

Easiest-Ever Grill Guide



Exclusive barbecue tips
from TODAY's favorite chefs
– and the anchors! – to get
you fired up this summer.



Anchor Tips



“ Carson Daly

I grill a lot of bone-in rib eyes. They're delicious because they have a high fat content, but when the juices drip on the flames it can cause major flare-ups. I keep a plastic spray bottle of water handy so I can hit any wild flames that cause me trouble. I also keep a cold beer nearby ... but that's a different story.

“ Savannah Guthrie

I stay away from the fire and let Mike do the grilling. I'll serve the drinks!

“ Willie Geist

Through trial and error – and the advice of people who cook for a living – I've finally come to terms with a tried-and-true grilling doctrine: Keep it simple. I used to spend hours on marinades and new spice combinations, but it's true what they say: Olive oil, salt and pepper get the job done for a great steak. Bobby Flay says to put more of all of those on the meat than seems reasonable ... and I always do.

“ Sheinelle Jones

We like to add a spicy kick to our hamburgers and chicken by adding a little jerk seasoning to the meat before we put it on the grill. It adds just the right amount of heat and it's so good!

“ Hoda Kotb

My grilling tip is “salmon and veggies à la Joel”! He is the master griller! He uses olive oil, salt, pepper and Lindberg Snider's Lemon Roast & Seafood seasoning. It's just heavenly!

“ Al Roker

Here's a quick and easy grilled dessert: Start with a dozen day-old glazed doughnuts (yes, Krispy Kreme, I'm looking at you!) and cut them in half. While your grill heats up, allow a quart of vanilla ice cream to soften, so it's easy to scoop. Grill each doughnut for about 15 seconds per side, or just long enough to get grill marks. Plop a scoop of ice cream on the bottom half of a doughnut and top the sweet sandwich with the other half. Serve warm!

“ Craig Melvin

Always pat the meat dry before you start grilling. You definitely want it to be as dry as possible so you can get the best sear on each side.

“ Dylan Dreyer

I make my burgers exactly how my dad always did. Season them with soy sauce, garlic powder and pepper – and be sure to serve them on toasted potato buns!

Matt Abdo

TIPS & TRICKS



Andrew White

1

Season your burgers before you cook them. A simple dash of salt and some pepper will go a long way!

2

Flip burgers only when you see the juices beading on top.



3

Only flip a burger if it releases easily from the grill.

4

Allow burgers to rest before placing them on buns.



Moe Cason

TIPS & TRICKS



1

Always use seasoned dry wood sticks, chips and chunks. They will burn better in your pit.

2

Preheat your grill an hour before cooking.



3

If you don't have a grill brush, clean your grates using a ball of aluminum foil held by tongs.





Adrian Davila

TIPS & TRICKS + RECIPE

1

Sear food over the white part of the coals – that’s the hottest part of the grill.

2

Place vegetables right on the coals for extra flavor and a smoky char.



Recipe



Fire-Roasted Tomato, Onion and Serrano Salsa

Adrian Davila

MAKES **4 cups**

PREP TIME **45 min**

COOK TIME **6 min**



CHEF'S NOTE: Cooking directly on the coals imparts a different layer of flavor than just grilling items on the grates. You'll find it brings the sugars forward while caramelizing the onions and tomatoes, yet it also intensifies the spiciness of the serranos. I like to serve this dish with fajitas so that I can cook all the ingredients on the same fire, but it's great simply served with chips or as a topping for a favorite dish.

Ingredients

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3 large serrano peppers | 1 garlic head |
| ½ pound ripe tomatoes | ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro |
| 2 large, sweet yellow onions | 2 teaspoons salt |

Preparation

- 1** **PREPARE THE FIRE:** A coal fire is ready when the coals are red. A wood fire is ready when the coals are red and white.
- 2** Using long-handled grill tongs, place each vegetable individually, whole, uncut and unpeeled, on the red coals. Turn the vegetables as needed when the skin blackens and caramelizes.
- 3** Remove from the fire when all sides are blackened but before they are crisped or fully charred and burned, 3 to 6 minutes total, depending on the vegetable. Watch closely: the smaller the vegetable, the less time it will take to cook. Remove the vegetables from the coals and set aside to cool. Do not refrigerate the veggies.
- 4** Using a terry cloth, remove the charred skin. Place each vegetable in the middle of the cloth and gently rub the skin off. It's important that you do not rinse the vegetables, as rinsing will eliminate flavor.
- 5** An alternative method is to cover the vegetables with plastic wrap and allow them to cool in the steam, and then peel by hand. Remove the stems from the peppers and from the tomatoes if needed. If you prefer a less spicy sauce, you can also remove some (or all) of the seeds from the peppers.
- 6** Put the vegetables in a molcajete (or blender) and mash them until they are the desired salsa consistency – chunky or smooth.
- 7** Season the salsa with cilantro and salt, and serve.

Megan Day

TIPS & TRICKS

1

Skip the wire brush and clean your grates by rubbing a halved onion on a heated grill. The onion's juices will release and produce steam to remove the bits of charred-on debris.

2

Skewer a halved raw potato with a wire-probed thermometer, and place it on the grill to measure the temperature.





"The Butcherbabe Cookbook" from Page Street Publishing /
Photo by Jessica Ebelhar

Loreal Gavin

TIPS & TRICKS + RECIPE

- 5 Use a squirt bottle to mist on something I call a "meat perfume" – a mixture of coffee, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, bourbon and more – for wonderful flavor.
- 6 Degrease the grill with corn cobs soaked in apple cider vinegar.
- 7 Keep a box of baking soda nearby to throw on the grill if things start getting a little crazy!
- 8 Even if you're a professional, you should always keep your hot grill attended just in case.

- 1 Before you start grilling, have everything you need around you – including tongs and a cocktail!
- 2 Test if your grill is hot enough by placing a halved raw potato on the grill. If the potato has slight grill marks and can be easily removed after a minute, your grill is preheated.
- 3 For the best sear, completely pat dry marinated meat before it hits the grill.
- 4 Don't play with your meat. Resist the urge to flip it too much.



Recipe



Meat Perfume

Loreal Gavin



“The Butcherbabe Cookbook” from Page Street Publishing / Photo by Jessica Ebelhar

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

Pour-over coffee setup
Paper filter
Food-safe glass squirt bottle
Glass funnel

Ingredients

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 cups balsamic vinegar | 2 tablespoons bourbon, preferably Maker's Mark |
| 1 cup Worcestershire sauce, preferably Bourbon Barrel | 2 sprigs fresh rosemary |
| | ¼ cup finely ground coffee |

Preparation

- 1 In a medium-sized saucepan, add the balsamic vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, bourbon and rosemary.
- 2 Cook over low heat until simmering. You should barely see the steam coming off of the liquid when you turn off the heat.
- 3 Remove the pan from the heat and discard the fresh rosemary after squeezing any essence from the herbs. Gently pour the hot mixture over the coffee grounds as you would if you were making a pot of coffee in the morning.
- 4 Let the perfume come to room temperature on the countertop, then using a funnel, pour it into the glass bottle.

Linton Hopkins

TIPS & TRICKS + RECIPE

1

Avoid flare-ups by not using an oily marinade.

2

Keep recipes simple and let the grill do the work.



Sarah Dorio



Recipe



Marinade & Basting Sauce

Linton Hopkins



George Crudo Photography

Ingredients

- 1 cup olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 tablespoon crushed red pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 medium lemon, juiced and zested
- 1 teaspoon crushed coriander
- ½ cup beer (IPA works well but you can also use hoppy lager)
- 3 sprigs rosemary, torn

Preparation

- 1 In a medium bowl, add all of the ingredients and stir to combine.
- 2 Use this zesty marinade on chicken, shrimp, salmon or any of your favorite meats and veggies. It can also be used as a basting sauce to keep food flavorful and moist while grilling.

J.J. Johnson

TIPS & TRICKS + RECIPE



Spring Place

1

Make perfect grill marks on meat and fish by placing each piece in the 11 o'clock and 1 o'clock position for 4 minutes each. The marks will look like you've painted them on!

2

Choose a hearty fish with a high fat content, like salmon or swordfish, that won't fall apart on the grill.

3

If you really love light, flaky fish, use a grill basket.

4

Use an oil with a high smoke point to season your grill, like grapeseed oil.

5

Slather barbecue sauce on your food 5 minutes before you remove it from the grill.



Recipe



Afro-Spiced Grilled Fish

J.J. Johnson



Spring Place

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2 bird's-eye chiles, seeded and chopped | 4 limes, juiced and zested |
| 1 tablespoon onion powder | 1 teaspoon kosher salt |
| 1 tablespoon garlic powder | 1 pound fresh tuna (salmon or swordfish also work well) |
| 1 teaspoon smoked paprika | |

Preparation

- 1** In a medium bowl, add the chiles, onion powder, garlic powder, paprika, lime juice and zest, and whisk until completely combined.
- 2** Coat the fish in the marinade, making sure that every part of the fish is thoroughly covered. Place the fish in a nonreactive container, cover and refrigerate for 15-20 minutes.
- 3** Remove the fish from the marinade and lay it on a large plate.
- 4** Prepare a charcoal grill or preheat a cast-iron grill pan over high heat.
- 5** Season the fish with the salt. Place it on the hot grill and cook for about 5 minutes on each side. It should be browned and nicely caramelized. Serve right away.

Angie Mar

TIPS & TRICKS



Beatrice Inn

- 1 Let your meat reach room temperature before cooking.
- 2 Keep half of the grill at a very high temperature, and the other half at a low temperature.



- 3 Start grilling any meat over high heat, and then move it to the lower-heat area to finish cooking.
- 4 Keep the grill hot while you scrub it clean.



Roxanne Spruance

TIPS & TRICKS + RECIPE



Kingsley

1

For super tender chicken or ribs, partially cook them in broth before grilling over high heat while basting.

2

Try grilling on alternative surfaces like cedar planks, salt blocks, corn husks, banana leaves, bamboo or pine branches that have been soaked in water.



3

When the coals are cool, give them a light spray of water so the ash is easier to scoop out.

4

Buy a hardcore wire brush from the plumbing section of any hardware store.

Recipe



Root Beer, Scallion and Ginger Ribs

Roxanne Spruance

SERVES 4



Kingsley

Ingredients

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 4 racks baby back ribs | 2 tablespoons grated garlic |
| 1 head garlic, halved width-wise | ¼ cup sambal |
| 2 ounces fresh thyme | 3 tablespoons sriracha |
| 1 ounce whole peppercorns | 2 tablespoons mirin |
| 2 tablespoons salt | ½ cup low-sodium soy sauce |
| 4 cups root beer | 2 tablespoons sesame seeds |
| 2 tablespoons grated ginger | ½ cup chopped scallions |

Preparation

- 1 Preheat the grill to 250-300°F.
- 2 **PREPARE THE RIBS:** In a large pot, add the ribs, garlic, thyme, peppercorns and salt. Simmer for 2 hours – or until the meat is tender but not falling off the bone. The meat should shrink down, exposing the tips of the bones. Remove the meat from the water.
- 3 **PREPARE THE SAUCE:** In a medium saucepan, add the root beer and cook over medium-high heat until it's reduced by half. Add the remaining ingredients and whisk well. Brush the sauce onto the backside of the ribs. Place them face up on grill. Brush the top of the ribs with sauce. Close the grill and let the meat cook for 4-5 minutes. Flip them over and brush them with more sauce. Repeat this process four or five times, until the glaze is baked onto the ribs.

Jet Tila

TIPS & TRICKS

1

Let the fire do the cleanup work. Run the grill for 15-20 minutes with the grates on, turn off the heat, then use a grill brush to take off any accumulation.

2

Start cooking your food over direct heat to get grill marks, then move it over to indirect heat to finish cooking.



Myleen Hollero

3

Keep food from sticking by prepping your grill using tongs and a towel dipped in vegetable oil.

4

Make a bouquet of fresh herbs with rosemary and thyme, and use it to baste steak, chicken and all large meats.

5

Use a digital meat thermometer – it's the only real way to tell doneness.

6

Put a pan directly on a hot charcoal chimney to cook side dishes like mushrooms or asparagus.