

Smart Summer Grilling Secrets

Grilling in America is just about synonymous with calorie-laden barbecue sauces, fatty ribs and burgers, and preservative-filled hot dogs. But an outdoor feast doesn't have to be bad for your health.

Those unhealthy barbecue standbys can easily be modified with healthy alternatives that still taste great. Learn how to prepare your seasonal bounty with homemade low-fat marinades, spice rubs, and other additions that do an excellent job of bringing out food's natural flavor when it's cooked over an open flame.

Rules of the Grill

These timeless adages of meat and fire will help you tame the flame once and for all.

1. **Forget the Fork.**

The last tool that you want to use is one that will break the surface of your food, creating an escape route for all the precious juices that are trapped inside. Only use a spatula or tongs.

2. **Ditch the lighter fluid.**

Have you ever smelled the stuff? If you have, you'd know that even the faintest residue of fluid on your food is bound to be a bad thing. Put down the squeeze bottle and pick up a charcoal chimney, a simple device that houses charcoal on top, newspaper on the bottom, and sets the whole pile ablaze with a simple flick from a lighter. Weber sells charcoal chimneys for about \$15.

3. **Know your zones.**

Always try to set up your grill with two temperature zones, one very hot area for searing and charring, and one cooler zone where you can cook thicker cuts slowly and thoroughly. If using charcoal, gather the majority of the briquettes on one side of the grill (a technique called banking), leaving the other side relatively free of direct heat. For a gas grill, simply turn one burner on medium or high and keep the other all the way down on low.

4. **Rest you meat.**

All meat needs time to rest before it is cut. By allowing poultry and red meat to cool, you give the juices a chance to be reabsorbed back into the food. Big cuts of meat need 10 minutes to rest (thick steaks, roasts, whole chickens); thinner cuts (chicken breast, flank steak, pork tenderloin) will be ready to eat after 5.

5. **Tame the temperature.**

The most important skill to master is learning to cook meat and fish to its proper doneness. Even the pros carry instant-read thermometers to ensure they've cooked their food perfectly. To get the most accurate reading, insert the thermometer into the deepest part of the meat. Chicken should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F and pork to 140-145°F. For beef and lamb, the internal temperature will vary based on the desired doneness: Rare 120-125°F (red throughout); Medium Rare 130-135°F (red at the center, pink everywhere else); Medium 140-145°F (pink throughout); Medium Well 150-155°F (slightly pink center, gray everywhere else); Well Done 160°F and above (gray throughout).

Master the Marinade

*Marinades and spice rubs do more than kick up the flavor at your summer parties. The spices in both have anti-cancer compounds and most important, marinades have an important health function: Research from the Food Science Institute of Kansas found that **the polyphenols in marinade, drawn from a pool of herbs and spices, cut carcinogen deposits in grilled foods by up to 88 percent.** Also, the acids from vinegar or wine break down muscle fibers, helping make meats and fish more tender, while the oil locks in vegetables' juices and water so they don't escape during cooking. These simple recipes will help you make the perfect dressing for whatever's on your menu!*

Each recipe makes enough marinade or rub for 12 ounces of meat or 2 cups of veggies.

Marinade base 1/4 c olive oil

Rub base 1 tsp sea salt and 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper

For Poultry add:

Marinade 1/4 c dry red wine, 1/4 c soy sauce, 1 Tbsp Dijon-style mustard

Rub 1 Tbsp curry powder, 1/2 Tbsp cumin powder, 1/2 tsp ground coriander, 1/2 tsp turmeric, 1/4 tsp ginger powder, 1 tsp dried mint

For Beef add:

Marinade 1 c dark beer, 1 Tbsp chopped fresh ginger, 2 chopped garlic cloves, 1 tsp each orange zest and cumin powder

Rub 1 Tbsp cumin powder, 1 Tbsp coriander, 1/2 tsp cardamom powder, 1/2 tsp ginger powder, 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon, 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg

For Fish add:

Marinade 1/4 c pure maple syrup, 1/4 c orange juice, 1/8 c balsamic vinegar, 2 minced garlic cloves

Rub 1 Tbsp onion powder, 1 Tbsp garlic powder, 1 Tbsp paprika, 1/2 Tbsp cayenne pepper, 1 Tbsp dried oregano

For Pork add:

Marinade 1/4 c pomegranate juice, 2 Tbsp honey, juice of 1 lime, 1 tsp dried oregano

Rub 2 Tbsp brown sugar, 1/2 Tbsp chili powder, 1 Tbsp cocoa powder, 1/2 tsp cinnamon, 1/2 tsp garlic powder

For Vegetables add:

Marinade 1/4 c red wine, 1/8 c balsamic vinegar, 1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce, 1 minced garlic clove, 1 Tbsp fresh rosemary

Rub 4 Tbsp chopped basil, 1/2 tsp grated lemon peel, 1 Tbsp onion powder, 2 tsp celery seed, 1 Tbsp dried oregano

The Skewer Matrix

*From Cook This! Not That! By David Zinczenko & Matt Goulding
(pg. 168-169)*

The very nature of a skewer – lean meat, interspersed with a variety of fresh vegetables, and brushed with a simple sauce- all but guarantees healthy eating. Best of all, they take but a few minutes to assemble and the potential for deliciousness is only limited by your imagination.

Rules of the Skewer

Step One:

Soak wooden skewers in water for at least 20 minutes before loading them up. The moisture will prevent the wood from catching fire and scorching your dinner.

Step Two:

The size of the produce on your skewer should be determined by the protein you're cooking with. Shrimp and Scallops cook quickly, so the produce should be cut smaller. Chicken and pork take time to cook, so pair with larger chunks of vegetables.

Step Three:

When it comes to sauce, you can marinate the skewers before grilling – up to two hours for the meat, but no more than 30 minutes for seafood. If not using a marinade, brush the skewers before grilling and at least once during grilling. Marinade or not, it's always great to finish the skewers with a light sheen of sauce before serving.

Step Four:

You want a medium-hot grill – not so hot that it chars the outside before cooking the inside, but not so cool that the food doesn't fully caramelize.

Choose a protein:

- ⤴ beef (sirloin or tenderloin)
- ⤴ pork tenderloin
- ⤴ **chicken breast** or thigh
- ⤴ peeled and deveined shrimp
- ⤴ scallops
- ⤴ salmon

Choose produce:

- ⤴ **cherry tomatoes**
- ⤴ mushrooms
- ⤴ **sliced zucchini**
- ⤴ chopped onions
- ⤴ chopped bell pepper
- ⤴ cubed pineapple and peaches

Choose a sauce:

- ⤴ teriyaki
- ⤴ **pesto**
- ⤴ barbecue sauce
- ⤴ olive tapenade
- ⤴ jerk sauce
- ⤴ olive oil, lemon and herbs

Grilled Vegetable Wrap

*From Cook This! Not That! By David Zinczenko & Matt Goulding
Makes 4 wraps / Cost per serving: \$3.15*

Don't be tricked into believing that a wrap is some sort of magical weight loss bullet. Most restaurants cram Frisbee-sized tortillas with cheese, bacon, ranch and any other high-calorie ingredients they can find. Even with a dusting of goat cheese and a spread of balsamic mayo, this wrap earns its healthy stripes by virtue of its low calorie counts and generous vegetable filling.

You'll need:

12 asparagus spears, woody ends removed
2 portabello mushroom caps
1 red bell pepper, halved, seeds and stem removed
1 tablespoon olive oil
Sea Salt and black pepper to taste
2 tablespoons olive oil mayonnaise
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 clove garlic, minced
4 large spinach or whole-wheat tortillas or wraps (try LaTortilla Factory Low-Carb Tortillas)
2 cups arugula, baby spinach or mixed baby greens
¾ cup crumbled goat or feta cheese

How to Make It:

Preheat a grill. Toss the asparagus, mushrooms, and bell pepper with the olive oil, plus a few pinches of salt and pepper. Place on the hottest part of the grill and cook, turning occasionally, until lightly charred and tender. The asparagus should take the least amount of time (about 5 minutes) and the peppers the most (about 10). Alternatively, you can roast the vegetables in a 450°F oven for 10-12 minutes. Slice the mushroom caps into thin strips. If possible, peel off the charred skin of the pepper and then slice.

Combine the mayonnaise, vinegar, and garlic and stir to combine thoroughly. Heat the tortillas on the grill or in the microwave for 30 seconds. Spread the balsamic mayo down the middle of each tortilla, then top with the greens and cheese. Divide the grilled vegetables among the tortillas, then roll up tightly and slice each wrap in half.

Nutrition Info per serving: 240 calories; 13g fat (3.5g saturated); 450 mg sodium

Grilled Port Peaches

HINT: Soak wooden skewers in water for at least 20 minutes before loading them up. The moisture will prevent the wood from catching fire and scorching your food.

Ingredients

4 ripe peaches

Port Wine

Instructions

- Clean and cut each peach into six wedges. Place peaches in a small bowl and add enough port wine to just cover the peaches. Allow to marinate for at least 30 minutes.
- Put peaches on skewers and grill for 30 seconds on each side.