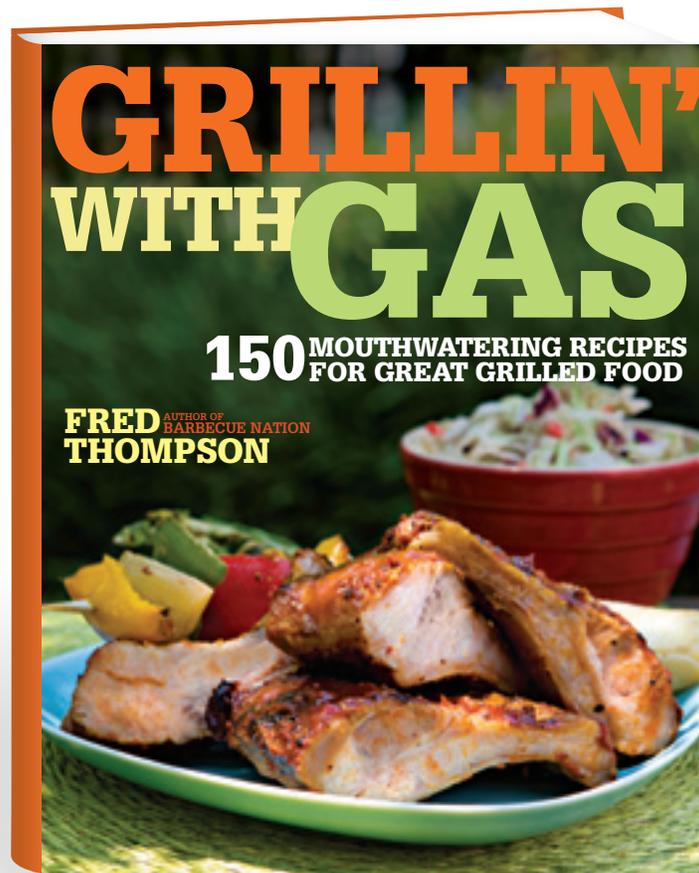


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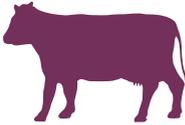
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**OPEN THE
VALVE
AND PUSH
THE
IGNITER**



GETTING STARTED WITH THE BASICS

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN COOKING with fire since the dawn of time, but gas has been an option for only the past 50 or so years. Back in the early 1960s, gas grills were huge appliances that were tied into natural-gas lines, and they cost several hundred dollars, which was a boatload of money for the time. Over the years, gas grills became smaller, mobile, and less expensive, and they also became more efficient. In the 1970s, liquid propane (LP) stored in cylinders became the fuel of choice, and more recently grills have gone from using lava rocks and ceramic briquettes, designed to mimic charcoal (or at least to look like it), to angled metal plates (Weber calls theirs Flavorizer® bars) that keep heat more even and help to prevent flare-ups.

Gas grills in the marketplace today are for the most part extremely sophisticated, and although most are still fairly small and easy enough to move, what's old is new again: Massive gas grills are increasing in popularity as part of "outdoor kitchens," and even mid-priced grills are available with an option for natural gas.

But even inexpensive grills offer plenty of options. Multiple burners are the norm. Side burners are almost standard equipment, and most mid-range grills offer special infrared rotisserie burners, built-in smoke boxes, and separate burners that give you expert control over low-and-slow barbecuing or super hot searing. We must like what the manufacturers

are producing, because 70 percent of us use gas as our medium of choice for grilling and barbecuing, and we are paying more for gas grills than ever before.

WHY GO WITH GAS?

Okay, if you think it's wimpy to use gas over "real" fire, then think about this: Most people cannot tell a taste difference. Want more reasons to make the switch (or to defend your choice)? Gas is easier and faster to heat. You will have fewer temperature fluctuations and fewer flare-ups, which, in some schools of thought, makes gas less risky for your health. And according to many studies, gas grilling is more environmentally friendly than charcoal grilling.

BUYING A GAS GRILL

The industry has caught up with our desire to cook fabulous food outdoors with a minimum

of fuss. Whether you are buying your first gas grill or replacing an old one, here are some tips to consider before you head out to the store.

First, decide what you are really going to do with your grill. You will need a well-made grill unless you like buying one every year. If you know you are just a hamburger, hot dog, steak, and chicken breast griller, you don't need a lot of bells and whistles. A two-burner grill that has staying power is in the \$300 range. But with the current grilling craze, which shows no signs of letting up, I'll bet you that you will want to get a little frisky and take your grilling to the next level. I always recommend a three-burner grill, and one in the \$400 to \$500 range will serve most folks very well. Grills in this price range have power ignition, have the ability to do some rotisserie cooking, produce decent smoke, and last for many years.

If you're looking to make grilling and barbecuing a hobby, then start looking for extras. A grill that will jump through hoops to help you will run about \$800, and yes, that's a lot of grill. But no matter what your price point is, read through the owner's manual of each grill you're considering before you buy. This will give you a sense of the grill's ability to perform and the ease of operation. You can also compare grills online before hitting the stores.

Here are other factors to consider and features to look for when you go shopping.

- Look for heavy-gauge metal that is rust resistant or has been coated to be that way. Whether you choose

WHETHER YOU ARE BUYING YOUR FIRST GAS GRILL OR REPLACING AN OLD ONE, HERE ARE SOME TIPS...

stainless steel or a powder-coated finish is a matter of preference.

- You'll want a cooking surface that's at least 400 square inches. That's the minimum, and if you think you might want to get more adventuresome than burgers and steaks, go larger.
- The lid must fit tightly and be easy to raise and lower.
- I think if you are going to do any cooking that takes longer than, say, 30 minutes, look for two or more burners, which allows for indirect cooking (see p. 8). Personally I like three burners or more.
- Btu is the unit of power that a burner has. Bigger is not always better. Look instead for efficiency ratings and total Btu in the 25,000 to 50,000 range. If you live in a windy area, or like me will be grilling in the snow, consider the higher number.
- Side burners are nice. They can keep sauces warm, or cook the eggs while the pork tenderloin cooks for breakfast. They are also good for frying and fish cookery, or for anything else that might stink up the house.
- Along with side burners I want side shelves. You can't imagine how much you will use them. Even then, having a separate table is handy.
- Rotisseries and rotisserie burners can be fun, but most anything you can do on a rotisserie you can do over indirect heat.
- If you plan to do much true low-and-slow cooking, then spend the extra money for a built-in smoke box or drawer. They used to be found only on grills that were \$5,000 and up, but now can be found on grills in the \$800 to \$1,000 range. One of my new grills has this feature, with a separate burner for the smoke box, and it works like a champ at barbecue.
- Buy from a manufacturer that offers a good warranty, a good reputation for service, and a toll-free service that treats you like a person when you call.
- While you may think this is fussy, check for the drip pan. Is it easy to get to? Is it easy to work with? There is nothing worse than rancid fat all over you and your deck.

- If you plan to move the grill around, you'll want lockable wheels. You may want to keep your grill against your house, but check the owner's manual for recommended clearances from walls and eaves and other stuff around your house that a badly positioned grill could harm. Just because you don't see flames as you do with charcoal doesn't mean that you can't scorch or, heaven forbid, burn something.
- Plan to spend at least \$400 for a grill that will last you several years if not decades. My original gas grill lived a vibrant life for 20-plus years.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Gas grilling doesn't take a whole lot of special equipment, and I for one try to keep tools to a minimum. If you don't have these items at home already, then add them to your list for your next trip to the home-improvement store, the supermarket, or a kitchenware shop. Here's a list of what I think is important and an instant gift list for your friends and family:

MUST-HAVE

- A good pair of **barbecue mitts**. If you use oven mitts, choose ones that go past your wrist and are well insulated.
- Multiple pairs of **tongs**. You'll need one for raw and one for cooked to prevent cross-contamination. Ones from restaurant supply houses are good. Spring-loaded is best; the kind that break apart into a spatula and fork can be hard to work with.
- **Spatulas**. Have several sizes, and make sure all should have a sturdy blade. Long handles are nice but not necessary. I particularly like fish spatulas, which can be used for most anything else as well. I still am a metal person when it comes to spatulas and the grill.
- A sturdy, brass-bristled **grill brush** for stainless-steel and porcelain-coated grill grates; if you have cast-iron grates you will need stainless-steel bristles. Don't skimp here; you need as much help as you can get keeping the grill clean.
- **Thermometers**. Have several instant-read thermometers and make sure to calibrate them. I also like probe thermometers for long-cooking meats; those with an internal temperature alarm are convenient. An oven thermometer is much more precise to measure the internal temperature of your grill than the thermometer that may have come with your grill, and I encourage you to get one and use it frequently. Move it around on the grill—it will help you locate cool and hot spots.

- A couple of **timers**. They keep you on track through cocktails and beer.
- A few **basting brushes**. Have a small one for brushing oil on the food before grilling and a longer-handled one for basting on the grill. The new silicone brushes are easy to clean and carry a good amount of sauce or mop with one dip. There's even one out now that looks and acts like a mop brush.
- **Disposable pans** are a godsend for many chores around the grill. Use them to transport food, as drip pans, or as water pans. Keep a good supply on hand.
- **Skewers**. Have both bamboo and metal. Given a choice I will always use metal for better heat transfer, but bamboo ones are less expensive and are still acceptable. Choose flat skewers so the food doesn't spin when you turn it. You might want some double-pronged ones, but they're not a must-have. Simply use two skewers for the same effect.
- Loads of **heavy-duty aluminum foil** and 1-gallon and 2-gallon **zip-top plastic bags**.
- Don't forget an **extra propane tank**. It will at some point prevent aggravation and embarrassment.
- A restaurant-quality **half sheet pan** or a **jellyroll pan**. Perfect for carrying all your stuff to the grill.

- **A pepper mill**. Grind your pepper fresh—it makes a huge difference.
- **Wood chips and chunks** if you want to give that road a try.
- A good **injection syringe** if you plan to do long-cooking meats.
- **A spray bottle**, mainly for basting, but one filled with water can help control flare-ups.

NICE TO HAVE

- **Racks**. I like the new ones that hold a whole rack of any type of ribs, but the standard size is wonderful for chicken pieces, and a V-style roasting rack works for big cuts of meat (you can turn the roasting rack upside down for a quick rib rack). If you cook beer-can chickens, using a special rack will make them more stable.
- **Baskets**. Fish-fillet baskets, especially whole-fish baskets, which make turning a breeze, and a small-foods basket to use with veggies, especially if you are going to do multiple foods on the grill at the same time. These simplify turning so you can pay attention to everything else.
- An outdoor **grill light**.
- **A pizza peel**.
- **Assorted wood planks** that are 2 inches thick and at least 4 inches wide and 10 to 12 inches long. Be sure they aren't treated with chemicals

that would make them unsuitable for cooking.

- **A grill wok.**
- A couple of **pans and pots** that are very heavy-duty for use on the grill or side burner. Look to Lodge pre-seasoned cast iron for a lasting product.
- **A spice grinder.**
- **Microplane® zester.**

LET'S GET COOKING

The pros call it *mise en place*, which means “everything in its place,” and your life will be a lot easier if you take a couple of minutes to think through what you will need at the grill (besides the food) when you're grilling. This is where those side shelves or an outdoor table come in mighty handy. If you are going to be yelling at someone to bring you something from the kitchen, make sure it's for a refill of your favorite beverage, not the barbecue sauce.

THE SKINNY ON TEMPERATURE

HIGH	450°-550°F
MEDIUM	350°-450°F
LOW	250°-350°F
LOW AND SLOW	200°-250°F

PREHEATING

Starting most gas grills is simply a matter of opening the valve on the propane tank, setting your burners to “Lite,” and pushing an igniter button. Many of the new grills have built-in igniters on each burner's control knob. You should read the manufacturer's instructions on how to light your grill, and especially on how to light it with a match if the igniters fail. Every grill is a bit different. No matter what grill you have or what cooking method you are using, *always* heat your grill with all the burners turned on and set to high and the lid closed. Most modern gas grills can get to a temperature of about 550°F in 10 to 15 minutes, regardless of how many Btu. At this point, turn off burners and turn down the heat as necessary for the food you are preparing.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT COOKING

The methods of grilling called direct and indirect almost seem self-explanatory. Direct is just that—cooking over the direct heat source, and this is what most of us refer to as grilling. In the case of gas grills, that means that the food is placed directly over an operating burner. Direct works better for foods like steaks, hamburgers, boneless chicken breasts, fish fillets, and the like, which are thin and small enough to cook to the center before the exterior burns. With the exception of tuna steaks, direct heat involves closing the lid.

Every grill has hot and cool spots, and knowing where they are is especially important when you cook with direct heat. Once

KEEP IT CLOSED

When cooking on a gas grill, *always* grill with the lid down, opening it only to turn or baste the food. Keeping the lid closed sets up a convection environment that cooks food more consistently, with more-even heat and less moisture loss. Do this with both direct and indirect methods and your food will be better for it. The only exception to closing the lid on your food is tuna. If you like it seared on the outside and cool and rare in the middle, closing the lid cooks the fish way too fast.

you've learned where these spots are, you can adjust the positioning of food accordingly.

Indirect cooking is when your food is placed over burners that are turned off. Indirect methods of cooking are well known to great pit masters across the country. It's typical in a low-and-slow barbecue. George Stephen, a welder from Chicago, brought the capability to our backyards with his kettle-designed grills. Indirect cooking exponentially increases our capacity to produce delicious food with our grills. It works better with large cuts like roasts, pork shoulders, turkeys, and ribs, as

well as with smaller cuts like bone-in chicken parts. Indirect almost guarantees that foods will not burn on the outside before they are completely cooked inside. It also allows time for smoke to penetrate your food, if you so desire. Indirect comes close to eliminating pesky flare-ups, and it *always* involves the lid being closed.

How you configure your grill for indirect cooking depends on the number of burners and whether they run side to side or front to back. For a three-burner grill with burners running side to side, the front burner might be the only one turned on, and you'd place the food over the center or back burners. For a two-burner, the rear burner would be off and the food would be placed over it. For grills with burners that run front to back, you can either turn the center burners off, or for a very long-cooking food like a turkey, have one side of the grill on and the other side off. This is particularly useful when smoking, as it sets up a nice drafting relationship between heat and smoke. A water pan is also useful with the indirect method to ensure a moist finish, but only with longer-cooking items like roasts and turkeys, not necessarily with chicken parts. Refer to the owner's manual for specifics to your grill for direct and indirect cooking.

So when do you use which method? A good rule of thumb is how long the food takes to cook. If a food will be done within 20 to 30 minutes, cook it using direct heat. If it will take longer than 20 or so minutes, to be perfectly safe, use indirect. The higher side of

OUTDOOR COOKING IS MEANT TO BE AN ADVENTURE, A CHANGE OF PACE, FUN, AND A BIT CHALLENGING...

that range is for the more experienced, devil-may-care, I-like-to-live-dangerously folks.

There's a third method of cooking with a gas grill, and it's my favorite—you'll see it used throughout this book. It's a combination of direct heat for browning and indirect heat for cooking through. Here are some examples. A rack of pork ribs cooks beautifully with slow and gentle indirect heat, but 10 minutes or so before they are done, I'll flip them to direct heat to develop a little char and start brushing them with sauce. The result is a perfect rib with enough caramelization for great taste but nothing burned to spoil the experience. Or I'll sear bone-in chicken parts, including halves and quarters, or whole butterflied chickens, first over the direct section of the grill, and after they are golden brown I'll transfer them to the indirect area. Even then, after I have sauced the chicken very near the end of the cooking time, I might place it back over the direct heat to add just a bit of char.

I consistently hear folks complain about not being able to cook a steak with the same crust as a steakhouse. First you need to know that most steakhouses are cooking in the 800°F to 1,200°F range, which is hard for you

to do at home, and few of us cook dozens of steaks all day, every day, to develop the expertise. If you want to get as close as possible to that steakhouse “crust” at home, first buy thick steaks, 1½- to 2-inchers. Sear the steaks over direct heat until the crust that you want has almost formed, then finish cooking the meat over indirect heat and turn your direct burner to a lower temperature. With a bit of practice you'll be the envy of the neighborhood. Of course that also means you will always be cooking the steaks for any function!

Make these cooking methods your friends and experiment with all of them. Soon you will reap accolades from your family and friends, and you'll get over-the-top taste from your gas grill.

COOK IT TILL IT'S DONE

Grilling is more art than science, which is the beauty of why we do this. Outdoor cooking is meant to be an adventure, a change of pace, fun, and a bit challenging—and one of the biggest challenges is knowing when a food is

done. The only absolute in the timing for any recipe in this book or in any other grilling recipes is that there is no absolute! Way too many variables have an effect on outdoor cooking, and you should never accept any timing guidelines as dictums. Among those variables are weather (wind, the outside temperature, rain or snow) and altitude, as well as whether the food you're cooking is a little larger or smaller than that specified in a recipe, your grill, and even how each cook defines terms like "medium" or "low" as it relates to heat level. For these reasons, take what you read in this (and any) book about grilling as guidelines, not gospel.

One of the biggest variables of all is your grill. They all cook differently and have different temperature points. A good oven thermometer is the best way to learn about your grill. But all this being said, it's much easier to adjust a gas grill to different conditions than it is to adjust a charcoal grill, whether you are dealing with hot spots or funky weather conditions.

In cold weather you will need to adjust your cooking temperatures upward to try to offset the outdoor temperature (cold weather affects the metal of the grill and drives the temperature down). But take care here, especially if you are indirect-cooking, say, a Thanks-

COMING TO TERMS

There are a few cooking terms that get tossed around a lot when it comes to a grill. They are "grilling," "grill-roasting," and "barbecuing."

- The act of **grilling** is cooking over direct heat, which you can also do on a grill pan inside; some diners look at their flattop griddle as a "grill."
- **Grill-roasting** is the process of cooking over indirect heat and is much like using an indoor oven for cuts of protein that benefit from longer cooking times in a gentler heat environment.
- **Barbecuing** is essentially grill-roasting at a super-low heat, say 225°F, and most all the time includes the addition of a smoking agent like wood chips or chunks. The setup is exactly like indirect cooking, and for gas grills that usually means only one burner running and turned to low heat. You've heard the term "low and slow" a million times, and that's just a different way of saying "barbecuing."

LITTLE STUFF TO KEEP IN MIND THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

- Let your food come to room temperature. It really helps the cooking process.
- For the most part, don't precook vegetables.
- Never parboil ribs—I will come talk to you if you do!
- A thermometer is your friend.
- Have a spare, full tank of propane.

giving turkey or a Christmas roast. Monitor the inside temperature of your grill (here's where that oven thermometer is invaluable). If you are grill-roasting at about 350°F, then adjust your temperature to maintain that temperature. In extreme cold this may be hard to do, so add to your cooking time and plan to baste or spray the item with broth or whatever your liquid flavoring ingredients might be to preserve moisture over the longer cooking time.

Here again each grill will vary, so if this is your first Thanksgiving turkey and it's cold outside, give yourself an extra hour. If it gets done early, don't panic, just tent it with foil and know that the hot gravy will overcome any cooling. And if Granny has to have hers steaming hot, nuke her a few slices.

Rain and snow have similar effects. A thunderstorm in the summer is going to cool the outside of your grill, but with summer rain, I tend to expect a slightly longer cooking time and make no other adjustments. Grilling in the snow is a hoot and proves to everyone what a grand grill master you are, so just follow the cold-temperature guidelines and plow your way to the grill. Wind can be your toughest adversary. If possible, place your grill so that the wind is perpendicular to the gas flow. Keep a vigil for a burner being blown out. The match light opening is a good place to look. And by all means, if the burners go out, cut off the gas, open the lid, and wait at least five minutes before trying to relight. I would like you to keep your hair and skin intact.

As in baking, grilling at higher altitudes, like in the Rockies or other high mountains, demands adjustments, too, mostly when you are cooking indirectly. You'll have to increase your cooking time. For the most part with roasts and other large cuts, increase your time by about 15 percent, but here again every grill is different.

TESTING, 1, 2, 3

So if the cooking times in a recipe are only guides, how do you know when something is done? Each recipe in this book has a few different doneness cues, and they rely on a variety of senses, but mostly sight, touch, and

smell: Is the food browned, or are the juices running clear? Does the food feel firm or still a bit soft? Are the aromas having their way with you?

Touch is the way most chefs determine doneness, at least with smaller cuts (bigger cuts will be more dependent on internal temperature). Invest in a couple of instant-read thermometers, and at least one probe type. Use their temperature readings to hone your skills by learning to match touch with temperature and you'll never have to do the slice-and-peek method to check doneness again. In all of the cooking classes I teach, one of the things I get the most feedback about is how wonderful these methods are and how quickly they can be learned. I most frequently use the cheek-nose-forehead method (see below).

While you're learning to gauge doneness, *always* err on the side of undercooked. I routinely tell students in my cooking classes, kitchen assistants, and neighbors that "it's

easier to put cook on than take cook off"—meaning you can always cook something longer if it isn't done enough, but you can't make something less cooked. If you aren't sure the food is done to your liking, just take the food off the grill and reduce your grill's temperature. Let the food stand or rest for however long the recipe suggests, and then check it. If it isn't as done as you prefer, return it to the grill. The beauty of the gas grill is that you still have a good heat source to return the item to and finish the cooking. You are not really wasting gas—the grill is cleaning itself by burning off any particles of protein that have adhered, which will make the job of cleaning it faster the next time you cook. Just don't forget (as I have) to cut the gas off if you don't return the food to the grill to finish cooking. You'll be very disappointed and say something like @#%*%# the next time you go to grill if your gas is gone by your own hand.

FACE METHOD FOR TESTING DONENESS



Touch your cheek—rare



Touch your nose—medium



Touch your forehead—well-done

GRILL FOR GOOD HEALTH

There is a lot of talk about grilling and its health effects. Flare-ups are the main culprits. You don't want flare-ups anyway because they affect the taste of the food adversely. Flare-ups are caused by fat dripping onto the heat source. The chemical reaction could create carcinogens, but the American Cancer Society has not yet determined the levels that might put you at risk. Here's where the new gas grills with bars over the heat source are extremely helpful in negating flare-ups and making your experience safer.

- Keep your grill outside and away from overhangs. Never leave a lit grill alone for any length of time. Even when going low and slow, check on it occasionally.
- Never light a grill with the lid closed.
- Don't move a lit grill.
- Check for gas leaks routinely and every time you change a tank. It's very simple to do with a spray bottle filled with soapy water. A leak will create bubbles.
- Loose clothes and a gas grill is a bad idea.
- Watch the kids.
- Transport propane tanks in an upright fashion and store them outside, but not in an area where the temperature will reach 125°F.
- If a burner doesn't light, cut everything off including the tank, open the lid, and wait at least five minutes before trying again. If it still doesn't light, check your owner's manual for how to clear a blockage.
- Follow your owner's manual for scheduled maintenance and do it.
- Last but not least, if you smell gas, there's a problem. Shut everything down. If you still smell gas, call your friendly fire department.

A FEW WORDS ON SAFETY

I've said that grilling is fun, and it is. But nothing will put a damper on that fun like a trip to the emergency room, a call to the fire department, or a case of food poisoning. Keep these points in mind to stay safe, healthy, and home.

FIRST THE GRILL

Gas is explosive and flammable, and you'd be wise not to forget it. Read your grill's instructions thoroughly and follow them to the letter.

- Make sure your grill is assembled properly.

NOW THE FOOD

Most, but not all, foodborne illness is caused by not handling food properly, and most often

SMOKING WITH THE GOOD STUFF: SMOKING WOODS

WOOD TYPE	BASIC CHARACTERISTICS	GOOD WITH
HICKORY	Bacon-like, smoky	Most anything but fish
MESQUITE	Pungent, but sweet; however, burns hot so take that into account	Made for beef and lamb, but good with veggies
OAK	Mellow and is the traditional mix with hickory for barbecue of all types	Brisket, pork shoulder, pork of all types
APPLE	The darling of the barbecue circuit—mild, sweet, dense smoke; my favorite	Pork; all poultry, especially duck and turkey
CHERRY	Mild and sweet	Duck, other poultry, pork
ALDER	Light and delicate	Great with salmon and most all seafood; veggies too
PECAN	Strong and nutty; burns very cool, which makes it great for low heat	Wild game, pork, chicken
PEAR/PEACH	Woodsy and sweet, but rich	Poultry, pork, fish
GRAPEVINES	Mild and easy; great for quick-cooking foods	Small poultry, pork, turkey parts
WINE BARREL PIECES (WHISKEY TOO)	Fun and different; oak and wine nuances	Beef and poultry

those foods are protein based. Raw chicken, for example, is the source of a lot more food poisoning than raw broccoli. Keep these tips in mind to lessen the risk of making your friends, your family, or yourself sick.

- Wash your hands often in hot, soapy water.
- When I mention room temperature, the range is 65°F to 72°F, but remember that bacteria grows most rapidly between 40°F and 120°F. Minimize

the time that food spends out of the refrigerator or off the grill.

- Defrost foods in the refrigerator. Protein-based foods can be at room temperature for about 2 hours—and that’s combined before and after cooking, not two hours before and two hours after—before it becomes potentially unsafe.
- Cross-contamination is real and can ruin your day. Keep tongs, cutting

boards, platters, and anything else that touches raw food away from cooked food. Wash everything that has been in contact with raw stuff in hot, soapy water.

- If reusing a marinade as a sauce or basting medium, place it in a pot over high heat and bring to a boil. Boil for *at least* a full minute (some experts recommend boiling for three minutes, others for up to five minutes). Start timing when a full boil is reached—and a full boil is one that does not go down when stirred.
- Divide a sauce that will be used for basting and for passing at the table before it comes into contact with raw or partially cooked foods. You can also bring the sauce that was used for basting to a boil like a marinade, but sometimes it radically changes the flavor, especially with cooked sauces, so I would rather divide.
- Get a clean spatula or platter for the cooked food rather than reuse the one that touched the raw. Why risk it?

ADDING FLAVOR WITH SMOKE

What was once a disappointing aspect of gas grilling was the lack of a wood flavor. Most folks don't understand that charcoal adds such a tiny bit of smoke flavor that it has to be

enhanced as well, so don't let the "charcoal snob" bully you. Grills have improved to the point that I regularly use wood for adding a bit or a lot of flavor. Many recipes in this book use wood chips, and you can certainly add this dimension to most any recipe.

Originally, charcoal was actual wood that had been burned to embers, and good barbecue joints still use this today. Charcoal as we know it, however, was Henry Ford's idea. Most of what you buy as briquettes is compressed charred wood and coal mixed with cornstarch and other chemicals. Lump hardwood is more about charred wood without fillers, and it is a much better product.

The type of wood you use to create the smoke can have a profound effect on the flavor of the food you're cooking. The box on p. 15 explains the basic characteristics of the flavors that different woods impart and offers suggestions about which foods they complement best.

If your grill is equipped with a smoke drawer or box, especially with its own burner, you're good to go. Follow the guidelines in your owner's manual. Otherwise, there are many post-purchase cast-iron smoke boxes in stores and while they are nice, they certainly aren't necessary. I used the following method for years (the same general guidelines apply for using a smoke box):

1. Soak your wood chips or chunks for at least 30 minutes. They can soak in water, or in beer, wine, or fruit juices

SMOKING GUIDELINES

- Start with a small amount for smoke until you learn your grill and your tolerance for the smoke flavor. Remember, more is not always better. Smoke is a seasoning, just like salt.
- Experiment with different woods—and different combinations of woods—to see which you prefer with which proteins. I like a mix of hickory, oak, and apple, which gives a smoky, sweet, and rich flavor.
- For more information, check out my website at www.barbecue-nation.com.

for an extra zip. I usually start with 2 to 3 cups of wood chips or several pieces of wood chunks.

2. Take a small disposable aluminum drip pan and place the drained chips inside. Cover tightly with foil, and then poke a few holes in the foil.
3. Before you preheat the grill, place this packet under your cooking grate, directly on the angled metal plates covering your burners, or on the lava rocks or ceramic briquettes, in what is generally the hottest spot on the grill. Leave it there during the heating process.

4. It really helps to have a pan of liquid in the grill when smoking. Smoking can dry food out, so some steam keeps things moist. It can be water, beer, fruit juice, or any liquid used in the recipe. Keep the liquid in the pan for most of the cooking process (it's okay if it evaporates toward the end of the cooking time). Place the pan over the indirect-heat portion of the grill.
5. Don't start cooking until the chips have begun to smolder and smoke is present.

It has been my experience that chips will only smoke for 20 to 25 minutes, which for most indirect cooking is perfect for that smoke-kissed flavor. You can add another packet of chips if you wish, but know that every time you lift the grill's lid you are losing heat and extending the cooking time.

But what about cooking low and slow barbecue? If you are under the impression that most barbecue joints smoke food throughout the whole cooking process, get over it. Yes, there are still those that do, and there are commercial smokers that assist in this process. However, a good pit master knows that too much smoke will yield a food that tastes like a charred piece of wood, or as fellow grill master Elizabeth Karmel says, "the way an ashtray smells." Proteins tend to absorb their best smoke flavor within the first two hours. For most gas grillers, any more is a waste and you are working way too hard. If you plan to do a lot of "barbecue" cooking, I urge you to look at a grill with

QUICK CLEANING TIPS

- Use the heat of the grill to burn off food residue, and then remove it with your grill brush. Also knock off debris on the bars that cover the burners. Never use chemical solutions on either bars or burners.
- Remember to empty and clean your grease pan. It will prevent grease fires and keep critters from sniffing around your grill. Wash it with warm, soapy water.
- Once a year, clean your burners as suggested by your owner's manual.
- Clean the cooking box and inside the lid while warm with hot, soapy water. Use a scrub pad if needed.
- Wipe the outside surface occasionally. If your grill is stainless steel, use a product made for stainless.

built-in smoking capabilities. These grills know how to play the game to get perfect flavor.

Here's a trick I learned from my neighbor Robin Thomas. He soaks wood chips or chunks and places them right on the cooking grate, over the hot spot on his grill, and then pre-heats it. By the time his grill is heated, he's got smoke. This method is quick and easy and allows you to add chips as necessary without much effort. I use this method when quick-cooking items over direct heat and with foods that take an hour or less with indirect. Experiment with this method. You'll be surprised.

One of the most important things to do when smoking and cooking indirectly with low temperatures is to keep a pan of liquid in the cooking chamber. The dampness it creates makes the smoke more effective and helps to prevent the meat from drying out.

Remember too that "planking" is a form of smoking. Cedar planks are the norm, but there are hickory planks, and they are great with pork and beef. Cherry and maple play well with chicken, so add these to your grilling repertoire. (See the sidebar on p. 191 for more information about cooking with planks.)

And don't think it's "sissy" to wrap your hunk of meat in foil to finish cooking. What you are doing is using a "Texas Crutch." More great pit masters than you would ever imagine use this method. Wrap the meat in foil after it has had some time to absorb some smoke—usually an hour is good—then place the wrapped food back over the indirect heat of your grill or even in a heated oven. Your results will be stunning. Try Jean Lynn's Beef Brisket, by Way of Kansas City (p. 56) for the ultimate proof.

ROTISSERIE COOKING

For centuries, humans have been cooking foods on a spit. It's funny to me that what is old is new again. A rotisserie allows you to grill food on a rotating rod with indirect heat below or beside the food. Using a rotisserie creates an incredibly moist and very evenly browned food.

If you can balance a food on a spit, you can cook it on a rotisserie. What happens during rotisserie cooking is that the protein bastes itself. As the meat turns, the melting external fat bathes the meat, keeping it moist. The method is best used on turkey, duck, chicken and other whole poultry, roasts of all types, and ribs. I love cooking whole duck and other fatty birds this way, as well as lean beef roasts. Wrapping meat (or larding) with bacon adds volumes to lean cuts of any type.

Whether your grill came with a rotisserie unit or not, most gas grills can easily accommodate a post-purchase one. Follow your rotisserie's directions for securing the meat and operating the unit. Heat your grill with all burners on high, including the rotisserie burner if your grill is equipped with one. Place the spit in the unit and the rotisserie cut out on the grill. If you have a rotisserie burner, leave it on, and set a couple of burners for indirect cooking and adjusted to low heat. If your grill doesn't have a rotisserie burner, set the burners for indirect cooking over medium heat. Remove any racks that would interfere

with the rotation, place a drip pan under the meat to catch the fat as it melts, close the lid, and turn on the rotisserie motor. You can pretty much forget it at this point.

Any food that can be placed on a spit or recipe that uses a spit can be converted to this style of cooking, simply by following the direction in the previous paragraph. Also know that any rotisserie recipe can be cooked over indirect heat. The cooking time and temperature are almost exactly the same.

WHAT'S IN THE PANTRY?

Besides techniques, the ingredients you choose can affect flavor—sometimes profoundly. This section includes products I like and used in developing and testing these recipes, as well as some suggestions for your pantry. Pick and choose, but try to have a variety of each type on hand so you can experience, for example, how different vinegars or sweeteners can affect the taste of each dish. For more suggestions and ideas for flavoring your foods, see Chapter 10.

- **Kosher salt.** preferably Morton®, and gray sea salt. I like the feel and the melt of Morton kosher, but I use a fair amount of gray sea salt since it doesn't seem to affect blood pressure so much.
- **Black pepper.** freshly ground from a pepper mill. Adds volumes of flavor.
- **Good oils.** Have an olive oil (no need to use extra-virgin in most grilling

recipes) and a canola or other neutral oil (because peanut allergies are increasingly common, you may wish to avoid peanut oil). A little truffle oil is nice for finishing a simply grilled food.

- **Composed (or compound) butters.**

Make and freeze some to have on hand. Only buy unsalted butter—that way you control the seasoning.

- **Hot pepper sauces.** I use Texas Pete[®], FRANK'S[®] RedHot[®], and Tabasco[®].

All are excellent. Also keep an Asian hot sauce like sriracha.

- **Duke's[®] Mayonnaise.** If you can't find it in your area, try a southern-food website, or pick a mayonnaise that has little or no sugar. But, and this is a big but: If you are making your grandmother's recipe and she always used Hellmann's[®], then you must use Hellmann's too. It's part of the flavor profile and the dish just won't taste "right" with anything else.

- **Sweeteners.** Brown sugar, honey, molasses, Splenda[®], Sugar in the Raw[®], maple sugar and syrup, and plain old granulated sugar.

- **Bourbon,** for the food and the cook.

- **Ketchup.** I really like the flavor of organic ketchups, Hunt's[®] regular ketchup, and Dickinson's[®], a specialty ketchup from J.M. Smucker.

- **Tamari** instead of soy sauce. Better tasting and lower sodium. Think of it as premium soy sauce.

- **Worcestershire sauce.** Try the home-made recipe on p. 300. Many gourmet brands are excellent as well, and Lea & Perrins[®] is pretty good, too.

- **Apple cider** and **distilled white vinegar.**

- **Mustards.** Yellow American-style mustard, Gulden's[®] Brown, and Grey Poupon[®] or Maille[®] Dijon-style mustard, both grainy and smooth. I use only Colman's[®] Dry Mustard.

- An emergency bottled **barbecue sauce.** I use Bone Suckin' Sauce and Bull's-Eye[™] when I don't have time to make my own.

- Fresh, I repeat fresh, **spices and herbs.** If they are older than six months they need to be thrown out. Within this group have a few pure chile powders, especially chipotle; smoked paprika; granulated garlic and onion; and a locally produced barbecue rub to have for emergencies (or order one from a barbecue house like Neely's or the Barbecue Shop in Memphis, Tennessee, or Magic Dust from Mike Mills's 17th Street Bar and Grill in Murphysboro, Illinois, for when you are short on time). Ground coriander and cumin mixed in equal parts is great for seafood. Crushed red chile flakes are also an important part of your spice rack.

- **Fruit preserves.** Jellies like red currant, guava, plum, and hot pepper;

THE TOP 10 KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL GRILLING

- Be patient and let your grill preheat fully.
- Keep your cooking grate clean.
- Oil the cooking grate each time you cook, and brush or spray oil on your food, especially fish, and sticking becomes a thing of the past. Oil also transfers heat quickly.
- Understand direct and indirect and when to use each or a combination.
- Always cook with the lid down.
- Shoot for caramelized, not blackened.
- Don't baste with sauces that include sugar until the end of the cooking time. That includes ketchup-based sauces.
- Turn food only once if at all possible.
- Use a thermometer for both grill temperature and internal food temperature (at least until you have mastered the “touch” method for doneness).
- Most of all, enjoy the process, and reap the rewards and praise.

peach preserves; and orange marmalade make for quick glazes and sauces. Smucker's®, Dickinson's®, and Braswell's® are my choices.

- Prepared **horseradish and wasabi** in a tube—forget the powder.
- Wickles™, the best damn **pickle** you'll ever eat.
- **Bacon**, preferably apple-wood smoked.
- Lots of **onions**, yellow and sweet; fresh **garlic**; and **shallots**.
- **Citrus fruit**, especially lemons, limes, and oranges.
- Wish-Bone® or Good Seasons® Italian salad dressing for **emergency marinades**.
- **Red and white wine and sherry**. Box wines have gotten so much better that I keep one red and one white just for cooking. The wine stays fresher in the box than in a bottle. Remember, it must be drinkable. Vermouth is also nice to have on hand for a variety of reasons, but mainly because it can double for white wine, and martinis are good when having a cookout.

THE SIMPLEST AND BEST-TASTING LONDON BROIL IN THE WORLD

SERVES 4 TO 6

DIRECT HEAT

One 3- to 3½-pound flank steak or thick sirloin tip (sometimes labeled London broil)

One 16-ounce bottle Wish-Bone Italian dressing

2 tablespoons dry sherry, such as oloroso

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1 Granny Smith apple, cut into thin slices

Not everything has to be complicated or expensive to be over-the-top delicious, and here's a perfect example.

London broil, as it is so labeled in many grocery stores today, is not a cut of meat. It refers to flank steak or sirloin tip that should always be marinated, cooked quickly, and thinly sliced. This recipe may look a little pedestrian to you, but don't knock it until you've tried it. This is a showy dish for a tailgate.

- 1.** Cut shallow diagonal slits on one side of the steak. This will help it absorb the marinade better.
- 2.** Combine the dressing, sherry, Worcestershire, and apple slices in a large zip-top bag. Add the beef, close the bag, and squish the marinade around the meat. Put in the refrigerator and marinate for at least 24 hours; 48 is better, and you can go for as long as 3 days.
- 3.** Oil the grill racks. Preheat your grill using all burners set on high and with the lid closed for 10 to 12 minutes.
- 4.** Remove the meat from the bag and discard the marinade and apples. Pat the meat dry with paper towels. Place on the grill, close the lid, and cook for 7 or 8 minutes. Turn, cover the grill again, and cook for an additional 8 minutes, or until the steak gives slightly to the touch and is about 140°F on an instant-read thermometer. Remove from the grill and let rest for 5 minutes. Slice very thinly across the grain and serve with any accumulated juices.

IN THE KITCHEN

Two of my favorite cuts of beef are flank steak and brisket. They're not as tender as filet mignon, but they have 10 times the flavor. They can also be ruined with sloppy knife work. Cuts of beef that are not inherently tender need to be cut against the grain of the muscle fibers. By doing this, you shorten the length of that grain and make the meat more palatable to chew. Since the grain can sometimes be difficult to see, a good rule of thumb is to slice vertically across the length of the meat.



HICKORY-SMOKED BOURBON TURKEY

SERVES 12 TO 14

INDIRECT HEAT

One 12-pound fresh turkey

8 cups water

2 cups pure maple syrup

1 cup bourbon

½ cup plus 1 tablespoon kosher salt

1 tablespoon pickling spice

1 large carrot, peeled and halved crosswise

1 rib celery, halved crosswise

1 medium onion, peeled and halved

1 lemon

2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper

Hickory wood chips, soaked in water for 1 hour

This turkey gets smoked. Yeah, the low and slow way to magnificent results. Armed with a brine and hickory chips, a plain-Jane turkey turns into outdoor cooking nirvana. If bourbon is not your thing, cut back by half or cut it out entirely, replacing it with another cup of water. You can buy specially designed turkey brining bags, but it's just as easy to use turkey oven-cooking bags for brining. Plan ahead for the 6-hour cooking time.

1. Remove the giblets and neck from the turkey; reserve for other uses, if desired. Rinse the turkey thoroughly with cold water and pat dry.

2. To make the brine, a large stockpot is usually a good container. Pour in the water, maple syrup, bourbon, ½ cup of the salt, and pickling spice. Place your turkey in a brining bag and pour the brine over the bird. The turkey needs to be completely submerged, so add additional water if needed. Close the bag tightly; like to put it in another bag just for insurance. Put in the refrigerator for at least 24 hours, but no more than 36 hours or the brine will begin to make the meat mushy.

3. Oil the grill racks. Preheat your grill using all burners set on high and with the lid closed for 10 to 12 minutes.

4. When the grill is hot, cut off the center or back burner and adjust the heat to medium-low.

5. Remove the turkey from the brine, discarding the water mixture. Pat dry inside and out and set it on a baking sheet. Stuff the cavity with the carrot, celery, and onion. Slice the lemon in half and squeeze the juice over the turkey, then place the rinds in the cavity. Season the turkey with the remaining 1 tablespoon salt and the pepper, rubbing it into the skin. Fold the wings under and tie the legs together with kitchen twine.

6. Drain the wood chips and place in a smoker box (follow your manufacturer's instructions) if your grill is so equipped. If not, see pp. 16–17 for directions on making a wood-chip packet. Place a small disposable pan on the grill and fill halfway with water. Place the turkey on the grill, close the lid, and be patient. The turkey will need to cook and smoke for about 6 hours, or until a meat thermometer registers 170°F when inserted into the thickest part of the thigh or the juices run clear when nicked with a knife. During this time you will need to add additional water and wood chips. Wood chips tend to burn for 15 to 20 minutes. So about every 30 minutes, quickly add more wood chips. Every time you lift the grill's lid you're losing precious heat and smoke.

7. When the turkey is done, remove it from the grill and let rest for at least 30 minutes before carving.



GRILLED BREAD AND TOMATO SALAD

SERVES 6 TO 8

DIRECT HEAT

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter

2 garlic cloves, minced

**8 ounces day-old Italian bread,
cut into ¾-inch-thick slices**

**6 dead-ripe meaty tomatoes, cored,
seeded, and cut into quarters**

¼ cup minced red onion

⅓ cup fruity extra-virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon

½ teaspoon kosher salt

7 or 8 grindings black pepper

The Italian classic *panzanella* gets a new spin when you grill the bread. This added dimension, I think, further brings out the summer sweetness of dead-ripe beefsteak tomatoes. The juxtaposition of the caramelized, toasted bread against the sweet-tart tomatoes makes for plenty of contrast in flavor and texture. You can also try this without grilling the tomatoes, if you prefer. Just don't make this salad too far in advance. You want the bread to have a little structure and crispness.

1. Place a small saucepan over medium heat and add the butter. When it's about half melted, throw in the garlic and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, allowing the garlic to take on a little bit of color. Remove from the heat and brush this mixture on both sides of each slice of bread.

2. Oil the grill racks. Preheat your grill using all burners set on high and with the lid closed for 10 to 12 minutes.

3. Place the bread on the grill, close the lid, and cook, turning once, until well marked. Careful here; depending on the moisture content of the bread, this could happen as quickly as 2 minutes (or about 1 minute on each side), but it usually takes about 4 minutes. Place the tomatoes on the grill, close the lid, and cook for a few minutes per side.

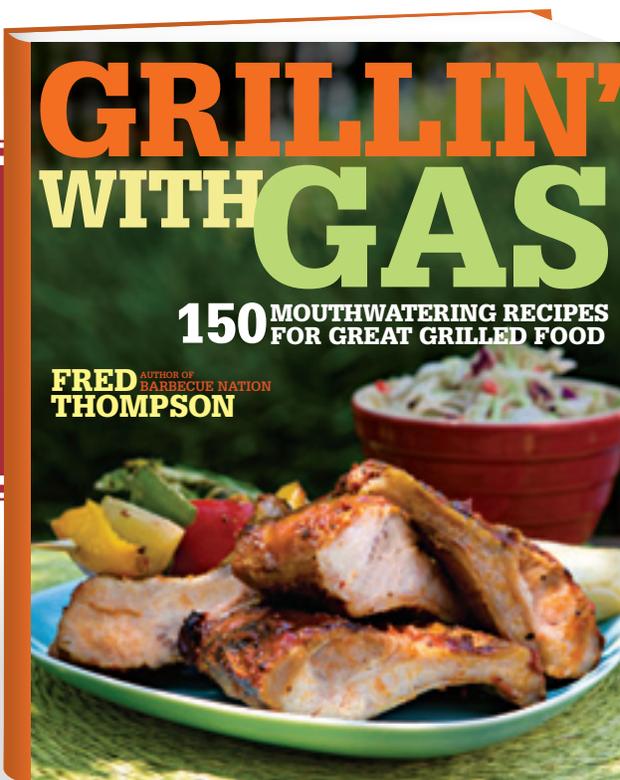
4. Remove the bread to a cutting board, cut into ¾-inch cubes, and place in a large mixing bowl. Add the tomatoes, onion, olive oil, vinegar, herbs, salt, and pepper. Toss gently with your hands to combine. Taste and adjust the seasonings if you desire. Serve at room temperature.



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