

The Art of Grilling

Mastering the Rules and Different Methods of Grilling

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Introduction

Grilling is a form of cooking in which dry heat is applied directly to the surface of food.

Grilled foods may be cooked on a grill, which is an open wire grid with a heat source above or below; a grill pan, similar to a frying pan; or griddle, a flat plate heated from below.

When using a grill the heat is transferred through thermal radiation, while heat transfer when using a grill pan or griddle is by direct conduction.

In direct heat grilling, food is exposed to a temperature of more than 250 degrees Celsius. When meat is grilled at that temperature for some time it acquires a distinctive aroma from a process known as the Maillard reaction.

Electric grills are among the most efficient of the lot. They provide heat with the help of

heating elements placed below the cooking surface or within the surface area.

They come in a variety of types, and can be used both indoors and outdoors. The indoor style is very popular, as it allows for having food with an outdoor flavor prepared indoors. These units are also considered one of the healthier means of preparing food as fat is run off, thus making the cooked meat trimmer and leaner.

Electric grills hold many advantages over charcoal and gas type grills. Mainly, they take considerably less time to heat up compared to outdoor grills that are known to produce lots of smoke and contribute to an unpleasant grilling experience.

But though electric grills may be very clean and efficient, they do not offer the same traditional smoky taste associated with foods cooked by outdoor grilling.

Charcoal type grills, on the other hand, offer users food with a genuine outdoor flavor.

These are considered the most popular and favored grilling equipment. Sales of this type of grill are boosted by their attractive costs, which are much lower than electric or gas grills.



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They come in types small, large, and portable. Cleaning them used to be a bit messy, but with the introduction of sweeping levers, removal of ash is no longer an issue. For safety's sake, before lighting them the ash

should be removed along with the lid and the grate.

Gas Grills use either natural gas or propane gas for heating. They are easy to operate and find favor with a large number of grill users.

Basics of Grilling

Grilling is just like any other kind of cooking, it is a learned art. Keep this in mind as you are learning. You are sure to have some failures. The major difference between grilling and cooking on the stove or in the oven is that grilling is a combination of the two.

You have direct heat from the gas burners or the charcoal and you have indirect heat that fills the grill when the lid is put down. Grills also have higher heat and less control over that heat. With your oven you can set the temperature precisely, but with a grill you either turn on or light the fire and the heat will just keep rising.

The average gas grill can reach temperatures of 500 degrees in a just a few minutes. This is why you can't throw the food on the grill and walk away until the timer goes off. You must remain ever attentive. Monitoring is the key.

The high heat, both direct and indirect is the basis of grilling.

You want to use this high heat to cook the food quickly, but, because foods will cook fast on a grill, you will have to turn them to get them to cook evenly and without burning. Although, if you turn the food too often you will just slow the process of cooking and this can lead to food that is tough and dry.

The trick is to turn only when necessary. To check when the food is ready to be turned you will need to get down low, by the edge of the grill, being careful not to burn yourself, and lift up the corner of the meat. When the lines from the grills cooking grate start to turn black it's time to turn the food.

Knowing when to turn and when your food is cooked is the whole skill of successful grilling. The rest is just recipes and tricks. This skill however is also the hardest thing to teach, especially in a book. Ideally a steak should be turned only once. If you are cooking a thick

cut of meat (over 1-1/2 inches) you may need to turn it three times to ensure it is cooked through to the center.

As a beginning grill master you should start simple. Thinner cuts of steaks, pork chops and burgers under 3/4 inches will let you get the "hang" of grilling and still get your food properly cooked. After you become experienced with these thinner cuts you can move on to more difficult foods.

Here are some useful tips for the beginning griller:

Tip 1: Keep your grill clean. A clean grill will give you better tasting food and is less likely to cause your food to stick to the grate.

Tip 2: Applying cooking oil or spray to the grill before it is lit will keep low fat meats and other foods from sticking.

Tip 3: Allow for plenty of time. You don't want to rush your grilling or keep your family or guests waiting.

Tip 4: Don't leave your grilling unattended for any length of time. A flare-up can occur at anytime and leave you with burnt food if you are not there to attend to it.

Tip 5: Flare-ups are caused by grease and heat. Trimming excess fat from the meat and moving the meat to a different area of the grill when turning is the best way to control flare-ups. Do not use a spray bottle of water to control a flare-up.

Tip 6: Don't add sugary or oily sauces or marinades to meat on the grill. This will just cause burning.

Tip 7: Apply spices or marinades to your food at least one hour before grilling. If using barbecue sauce, you should soak the food overnight. This will assure that the flavor gets into the food.

Tip 8: Using the proper tools is important. A fork should never be used for grilling. A long set of tongs is the best for turning steaks,

chicken and other cuts of meat. A long handled spatula is best for burgers.

Choose the Grill That's Right for You

With so many grills on the market today, it can be a little confusing when you're ready to buy one. We understand. That's why we put together an easy-to-read guide for you can compare the the most popular grilling methods. In the end, it's all about helping you find the grilling style that's right for you.

What's the best grill for you?

That depends on what's most important to you. Generally, it should be a grill that satisfies your taste, lifestyle and falls within your budget. Whatever you decide, happy grilling!

Gas Grills

Pros: If convenience is a priority, then a gas grill may be your best choice. It's the most common grill and offers multiple burners,

warmers, side shelves and a number of accessories for specialty cooking like rotisserie attachments. Start up and shut down is quick and temperature control is easy with a low cost per use. Cleaning is fairly easy, although cast iron grates require a little more care.

Gas grills are attractive and come in a variety of stainless steel designs. A good quality gas grill will cost \$500-\$1,500 and upwards of that for commercial outdoor versions.

Cons: As convenience goes up the flavor goes down. You will sacrifice some level of taste by using gas, because the grilled taste can only come from the vaporized drippings of the food. Space is another consideration if you have a small patio or deck.

Also, you may unknowingly run out fuel in the middle of cooking if you don't check your tank prior to cooking. All metal grills become very hot while grilling, so they pose a burn hazard. The real drawback to metal grills is

that they radiate great amounts of heat, which pulls the moisture from food very efficiently. It's likely that the driest chicken breast you ever ate came from a gas grill.

Briquette Charcoal Grills

Pros: These grills offer a good charcoal taste and are generally inexpensive compared to other grilling styles-as low as \$20 with average pricing of \$75-\$150.

Briquette charcoal is widely available and is offered in a variety of brands and features such as mesquite flavored and "ready-to-light" versions. They typically have a large grilling area for direct and indirect grilling and you can even use them as a smoker on a limited basis by controlling the air vents. They are also a good choice if you have limited space.

Cons: Briquette charcoal grills typically take 20-30 minutes or more for start up. There is no thermometer on basic models so these grills take quite a bit of guesswork when it

comes to temperature. Once again, all metal grills pose a burn hazard, and they radiate great amounts of heat which pulls the moisture from food very efficiently.

Kamado Charcoal Grills

Pros: If you are a serious outdoor cooker and put a priority on taste, then a Kamado-style grill is likely your best choice. These grills use a combination of ceramic shell, natural lump charcoal and air flow to offer a superior charcoal taste and the ability to cook food at high temperatures and have it retain its moistness.

You can cook as low as 225°F or well over 750°F, so you can use it as an oven, a grill or a smoker. They have a small footprint and costs range from \$850-\$1,000. A wide range of accessories are available. Kamado grills are ready to use in 15 minutes.

Cons: Kamado grills have an initial learning curve when it comes to adjusting the airflow to achieve the desired temperature. The

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