills

Charcoal Grills

Charcoal grills are the most commonly used type of grill. Charcoal grills utilize charcoal, and paper and kindling wood to heat up and cook your food. Charcoal grills come in all shapes and sizes, and vary in cost, with some small models being very inexpensive.

Charcoal grills come in small sizes, which are ideal for apartment dwellers or people with small homes. (Note that you cannot BBQ indoors—the fumes kill several people each year.) Once you have used your charcoal grill, you can clean it, and then store it away fairly easily.

One of the most noticeable features when using charcoal is the flavor of the food you cook. To cook with a charcoal grill, you must buy charcoal briquettes and kindling wood (or sometimes lighter fluid). Charcoal is a one-use item, and will need to be discarded after each use. Not very environmentally friendly in this day and age! Charcoal can be picked up at your local superstore, gas station, or grocery store, and is typically pretty inexpensive. Charcoal must be lit and allowed to burn until the charcoal is no longer on fire, but is red embers. The best way to get the pile to burn is by stacking it in a pyramid.

Smoker Grills

Smoker grills are used when flavor is the number one priority. Smoker grills burn wood at lower temperatures to slow cook your meat. Flavor can be controlled by using different types of woods. Some of the common **types of wood:**

1. Cherry - Similar to apple, but slightly bitter because most cherry wood comes from chokecherry trees. Use on poultry--turns skin dark brown.

2. Sugar Maple - Smoky, mellow and lightly sweet. Use on fish and beef.

3. Hickory - The most highly used wood, both commercially and for home use. Has a strong, heavy, bacon flavor. Use on pork, ham, and beef.

4. Oak - A lighter version of mesquite. Red oak is quite similar to mesquite; white oak is milder. Use on beef and fish.

Gas Grills

Gas grills work by a spark igniting the gas within the grill. Gas grills typically have a knob or button which you push, and which in turn activates a small hammer. The hammer hits the top of an ignition crystal. Then the burner mixes the gas with air and spreads it all over the cooking surface. This makes the gas grill one of the easiest and fastest grills to use.

Gas grills come in all shapes and sizes, which make them ideal for just about any type of barbecuing party. Smaller gas grills give you the portability needed to plan barbecue parties away from home. If you foresee camping trips, barbecues at the beach, or tailgate parties, you should buy a smaller gas grill. Smaller gas grills can range from 10 to 40 pounds. Portable gas containers are also available for these types of grills.

If your plans are more focused on home cooking, then larger grills should suit you fine. Larger gas grills are handy and efficient for cooking larger amounts of food quickly, and without as much mess as other types of grills.

Similar to weight, you should consider the amount of cooking surface area you will need, depending on the situations you will be in. If you will only be cooking for yourself or you and one other, you will want a gas grill with a smaller surface area, as it will be easier to clean. If you plan on holding parties or cooking for a larger family, then you will want to consider a gas grill with a larger surface area.

Gas grills, unlike some of the other grills types, sometimes come with several different types of cooking surfaces. These different cooking surfaces include a BBQ

surface, a flat grill, and a ribbed grill. Some grills even offer these types of surfaces as non-stick, which allow you to cook a whole array of foods that you would not be able to cook on a grill otherwise. You will be able to cook your whole meal, including side dishes if you plan correctly.

Some gas grills even contain a wok-type surface for cooking pasta and rice dishes, or a full rotisserie set that allows you to cook rotisserie chicken.

The Benefits of Gas Grills

In summer months, most of us look forward to a barbecue get-together. However, some diehard fans of barbecue break out their barbecue grills even in the middle of winter. Grillers in the southern states may not face the problem, but if you live above the lower states, then chances are your winter includes a large amount of snow. Smokers and charcoal grills present a problem as you must set the grill up properly, and then wait for the grill to get ready. This can take quite a bit of time, so the idea of standing outside waiting on the grill may not sound appealing in three feet of snow! Gas grills give you the opportunity of quickly cooking barbecue—in almost any weather.

Another issue to consider is the cleanup involved. Once you are done grilling with a smoker or charcoal grill, you are then required to clean out the burned remains. In three feet of snow, chances are that you do not have a place readily available for disposal. Fire hazards come with the burnt coals and wood chips. Gas grills will simply need a wipe down before being stored away for the next time.

A benefit that comes with different cooking surfaces is the ability to cook different foods, at different temperatures, at the same time. This feature is available if your gas grill has separate burners. This allows you to cook your meals much more quickly, because you can cook some food at higher temperatures, and other food at lower temperatures—both at the same time. Some gas grills even come with a warming feature, which will keep your food warm while the rest of it finishes cooking.

Gas grills usually contain a built-in thermometer, which will aide you in cooking. You will know the exact temperature you are cooking at. Charcoal and smoker grills do not typically contain this feature, which either leaves you guessing what temperatures you are cooking at, or requires you to buy extra equipment in order to find out what temperature your food is.

Gas grills have safety concerns too, but they are different than other types of grills. Propane gas is extremely flammable if not used correctly. Other grills, however, present higher opportunities for fire as they cook with an open flame. Gas grills are typically built much sturdier than their simpler counterparts.

If you are considering traveling with your barbecue grill, a gas grill may be the best option. Gas grills come in small sizes which are perfect for traveling. Typically, these use propane gas, and propane is often sold in small containers, available at your local grocery store or department store. That means if you have a small grill, and you can purchase a small propane canister, you will be able to easily transport the fuel source as well.

The Particulars of Natural Gas Grills

The easiest grill to use is by far the natural gas grill. Natural gas grills are designed to hook directly into your home's natural gas line, if you have one, eliminating the need to provide the fuel source. This cuts out all trips to the grocery store for more charcoal or propane.

Natural gas grills are not portable as you will need to be able to hook them up to your natural gas line, so weight should not be that big of an issue when you go to purchase your first grill. Instead, you should look at the surface area available. Will you be able to cook for just yourself and one other? How about a family of 5?

Here are some of the top brands of natural gas grills:

Broilmaster - One of the most popular brands of natural gas grills is the Broilmaster. This company has been around for a long time and prides itself on creating great grills, even in the company's early years. If you are looking for a reliable name, Broilmaster would be one way to go. One of the most popular Broilmaster grills is the Super Premium Series, which puts out 40,000 BTU's of cooking power, and has a cooking surface area of over 695 square inches.

Brinkman- These simple natural gas grills put out a lot of power, and can be purchased for less than competing brands. The Brinkmans, like the Broilmasters, are of solid construction and meant to last a long time. Typical power output is around 45,000 BTU's. Smaller units can range from 12,000 to 15,00 BTU's.

Lynx - Lynx natural gas grills were specially designed for cooking higher end meats such as steaks and ribs. This grill has a patent design that is supposed to lock in

flavor and juices. The Lynx run on the higher end of the price range, anywhere from $500 to $3000. The typical cooking power is about 50,000 BTU and has a cooking surface area of 840 square inches.

Your First Charcoal Grill

Perhaps you have just moved into your first place, or you decided that you wanted to broaden your horizons and try new things. Maybe you went to a Fourth of July barbecue party and tasted the beautiful smoked flavor, and decided you wanted to try to replicate it. After doing your research, you decided that a charcoal grill is right for you. Now what?

Now you have to decide what type of charcoal grill will suit your needs. Are you planning on traveling and using your charcoal grill? If so, you will need a charcoal grill that is small enough to travel with you. Smaller charcoal grills are ideal for cookouts, camping, and tailgate parties, but would not be useful if you were cooking for a larger number of people. If you plan on feeding big groups, a larger charcoal grill will better suit your needs. If you are having issues deciding on which type you should get, you may consider getting both. Smaller charcoals grills can cost as little as $15, and will give you the ability to travel.

Charcoal grills contain hot embers and fire when it is in use. Safety should also be a major concern when you are picking out your first charcoal grill. Look for a charcoal grill with a sturdy structure and sturdy legs. If your grill does not have sturdy legs, the chances of it falling over are much greater. When a charcoal grill falls over, it may send the hot coals spilling. Many charcoal grills also have built-in safety features such as a water reservoir and smothering valves. Undoubtedly, when you are cooking with fire, accidents can happen. In the case that your grill gets out of control or becomes too hot, these safety features will prevent potentially

dangerous fires. The fire department has much better things to do than help you cook!

The majority of barbecue aficionados prefer to use charcoal versus the others as it enhances the flavor of the food you cook. To cook with a charcoal grill, you must buy charcoal briquettes and kindling wood (or sometimes lighter fluid). And since charcoal is a one-use item, it is normally discarded after each use. Charcoal can be easily bought and picked up—large bags of it are available in your local superstore, gas station, or grocery store—and is typically fairly inexpensive. Charcoal must be lit and allowed to burn until the charcoal is no longer on fire, but is merely red or gray embers. The best way of lighting the charcoal is to arrange them in a pile, or stacking them in a pyramid shape atop some crumpled newspaper and kindling.

Barbecue Smokers – Function and Features

Another type of equipment that is used for barbecuing is the barbecue smoker. Smokers are not as commonly used as grills. Barbecue smokers have barbecue rigs with a side compartment, controllable heat vents, and smoke stacks. These allow you to control the amount of smoke that surrounds your food.

They have basically the same functions as the grills except that the heat source is away from the food. If it is a vertical water smoker, the heat source can be far below, while in a horizontal smoker, you can find it on the side. One of the basic features of the smoker is that it keeps the heat bottled up inside. This is why it can cook on really low temperatures, from around 200-250 degrees Fahrenheit.

Although cooking with barbecue smokers can be mighty slow compared to other grills, you can be sure that the flavor of the meat will be enhanced more.

Like grills, barbecue smokers also come in different types depending on the fuel being used. There are gas barbecue smokers, which run on propane or natural gas. There are also barbecue smokers that use charcoal or electricity. Charcoal barbecue smokers produces better flavor but can be really slow and complicated to set up while electric ones can be really easy to use but produce the least authentic flavor for the food.

Still, electric smokers have certain advantages such as being able to produce “cold smoke.” This method is used to cook dishes such as cold smoked salmon.

Budget-wise, you can really save with barbecue smokers. For less than $50, you can actually buy some really good ones that can cook great barbecues. There are, however, electric smokers that use wood chips for the smoke and can be large enough to be used in a busy restaurant. These are the really expensive ones. And the ongoing costs of the wood pellets or chips can be substantial over the years.

D. Basic Barbecue Accessories

Although barbecuing seems so simple at first glance, it is actually not. Like other kinds of cooking methods, it requires a lot of materials, ingredients, and equipment. In fact, there are a host of other accessories that you will need besides the tongs that you usually see.

Below are some of the barbecue accessories that you may need. Of course, you don't have to buy all of them at once. Just read on and decide what you need and what you don't. Many can be added over the years as you grow more proficient in the art.

Kabob Skewers

An all-time favorite technique for preparing a meat and vegetable meal is the skewer. Outdoor grilling with kabob skewers is fun, easy, and delicious. You can opt to mix and match any meat and most vegetables, or even put together a marshmallow dessert.

Heat Resistant Gloves

If you cannot stand the heat of the grill and would like to keep your hands and wrists from getting heat damaged, you should buy some flame and **heat resistant BBQ gloves**. Gloves with longer cuffs will protect your wrist from touching the grill or smoker, and also work well in the kitchen for handling oven racks, casseroles, and roasting pans.

Fork and Spatula

Other heat-reducing options include long-handled cooking utensils that are especially made for people who grill frequently. In fact, these long-handled utensils are considered really basic equipment in outdoor cooking and camping trips. Often sold in sets, a typical set will normally include a fork and a spatula.

Tongs

Another of the must-buy barbecue accessories are tongs that are used to lift cooked meats and vegetables and manipulate them while grilling without piercing the food, which often happens with a fork. Piercing can actually lessen the flavor of the food so most people do not use a fork until after they are sure that the meat is really cooked.

Meat claws or shredders

If you love shredded pork, or shredded ANYTHING, then make sure to get yourself a pair of meat handling claws. Bear paws/claws make quick work of any amount of meat, and can help with other cooking tasks, like moving hot roasts, tossing salads, and so on. Check out our stainless-steel and wood-handled **Devil's Claws from HellFire BBQ**.

Thermometer

Consider buying a cooking thermometer, which helps determine if the meat is at the right temperature for safety, and because some dishes should be grilled at specific temperatures. Sometimes, it is hard for people to see if the meat inside is already cooked. The most common varieties are actually the grill thermometers and the meat thermometers.

Grill thermometers are placed inside barbecue grills or placed into one of the air vents. Meat thermometers on the other hand are used directly on the meat to gauge the internal temperature. This is important because certain foods need to be thoroughly cooked to kill bacteria.

Fire Starters

In the past, liquid flammable lighter fluids were commonly used, but the dangers, and the lingering odor, as well as environmental concerns mean that more people now light charcoal with paper and kindling, or special wood chunks that add some smoky flavor.

Wood Chips

For a great BBQ flavor, try using wood chips. There are different wood types to choose from depending on the meat or fish you wish to barbecue. A rich smoked flavor improves the taste of almost any barbecue meal.

Basting Brushes

A basting brush is used to apply barbecue sauces and some rubs, which are usually applied during barbecuing. Basting keeps meat moist and tasty. You may opt to use a basting mop for a big barbecue job. So slather that barbecue sauce on and enjoy that grilled delight.

Baskets Racks and Grill Toppers

Cook your favorite smaller foods in a basket over the barbecue grill or on a convenient rack made especially for that purpose. Prepare meat, fish, chicken, vegetables, corn, or potatoes using the grill toppers.

Aprons

Don't get your clothes dirty or splashed with BBQ sauce—wear a heavy duty cooking apron. Check out the cool **HellFire BBQ Apron here**.

Grilling Forks and Hooks

Have you experienced difficulty flipping meat on the barbecue grill? Check out the BBQ hook. Professional grillers use these hooks to turn meat easily.

Grill Cleaning Brushes and Cleaners

Ensure that your barbecue grill is clean and ready to cook. These can be made of stainless steel, or brass. Newer ones made entirely of wood are meant to prevent tiny bits of wire—that sometimes break off from wire brushes—from getting caught in your throat or stomach.

E. Proper Care For Your Grill

While no one likes to clean their grill, it is necessary to maintain it if you want it to last its intended lifetime. When purchasing your barbecue grill, think of it as an investment rather than just another item for your outdoor entertainment. You should expect this item to become a large part of your outdoor activities for many

years to come. But like any other investments, proper maintenance and care is needed to ensure that your barbecue grill will work for you for a long time.

Leaving your grill messy after each use will not only make it harder on you when you finally do clean the grill, but it will also drastically decrease the lifespan of your grill. If your grill sits dirty, you increase the risk of rust. Many thousands of grills end up in landfill sites each month because they are rusted out.

One problem you will face is the fact that charcoal grills stay hot for a long period of time. You can remedy this situation two ways. First you can leave your grill open, allowing it to burn out. This method typically burns a lot of the grease off, but can potentially cause problems if you are not near your barbecue grill. Obviously, you do not want to start a fire. Another way is to completely close off your grill and deny the fire oxygen.

As soon as the grill is cold, or cold enough not to burn you, you will want to clean the grill. Leaving the grill dirty for any amount of time will cause the buildup to become hard, and will make it harder to remove. Use a wire brush to clean off the surface areas of your grill, and then spray cooking oil on the surface.

Take the racks off and clean them with dishwashing soap. Most modern liquid dish soaps contain degreasers, and that is what is needed here. Rinse the racks off, and replace them in the grill. Here are the elements in detail:

Gather Necessary Items

You will need some common household items on hand when it comes time to clean your barbecue grill.

- Wire grill brush
- Steel wool pads
- Mild dish soap
- Sponge or dishcloth
- Spray cooking oil
- Dry baking soda
- Aluminum foil

Brushing Your Grill

The first thing that should always be done to your grill is a routine brushing. Using your brass wire grill brush (or stainless steel, or other brush suitable to your type of grill) you should brush off all the surfaces. By routinely brushing your barbecue grill, you will prevent buildup.

Spray Cooking Oil

Once you are sure that your grill is free of all buildup and debris, and that your grill is completely cooled off, you will want to spray it down with a light layer of cooking oil. Spraying it down with cooking oil will prevent your barbecue grill from rusting. It is especially important to make sure your barbecue grill is completely cold, as spraying cooking oil on a hot surface may cause the oil to heat up and ignite, which could be potentially dangerous to your eyebrows and hair!

Use Baking Soda and Aluminum Foil on Your Grill

Baking soda is an excellent cleaning and polishing agent. Once you have removed any extra debris and buildup, lightly scrubbing your barbecue grill with baking soda will give it that extra shine, similar to the day that you brought it home from the store. This can also be used on handles and knobs to remove any extra buildup that cannot be taken off with a wire brush.

Aluminum foil can also be used to keep your grill looking nice. Using a wad of foil, gently rub the grill, and you will notice that it removes grim and buildup.

Clean Your Racks

The racks in your grill are especially important as this is where the food touches when it is cooking. You will have to use the wire brush to remove as much buildup as possible. Once you remove as much goop as possible, start washing the racks with dish soap. If the racks are really dirty, you may also want to use the steel wool pads. Be sure to completely rinse off all soap and residue before cooking on these racks again. Once you gain experience with proper cleanup, it should only take a few short minutes each time.

F. Be A Smart Barbecue Grill Owner – Plan Ahead

Many Americans are finding themselves with a grill for the first time. Good experiences with your grill will surely lead to using your grill more and more, and planning ahead is key.

Menu

Barbecuing has been around since early cave-dwellers figured out that food tasted great after being cooked on an open fire. Perhaps one of the main memories attached to a family barbecue party is what was on the menu that day. The type of foods you serve should largely depend on your crowd and the event in which you

are celebrating. With the wide range of possibilities, you are sure to find at least a few items that will please most of your guests.

Weather

Another potential issue when barbecuing is the weather. While you will not be able to guarantee that the weather stays nice during your barbecue event, a certain amount of planning will help you avoid the days in which barbecuing is just simply out of the picture. Watch the weather channel or check online for your weekly forecast.

Don't ever attempt to start your barbecue in high winds. Be sure to choose the safest environment to set-up your barbecue. Never try to do a barbecue indoors to push through with the planned barbecue party: several people die each year because of the odorless carbon monoxide fumes from BBQs used indoors.

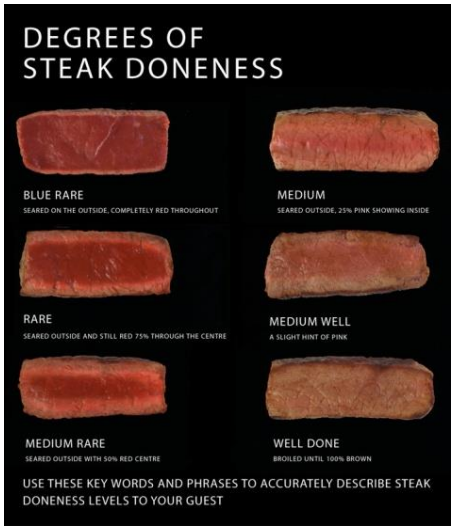
The Meat and the Side Dishes

Make sure that you prepare ahead for your barbecue. 12 to 24 hours before you plan on beginning the party, make sure to safely thaw, prepare, and marinate the meat you will be cooking. Once you have the meat stored away, soaking up the marinate, then you must start thinking about what types of side dishes you will be having. If you want a completely traditional barbecue, you may want to stick with traditional sides. Traditional barbecue sides include potatoes, potato salad, baked beans, and coleslaw.

The Grill

The first thing that should always be done to your grill is a routine brushing. Using your brass wire grill brush (or stainless steel brush if suitable to your type of grill), you should brush off all the surfaces. By routinely brushing your barbecue grill, you will prevent any type of buildup. If buildup from food is left for a long time, it can become increasingly difficult to remove.

The majority of problems that arise from barbecue grills come from lack of cleaning and maintenance. That means if you notice something does not seem quite right with your barbecue grill, chances are it can be fixed with just a simple cleaning. Even if you clean it, and still find that it is having problems, at least you saved yourself the potential embarrassment of taking it to a professional only to find out all it needed was to be cleaned.



Finally, one method of preventing problems with your barbecue grill is protecting it from the outdoors. Covers are available for grills in all shapes and sizes, so chances are, you will find one that fits your grill. If you have a cover for your barbecue grill, then all you will ever need to do is do the regular maintenance listed above.

G. Doneness Versus Safety

Kids popping into the kitchen or dashing by a barbecue grill ask impatiently, “Is it done yet?” But is “done” the same as “safe”? How does the cook know? Appearance and color are not reliable indicators of safety or doneness. Studies have shown that using a food thermometer is the only accurate way to tell if harmful bacteria have been destroyed, yet only about 15% of people consistently use a food thermometer.

By using a food thermometer to check if meat, poultry, and egg dishes are done, you also prevent overcooking and guesswork. Food cooked to a safe internal temperature is juicy and flavorful. If you use a food thermometer, then you’ll know the answer to “Is it done yet”? You can buy a food thermometer in many grocery, hardware, or kitchen stores. Here are some tips:

- Insert the food thermometer into the thickest part of the food, making sure it doesn’t touch bone, fat, or gristle.
- Cook food until the thermometer shows an internal temperature of 160 °F for hamburger, pork, and egg dishes; 145 °F for beef, veal, and lamb steaks and roasts; and 165 °F for all poultry.
- Clean your food thermometer with hot, soapy water before and after each use.

Beef

Beef roasts cooked to 160 °F will generally have very little pinkness to the meat, and the juices will not be pink or red. Below 160 °F, the center of the roast will be pink or red, depending on the internal temperature. A beef roast cooked to 145 °F in the

center can be considered safe since the exterior of the roast would have reached a temperature high enough to destroy bacteria, unless it is a rolled roast or one that has been mechanically tenderized. A consumer will not be able to determine if a roast that was pink in the center had reached the safe temperature of 145 °F without a food thermometer.

Pork

Pork roasts are safe when cooked to 160 °F even though the center of the roast may be somewhat pink. Pork chops may have just a trace of pink color at this temperature. Again, a consumer would not be able to determine visually if a pork roast that was pink in the center had reached a safe temperature.

Ground Meat and Poultry

Research indicates that the color of the meat and the color of the juices are not accurate indicators of doneness. Ground beef may turn brown before it has reached a temperature at which bacteria are destroyed. A consumer preparing hamburger patties and depending on visual signs to determine safety by using the brown color as an indicator is taking a chance that pathogenic microorganisms may survive. A hamburger cooked to 160 °F (165 °F for ground poultry), measured with a food thermometer throughout the patty, is safe—regardless of color.

Combination Dishes

Casseroles and other combination dishes must be cooked to 165 °F as measured with a food thermometer. These dishes are traditionally composed of cooked foods and then heated to combine flavors. Pathogenic bacteria could survive, however, if the meat or poultry component of a casserole was merely “browned” and the casserole was not subsequently heated thoroughly, especially if the dish was assembled in advance and refrigerated. Only by using a food thermometer could a consumer be sure it had been heated to a safe temperature.

No More Guesswork

Using an accurate food thermometer takes the guesswork out of cooking. No more cutting into your turkey or beef roast to see if it looks done. Simply place the food thermometer into the food and it will indicate the temperature the food has reached. You’ll know if it needs to cook a few minutes more or if it is finished. This is especially helpful with combination dishes such as lasagna or egg casseroles that may brown on the top before they heat through.

By using a food thermometer on a regular basis, consumers can be assured that the food they cook is “done” as well as safe.

H. Grilling Guidelines - Charcoal Grilling vs Gas Grilling

Grilling Guidelines

Beef Cut	Weight/ Thickness	CHARCOAL GRILLING (uncovered unless noted) Approximate Total Cooking Time Medium Rare (145°F) to Medium (160°F)	GAS GRILLING (covered) Approximate Total Cooking Time Medium Rare (145°F) to Medium (160°F)
CHUCK		(minutes)	(minutes)
Shoulder Top Blade Steak (Flat Iron)	8 ounces *each*	10 to 14 (grill covered)	12 to 16
Shoulder Steak, *boneless (marinate)*	3/4 inch	14 to 17	9 to 12
	1 inch	16 to 20	15 to 19
Shoulder Center Steak (Ranch)	3/4 inch	9 to 11 (grill covered)	8 to 11
	1 inch	11 to 14 (grill covered)	12 to 16
Shoulder Petite Tender Roast	8 to 12 ounces *each*	14 to 18 (grill covered)	14 to 19
RIB		(minutes)	(minutes)
Rib Steak, *small end*	3/4 inch	6 to 8	7 to 10
	1 inch	9 to 12	10 to 15
Ribeye Steak	3/4 inch	6 to 8	7 to 9
	1 inch	11 to 14	9 to 14
LOIN		(minutes)	(minutes)
Porterhouse/T-Bone Steak	3/4 inch	10 to 12	9 to 13
	1 inch	14 to 16	15 to 19
Top Loin (Strip) Steak, *boneless*	3/4 inch	10 to 12	7 to 10
	1 inch	15 to 18	11 to 15
Tenderloin Steak	1 inch	13 to 15	11 to 15
	1-1/2 inches	14 to 16 (grill covered)	16 to 20
SIRLOIN		(minutes)	(minutes)
Top Sirloin Steak, *boneless*	3/4 inch	13 to 16	8 to 13
	1 inch	17 to 21	13 to 16
	1-1/2 inches	22 to 26 (grill covered)	24 to 30
ROUND		(minutes)	(minutes)
Recommend cooking round cuts to medium rare (145°F) doneness only.			
Round Sirloin Tip Center Steak	3/4 inch	8 to 9 (grill covered)	8 to 11
	1 inch	11 to 13 (grill covered)	13 to 15
Round Sirloin Tip Side Steak	3/4 inch	9 to 11 (grill covered)	7 to 9
(marinate)	1 inch	12 to 14 (grill covered)	13 to 14
Bottom Round Steak	3/4 inch	8 to 10 (grill covered)	11 to 14
(Western Griller) *(marinate)*	1 inch	12 to 15 (grill covered)	15 to 17
Top Round Steak *(marinate)*	3/4 inch	8 to 9	10 to 11
	1 inch	16 to 18	16 to 19
Eye Round Steak *(marinate)*	3/4 inch	15 to 19	10 to 12
	1 inch	19 to 23	17 to 19
PLATE & FLANK		(minutes)	(minutes)
Skirt Steak *(marinate)*	1 to 1-1/2 pounds (4 to 6-inch portions)	10 to 13	8 to 12
Flank Steak *(marinate)*	1-1/2 to 2 pounds	17 to 21	16 to 21
OTHER		(minutes)	(minutes)
Ground Beef Patties	1/2 inch (4 ounces *each*)	11 to 13	7 to 8
Cook to 160°F.	3/4 inch (6 ounces *each*)	13 to 15	13 to 14
Kabobs, *beef only*	1 x 1-1/4 inches (1 pound)	6 to 8 (grill covered)	7 to 9

All cook times are based on beef removed directly from refrigerator.

For charcoal grilling, when coals are medium, ash-covered (approximately 30 minutes), spread in single layer and check cooking temperature. Position cooking grid. To check temperature, cautiously hold the palm of your hand above the coals at cooking height. Count the number of seconds you can hold your hand in that position before the heat forces you to pull it away; approximately 4 seconds for medium heat.

For gas grilling, gas grill brands vary greatly and grilling times may need to be adjusted. Consult owner's manual for specific grilling information.

Note: Chart guidelines were developed using Weber Genesis gas grills.

Trim visible fat from meat and poultry before grilling to help prevent flare-ups. If food is grilled over too high heat, the exterior can become overcooked or charred before the interior reaches the desired doneness. Charring meat, poultry or fish is not recommended.

GRILLING

BEEF

Funded by The Beef Checkoff

I. Most Common Barbecuing Mistakes and How To Eliminate Them

As humans, we all make mistakes. When it comes to barbecuing, this rule is no different. We often make mistakes that we do not even realize until we taste our food, or something potentially dangerous happens.

Some mistakes just mean that the food you cook is not going to taste very good, while others could potentially mean a trip to the hospital, or a visit from your claims representative on your home insurance policy. No matter the severity of the mistake, you should do your best to try to avoid them whenever possible.

If you are new to barbecuing, chances are you have run into some problems when it comes to barbecuing. Barbecuing, like anything else, takes practice. Learning from your mistakes, as well as the mistakes of others, will help you learn quickly.

1. Premature Cooking — When grilling with charcoal, allow 20 to 30 minutes for charcoals to glow red; then you can start grilling!

You must properly prepare the meat you are cooking, before cooking it. You should never attempt to cook meat on a grill when it is still frozen, or even partially frozen. While that might be safe in terms of bacteria when cooking in an oven, the danger in barbecuing is that it will overcook the outside before the inside reaches a safe temperature.

Thawing: Going from "frozen to thawed" needs to be accomplished safely! There are 3 ways to thaw — and because bacteria can multiply rapidly at room temperature, ***none*** of these methods involve the kitchen counter.

In the Refrigerator: This is the **safest** way to thaw meat and poultry. Take the food out of the freezer and thaw it in the fridge. Place it on a plate or in a pan to catch any juices that may leak. Normally, it will be ready to use the next day.

In Cold Water: For faster thawing, put the frozen package in a watertight plastic bag and submerge it in cold water; change the water every 30 minutes. The cold water slows bacteria that might be growing in the thawed portions of the meat while the inner areas are still thawing. Once thawed, cook it immediately.

In the Microwave: Follow instructions from the oven's manufacturer or owner's manual. Thaw it s l o w l y. Cook immediately after thawing in the microwave.

2. Contaminating Food — Ensure you boil the marinade for meat for at least 3 minutes if you like to use it as a sauce. Be careful to clean the tongs and platter after placing meat on the grill. Use an instant-read thermometer to ensure the meat is cooked thoroughly.

Once meat is cooked, never put it back in on the same plate you had it on when it was raw. This could cause the spread of many unwanted illnesses.

3. Flipping Food Before It's Cooked — When your chicken is sticking, it means the meat is not cooked yet. Wait an additional minute before flipping. Meat naturally releases once it's ready to turn. If it doesn't, the grill could be dirty or poorly lubricated before you used it.

Once the meat is on the grill, try not to open the lid too many times. Each time you open the lid, you change the temperature in the grill. The constant change in temperature and the air flow will cause your meat to dry up quickly.

While using tin foil or aluminum foil will make cleaning easier, it will cause your food to have more of a fried taste than a grilled taste.

4. Repeated Flare-Ups — Flare-ups are the result of dripping fat or sugar marinades. To avoid this, aim a jet of water at the problem area by using a spray bottle. You can also move meat to indirect heat where it won't burn as easily.

Never, under any circumstance, should you leave a grill alone when it is in use. Grilling does have fire involved, and accidents can happen. Fire spreads quickly, so being aware of your grill could mean the difference between a small fire that is quickly extinguished, and a visit from the fire department.

Never place a hot grill against a wall, even if the fire is already completely out. A hot grill can heat up an exterior wall to the point of combustion. Also, do not put the grill cover back on until you are sure that the grill is completely cool.

5. Keep the Grill Uniformly Hot — A very hot grill can turn food to carbon almost faster than you can say the word "*barbecue*". There must be an area of the grill for indirect heat; turn one burner to low, or have an area free of hot charcoal. Sear meat with direct heat, then remove to indirect to finish cooking.

6. Failing to Clean the Grill — Give a quick scrub with wire brush, once the grill is heated. Once food is removed, close the lid while maintaining the flame for a minute, then scrub again.

Your grill should be cleaned after each and every use, no exceptions. While no one likes cleaning the grill, it is essential for the life and safety of your grill. If you allow your grill to sit dirty, not only are you causing a potential fire and health hazard, but you are ultimately making it harder on yourself when it does come time to clean your grill.

J. Barbecue Rubs, Seasoning and Spices

Barbecue rubs are seasoning and spices that barbecue enthusiasts use to add flavor, texture, and color to the dishes that they prepare and grill. There are two kinds of barbecue rubs, one is the wet rub and the other is the dry rub.

A wet rub, as the name suggests, is made of a liquid ingredient, oil to be exact, that is used to coat the meat when barbecuing. The dry rub, on the other hand, is made of herbs much like your ordinary pepper and paprika. The dry rub can be sprinkled on the meat or rubbed on.

Still applying a barbecue rub is more complex than that. You don't just sprinkle the rub on the meat, you have to make sure that the rub is absorbed and actually coats the meat. When grilling poultry, it is good to apply the rub not only on the skin but also on the inside. You can also try to put rubs early on, perhaps an hour before the cooking to give time for the meat to absorb the flavor. This way, the flavor can be tasted not only from the outside but also from the inside.

Dry rubs are actually made from a combination of different spices that people already use to add flavor to their dishes. Herbs like chili powder, garlic, paprika, cayenne are just some of the usual ingredients that can be found in a dry rub. Some people make their own dry rubs by mixing different herbs. One tip that you can

definitely use is to mix a strong flavoring with a subtle one. This usually results in a good combination.

Because it is wet, meat absorbs wet rubs better as compared to dry rubs. If you are cooking meat that is already dry or those that easily dry out, wet rubs are good options because they can add to the moisture of the meat. Using dry rubs on an already dry surface will only lead to waste as the meat will not be able to absorb the flavor. Wet rubs, especially those that are oil-based, can also be used so that the meat will not stick on the grill. This way, you don't have to use separate oils.

K. Plan A Perfect BBQ Party

Barbecues are popular for events such as the 4th of July, birthday parties, receptions, and going away parties. No matter why you have decided to plan a barbecue party, the memories that will come from it are sure to stick with your guests for a long time, provided that you plan ahead. Planning the perfect BBQ party is not difficult, as long as you follow a few simple steps.

1) First, no barbecue would be complete without guests. Plan ahead of time, check with your potential guests for scheduling conflicts and/or issues. Finding a date and time that is suitable for everyone should not be too hard as long as you give everyone enough advanced notice. Remember that not everyone will be able to come, no matter how much notice you give them, so do not get discouraged if you do not get as many RSVPs as you originally hoped for.

2) Be sure to check the weather for that time of year. If you live in a climate that cannot be predicted, then you may want to have a backup plan just in case unusual weather comes. You cannot predict things like rain and thunderstorms

ahead of time, but you can make sure that you hold your barbecue during the time of year that will be pleasant to your guests.

3) Purchase the type of meat that you will be serving at your party. You will want to have a least a couple of different kinds of meats, as everyone attending may not like a certain kind. It is usually safe to go with pork, sausage, hamburgers, and chicken. If smaller children are going to be in attendance, you should consider child friendly foods such as smaller hamburgers and hot dogs.

4) Once you have the meat purchased, you will then want to consider what type of side dishes you will serve. If you want a completely traditional barbecue party, you may want to stick with traditional side dishes. Traditional barbecue sides include potatoes, potato salad, baked beans, and coleslaw. Your traditional condiment bar should include pickles, relish, and onions. These foods are typically severed at barbecues because they are easy to prepare and store until the event happens. You may want to cook other items, but any barbecue is complete with just the items listed above. Once again, if children will be present, you may want to consider sides for them as well.

5) Depending on the theme of your party, you may or may not want to purchase decorations. Festive decorations can be found at any local party or general store. You may also consider purchasing decorations that can be stored and reused at a different time, such as reusable tablecloths and Tiki torches.

6) The day of the party, get up early and start preparing for it. You do not want your guest arriving while you are still cooking or hanging decorations. It should only take you a few hours at most to prepare the area in which you will be having the party, but the reactions from your guest will probably seem as if you have been planning this for weeks.

L. Plan A BBQ Clambake Party

One particular type of BBQ party is a new and popular "clambake". Clambakes are typically held in a pit on the beach, but if a beach is not available, you may want to consider holding your clambake right from your home grill.

You will need to purchase the items for your clambake. The traditional items you will need are clams still in the shell, seawater (if available), corn still in the husk, and potatoes.

Side dishes can also be bought, but are not necessary since the potatoes and corn can act as such. If you feel that you need other side dishes, the simplest approach to side dishes is chips and dip, or tortilla chips and salsa. Chips and dip do not require any cooking on your part, and will still be loved by the majority of your guests.

Give your clambake a beach theme by adding tropical music and you may even consider adding some sand.

The day before you party, you will want to make sure to safely thaw, prepare, and marinate the meat you will be cooking. Keep the meat stored away, soaking up the marinade until it is time for it to go on the grill. Prepare any side dishes that you can ahead of time.

Place your food on the grill, layering your already cooked potatoes, corn still in the husk, and your clams on the grill. Then grill these until the corn and clams are complete.

M. Plan Your Chicken BBQ Party

Barbecuing is already a complicated task as it is, but barbecuing chicken can be even more complicated especially to the novice. Unlike pork and beef, which you can slice in just the right thickness so that it will be cooked to a precise degree, chicken can be trickier to manage.

The greatest challenge in making chicken barbecue is the fact that you have to cook the inside without making the outside a charred mess! This can be really difficult if you cannot see the inside. This is why some people cut a small part in the piece to open the chicken up and let the heat inside.

Remember that eating half-cooked chicken can be really dangerous so make sure that you serve fully cooked chicken. You will know that a chicken is cooked if you use a meat thermometer to find test the meat. An internal temperature of at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit is acceptable.

Here are some tips and warnings that will help you in coming up with a really great chicken barbecue meal.

1. When preparing your barbecue chicken, leave the application of the barbecue sauce until the last 10 minutes of cooking until you are sure that the chicken is already cooked inside. Most barbecue sauces that are used as marinade have sugar as one of their ingredients. Sugar can burn the chicken if it is exposed to heat for a long time.

   If you really want flavor for your chicken barbecue, what you can do is to marinate a day early and just put the chicken in the refrigerator. This way, the flavor of the marinade will have time to seep into the chicken.

2. Who says you cannot cheat a bit? If you feel that you cannot cook the chicken from the inside without first burning it up, you can always cook it partially in the microwave oven for about 8-10 minutes. This way, you are sure that the meat is already cooked and will only need some good-old fashion grilling and marinating. Besides, this will cut down the amount of time that you will spend turning the chicken over in the grill.

3. Fats from the chicken can drip and cause the fire from the grill to flare-up. This will unknowingly increase the temperature that you are using. To avoid this, you may want to use a small amount of foil over part of the grill to prevent the fat from dripping down.

N. An Aloha Kebabs Party

In Hawaii, everything is supposed to be fun under the sun: the beach, surfing, water, and of course, the sun work as one to create a paradise of non-stop parties and fun. So, with all that exercising and fresh air, how do Hawaiians manage to keep the chow coming without having problems? The answer is an authentic Hawaiian barbecue.

Every luau or Hawaiian party has regular elements. There are foods such as roast pig, meat pies, and all sorts of barbecued meat. Since Hawaii is an ocean paradise, chicken and fish are quite a plenty. Pork and beef are also present but because of the little land available for raising livestock, chicken is the new go-to meat of the islands. (Though, if you really want to BBQ something different, there is a long-standing tradition of using canned SPAM meat in Hawaii, in everything from sandwiches to sushi.)

One special thing about a Hawaiian luau is that fruit is also included in the fray. An assortment of fruit and vegetables are a common sight on the grill. Since pineapples are abundant in this part of the world, try adding some to your own skewered kebabs. Hawaiian barbecue is not just about the food itself but the other things that accompany it. Traditional songs and dances that are performed during these barbecues is what make the Hawaiian luau special. Add some Hawaiian slack-key guitar music or other traditional music as background atmosphere will really make the difference.

O. Some Tasty BBQ Recipes

Pork Ribs Kansas City Style

Ingredients

4 large pieces, pork spare ribs, 2 pounds each

Dry Rub

1 1/4 tablespoon smoked paprika
1 1/4 tablespoon garlic powder
1 1/4tablespoon onion powder
2 1/2 cups brown sugar
1 1/4 cup dry mustard
1 1/4 tablespoon cayenne pepper (to taste)
1 1/4 tablespoon salt
2 teaspoons black pepper, fresh ground

Barbeque Sauce

4 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 small onion, finely diced
3/4 cup water
1 cup or 2 cans tomato paste
1 cup brown sugar
2/3 cup apple cider vinegar
1/2 cup molasses
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, fresh ground

Preparing the Dry Rub

- Remove the thin white membrane off of the bone-side of the ribs. Mix together the brown sugar, dry mustard, cayenne, paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Massage the rub into the ribs and let sit for 1 hour or up to overnight.
- If cooking on the grill, place the ribs meat-side down next to medium-hot coals that are about 225 degrees F. The indirect heat will cook them slower, making them tender. Allow to cook for 1 hour. Turn ribs every half hour and baste with

the Kansas City Barbeque Sauce. Cook until the ribs are tender, about 3 to 4 hours.

- If cooking indoors, place in a roasting pan with a rack. Slather the ribs with the Kansas City Barbeque Sauce and tent a piece of aluminum foil over them. In a preheated 350 degrees F. oven, place the ribs, basting with the sauce every 30 minutes and removing the foil for the last 30 minutes and cooking until fork tender, about 2 1/2 to 3 hours.

Kansas City Barbeque Sauce

- In a small sauce pot on medium-high heat, heat the oil and add the onion, cooking until translucent.
- Add the remaining ingredients in a large bowl and mix together. Add to sauce pan and let simmer for 30 to 45 minutes. Use to baste the pork spare ribs.

Yield: 3 cups

Apricot-Glazed Pork Chops

In this recipe, apricot jam is the base for a sweet and spicy glaze with which you cover the pork chops. These apricot-glazed pork chops are a wonderfully flavorful grilled main dish.

Ingredients

1 piece fresh ginger
2 cloves garlic
1 cup apricot jam
3 tablespoons cider vinegar
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon soy sauce
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, or to taste
4 loin pork chops, cut 1-inch thick (about 2 pounds total)
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

- Prepare a medium-hot fire in a charcoal or gas grill.
- Grate the ginger.
- Peel and mince the garlic.
- In a small saucepan, combine the jam and vinegar.
- Cook, stirring over low heat, until the jam melts.
- Stir in 2 teaspoons ginger, the garlic, soy sauce, and cayenne pepper.
- Remove from the heat and set the glaze aside.
- Trim all but 1/4 inch of fat from each pork chop.
- Brush the chops lightly with oil; sprinkle with salt and pepper.
- Place the chops on a well-oiled grill grid.
- Grill the chops for 3 minutes on each side.
- Brush both sides generously with the glaze and grill for another 4 to 5 minutes or until done, turning once.
- Cut to determine doneness.
- The chops are cooked when the meat has a light pink blush and there's no sign of pink near the bone.
- Simmer the remaining glaze for 2 to 3 minutes.
- Drizzle over the grilled chops before serving (if desired)

The Ultimate Chicken Barbecue

Ingredients

Brine

3 quarts water
2 tablespoons salt
1/2 cup brown sugar
2 garlic cloves, smashed
6 sprigs fresh thyme
8 chicken legs and thighs, about 10 ounces each

The Barbecue Sauce

2 slices bacon
1 bunch fresh thyme
1 teaspoon paprika
2 teaspoon black pepper, freshly ground
1 onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, chopped
3 cups ketchup
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup molasses
Extra-virgin olive oil
2 1/2 tablespoons red or white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon dry mustard
1 teaspoon cumin, ground

Directions

- For the brine, in a mixing bowl combine the water, salt, sugar, garlic, and thyme. Transfer the brine to a 2-gallon sized re-sealable plastic bag. Add the chicken, close the bag and refrigerate 2 hours (if you've only got 15 minutes, that's fine) to allow the salt and seasonings to penetrate the chicken.

- Meanwhile, make the sauce. Wrap the bacon around the bunch of thyme and tie with kitchen twine so you have a nice bundle. Heat about 2 tablespoons of oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the thyme and cook slowly 3 to 4 minutes to render the bacon fat and give the sauce a nice smoky taste. Add the onion and garlic and cook slowly without coloring for 5 minutes. Add the remaining ingredients, give the sauce a stir, and turn the heat down to low. Cook slowly for 20 minutes to meld the flavors.
- Once the sauce is done cooking, remove about 1 1/2 cups of the sauce and reserve for serving alongside the chicken at the table. The rest of the barbecue sauce will be used for basting the legs.
- Preheat oven 375 degrees F.
- Oil the grill. Then preheat the grill pan or an outdoor gas or charcoal barbecue to a medium heat.
- Take the chicken out of the brine, pat it dry on paper towels. Arrange the chicken pieces on the preheated grill and cook, turn once mid-way, and cook for a total of 10 minutes.
- Transfer the grill marked chicken to a cookie sheet and then place in the oven. Cook the chicken for 15 minutes, remove it from the oven and then brush liberally, coating every inch of the legs with the barbecue sauce and then return to the oven for 25 to 30 more minutes, basting the chicken for a second time half way through remaining cooking time. Serve with extra sauce.

Grilled Shrimp Tacos

Ingredients

1/2 cup sour cream
3 tablespoons mayonnaise
3 tablespoons milk
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 1/2 pounds large shrimp, peeled
3 tablespoons butter, melted
2 large garlic cloves, minced
4 limes, cut into quarters
kosher salt
8 6-inch corn tortillas
2 to 3 cups finely shredded green cabbage
bottled green tomatillo salsa

Directions

- Heat grill to medium-high. In a small bowl, whisk together the sour cream, mayonnaise, milk, and cumin. Set aside.
- Skewer the shrimp. (If using wood skewers, soak them in water for 10 minutes beforehand.) In a small bowl, combine the butter and garlic. Brush the shrimp with the garlic butter.
- Place the shrimp on grill with the limes. Cook for about 4 minutes on each side or until the shrimp are opaque and the limes are browned.
- Remove from grill. Lightly salt the shrimp.
- Grill the tortillas for 30 seconds on each side, then place inside a paper bag to keep warm.
- Pull the shrimp off the skewers; divide evenly among the tortillas. Top with the cabbage, sour cream sauce, tomatillo salsa, and a squeeze of grilled lime.

Parmesan-topped Mussels

Ingredients

Serves: 4

3½ fl oz. white wine or fish stock, preferably home-made
1 large onion, very finely chopped
3 large garlic cloves, crushed
about 30 large mussels, scrubbed and beards removed
1¾ oz. fresh whole meal bread
1 oz. parsley, chopped
1 oz. Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
½ tbsp. finely grated lemon zest
pinch of cayenne pepper
1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
lemon wedges to serve

Directions

- Pour the wine or stock into a large saucepan, add the onion and garlic, and bring to the boil over a high heat. Boil rapidly for 1 minute. Add the mussels, cover the pan tightly and cook for 2–3 minutes, shaking the pan occasionally. Uncover the pan and give the mussels a good stir. Using tongs, remove the mussels from the pan as soon as they open and set them aside. Discard any mussels that remain shut.
- When the mussels are cool enough to handle, remove and discard the top shell. Place 24 mussels on the half shell in a single layer in a shallow flameproof dish, loosening the mussels from the shells but leaving them in place. Set the dish aside.
- Preheat the grill to high. Put the bread in a food processor or blender and process to fine crumbs. Add the parsley, Parmesan, lemon zest, cayenne pepper and olive oil, and process until well blended.

- Using your fingers, put a mound of the cheese and crumb mixture on each mussel and pack it down firmly so the mussel is completely covered. Put the dish under the grill and cook for 2–3 minutes or until the crumb topping is lightly browned. Divide the mussels among individual plates and serve with lemon wedges.

P. Cooking Vegetables on the Grill

Many people never even consider barbequing vegetables - but once you've had barbequed vegetables, you will never barbeque again without throwing some veggies on the grill. Here are some tips for great results with various vegetables:

Potatoes

Once you've had a baked potato, cooked on the barbeque, you will laugh at those baked in the oven. Wash the potatoes well, dry them, rub with cooking oil lightly, poke several holes in them, and then wrap the potatoes in foil, and place them on top of the coals. They should be done in about 45 minutes.

Corn on the Cob

There are two ways to cook corn on the cob on the barbeque. If the corn still has its husk, pull the husk back, but don't break it away. Instead, remove the silk, cut the tip off of the cob, wash the corn, or allow it to soak for about half an hour (soaking is best, as it makes removing the silk easier). Dry the corn and brush it with butter. Simply enclose the corn in its husk, and use a little thin wire to seal the end (don't use a rubber band – they melt). If you've soaked the corn for 30 minutes, it only takes about ten minutes to cook it on the grill.

If the corn doesn't have its husk, repeat this process, but wrap it in foil. This may require additional cook time—about fifteen minutes. Either way, the corn is placed on the grate, not on the coals.

Asparagus

Season the asparagus however you wish. Slice it however you like. Cover the grate of the grill with foil, and place the asparagus on the grill. It doesn't take long for asparagus to cook. When it is done, it will be a slightly brighter shade of green than it was when it was raw. If it turns more of a grey color, it has cooked too long.

Onions

Peel the onion and cut it in half or in quarters. Onions will stick to the grill, so use a non-stick cooking spray on the grate before you get it hot. Place the onions directly on the grill for about four minutes. If you don't want to spray the grill, you can coat the onions with oil as well to prevent sticking. Many people prefer to spray the grate because onions need no added flavors, and the oil can detract from the natural flavor of the onion. You can choose red onions, yellow onions, or white onions.

Garlic

Use whole bulbs of garlic. Cut the root from the end, and peel away the paper covering of the bulb. Brush the bulb with your favorite oil (olive oil burns at a lower temperature, though). Place the bulb on the grill, with the cut portion facing the fire. Grill for about ten minutes—expect the outer portion of the bulb to turn a light brown.

Mushrooms

Wash the mushrooms well. Brush with your favorite oil, and place on the grill for four to five minutes. If the mushrooms are large, they may require a longer cook time—up to about eight minutes. If the mushrooms are too small, you can place them in a metal grilling basket to keep them from falling through.

Eggplant

You can slice the eggplant anyway you like. Some barbeque masters slice them in coins. Do not peel the eggplant! You can coat the eggplant with your favorite cooking oil and season them however you like. Eggplant should be grilled for four to five minutes.

Bell Peppers

Red peppers, yellow peppers, orange peppers, and green peppers are very easy to barbeque. Cut the pepper in half and remove the stem and the core. Remove the seeds. You can leave the peppers in halves, or cut them in quarters, but if the pieces are too small, you will need a metal grill basket.

Lightly brush some olive oil over the peppers and sprinkle with a hint of thyme and grill for 2 to 3 minutes.

Chili peppers are smaller and should be cooked whole for two or three minutes on each side. You can leave them as they are, or coat them with your favorite cooking or salad oil before grilling as well.

Squash and Zucchini

Cut the squash or zucchini in half lengthwise. Coat it with oil, and season it to taste. It should be cooked for about two minutes on each side, but you will have to really watch it when the open side—or the side that has the seeds showing—is facing the fire, as it will burn easily.

Tomatoes

You can grill regular tomatoes and cherry tomatoes. For regular tomatoes, cut the tomato in half from the top. Coat the tomato with your favorite cooking oil. Place on the grill with the cut side facing down, and allow it to cook for two or three minutes.

For cherry tomatoes, you may need to use a metal basket or to keep them from falling through. Another option is a skewer. You can coat these with your choice of cooking oil, and season them to taste, or grill them without oil or seasoning. Two to three minutes of cook time is fine.

Q. Preparing Different Kinds of Barbecue Sauces

It takes the best cooks to make a really mean barbecue sauce that will raise your piece of grilled meat a cut above the rest.

Sauces are used to enhance the flavor of the meat and to help retain the juiciness of the meat being grilled. Often, sauces have high sugar content. This is why they are brushed on the meat later during the cooking process instead of being dipped because sugar may burn even before your meat is cooked.

Contrary to popular perception, there is actually no "one" formula for making barbecue sauce. There are, in fact, hundreds of different kinds of barbecue sauces in the market that you can choose from. There are even different sauces that can be used for different types of meat—for chicken, beef, pork, or duck.

Most sauces can be bought already prepared in bottles that are sold in grocery stores. Still, there are people who want to create their own sauces or use sauce recipes that have been passed from generation to generation.

Below are some of the popular sauces being used both at home and in restaurants:

Honey bacon barbecue sauce	You can create your own by using chopped bacon, onion, garlic, honey, lemon juice, hot pepper sauce, and other seasonings.
Mushroom-wine sauce	This kind of sauce is often used with chicken. It has three major ingredients, dry white wine, mushrooms, and some chicken broth, which is used to help keep the flavor of the chicken.
Sweet and sour sauce	In preparing this kind of sauce, you will need some jelly, mustard, rosemary, and lemon juice. This is also one of the favorite sauces when preparing turkey.
Nippy pineapple sauce	This sauce is especially great in keeping with a Hawaiian theme for a barbecue party. Although pineapple preserves are often used to make this sauce, you can also use fresh pineapple.

Hoisin sauce	This is used if you want your barbecued meat to have a sweet rich taste to it. This sauce is often used with onions and black beans.
Crème Fraiche	This is a rich and thick cream with a mild and tangy flavor that will be especially good for salads and desserts that you can whip up with your barbecued meal.

R. Premium BBQ Gear

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