

May is NATIONAL BARBECUE MONTH

How to barbecue the perfect steak



The steakhouse is a family favourite for its flavourful cuts of beef, so to save money, the grilling experts at Broil King are here to show us how to re-create those same savoury steaks on our own gas barbecues. Here are their tips.

* If it doesn't sizzle, it's not hot enough. Preheat your grill to at least 450* for great sear marks and steakhouse quality results.

* Season the grill: a thin coating of oil on a hot grill both protects the grill surface and keeps your food from sticking. A refillable oil mister is an easy way to do this. Tip: Always turn the burners

to low before spraying oil; never use non-stick sprays with aerosol since they are flammable.

* Marinate your steak for 30 minutes to 2 hours (most cuts) to infuse complementary flavours into the meat.

* Any sweet or sugary barbecue sauce should be applied in the last two minutes on the grill, or after the meat is removed. These sauces burn easily and can ruin a great steak.

* Try a compound butter: first soften the butter to room temperature and then mix in the flavouring of your choice, such as blue cheese, sundried tomato or cheddar & jalapeno. Top the hot steak with a pat of this butter and watch the flavour melt all over the grilled meat.

* Choose your weapon: don't pierce your steak, use a good set of tongs to turn them. The more you poke holes, the more flavour and tenderness escapes.

* Let it rest: cutting into a steak right off the grill lets juices escape onto the plate. Let any steak rest for

5 minutes before serving. The juices will settle evenly throughout the steak, giving a more tender, flavourful and enjoyable dining experience.

Bleu Cheese Compound Butter

Ingredients
2/3 cup butter, at room temperature
1/3 cup Roquefort cheese, crumbled
1 tablespoon shallots, finely chopped
1 1/2 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves, finely chopped
Dash hot pepper sauce
Pinch salt

Directions

In a small bowl, mix all ingredients together lightly with a fork until just evenly combined. Over-mixing will cause it to become too blue in colour. Spoon the mixture onto a sheet of waxed paper, and shape it into a log about 4 centimeters (1 1/2") in diameter. Refrigerate 1 hour. Slice into 1.5-centimeter thick rounds (1/3") and place on hot grilled steaks to melt. Freeze leftovers butler.

Additional grilling recipes and tips are available at www.broilkingbbq.com.

■ Metro Creative Connections

Quench guests' thirst with this refreshing concoction

Few foods are as synonymous with a particular season as watermelon is with summer. For many people, a backyard barbecue or picnic in the park is not complete without a refreshing slice of fresh watermelon.

But while watermelon is most often associated with dessert at warm weather soirees, this beloved fruit is much more versatile than that. For example, watermelon can be used to make a refreshing beverage for guests of your next outdoor get-together. Easy to prepare and ideal on warm afternoons and evenings, the following recipe for "Pressed Watermelon With Basil Water" from Brian Peterson-Campbell's "Cool Waters: 50 Refreshing, Healthy, Homemade Thirst Quenchers" (Harvard Common Press) is sure to cool down your guests.

Pressed Watermelon With Basil Water (Makes 6 servings)

4 cups watermelon
6 to 8 large basil leaves
1/4 teaspoon white wine vinegar
4 cups chilled still water
Pinch of sea salt

1. Combine the watermelon chunks and basil in a colander placed over a large bowl. Using a metal ladle or spoon, press the watermelon to extract as much juice as possible (the remaining pulp should be fairly dry).

2. Season the juice with the sea salt and vinegar and strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a large pitcher. Add the water, stir and serve.
Food pairings: Grill chicken or fish, feta and tomato salad, shortbread cookies

Chef's tip:

Use yellow watermelon for an unexpected twist!

■ Metro Creative Connections

Smoking meat for beginners

Many people associate barbecuing and grilling with cooking outdoors. But smoking food is another way to create succulent, fall-off-the-bone meat and poultry outdoors.

Smoking meats involves cooking the food over a low temperature in a smoky environment for several hours – sometimes overnight. The low temperature, between 180 and 220 F, causes the wood and charcoal used to smoke and charcol rather than burn. This is what imparts a smoky flavor to whatever is being cooked.

Although there are specialized smokers available for sale, you can also smoke foods with a regular barbecue grill or even a homespun creation. There are two methods of smoking: dry and wet. Dry smoking uses indirect heat to cook the food, while wet smoking employs a water pan to produce moisture that keeps temperatures consistent and may help keep food tender.

For those who run out and purchase a new smoker, most smoking experts advise seasoning the smoker prior to first use. Much as you would season a new cast-iron pan or other cooking appliance, you can season a smoker to ensure there aren't any chemicals or oil residues from manufacture left on the smoker. Otherwise, you may transfer a chemical taste to your meal. Set up the smoker according to the directions. Allow it to run for at least two hours to burn off any residue. Afterward, you should be able to smoke your first piece of meat.

There are a few tips to consider before embarking on your first smoking adventure. Always keep the water pan full if you are doing a wet smoke. The water will help to keep food tender. When smoking for

the first time, start out with a small amount of wood or aromatics in the smoker to experiment with flavor. You can always add more the next time for an intense smoky flavor. Wood chips and any other additions to the smoker may last longer by wetting the chips and then bundling them in a foil packet. Punch holes into the packet and place it on the coals.

Certain foods work better with smoking than others. Oily fish, pork, beef, lamb, and game meats are some of the best options. Poultry can also be smoked, but be advised the skin on a turkey or chicken may not stand up well to intense smoking. It may need to be removed prior to eating.

Pairing food with the right woods can also create an enjoyable flavor. Alder wood produces a delicate flavor, as does apple and cherry. For more assertive smokiness, try hickory, oak or pecan. Mesquite is still full-bodied but lighter than the other woods and creates a sweeter flavor. Aromatics, such as herbs, fruit peels or cinnamon sticks, also can be added to produce even more flavor. Aromatics with a high oil content will produce a stronger flavor.

Putting a rub on food prior to smoking can also give it added flavor. Many chefs also like to brine foods, especially poultry, to help tenderize the meat before smoking.

While the meat is smoking, resist the urge to take off the cover and check it frequently. This will allow the heat and smoke to escape. You may end up extending the cooking time every time you remove the cover. Only open the smoker to refill the water tray if you are doing a wet smoke. Much in the way an indoor slow cooker needs to remain closed to cook ef-



ficiently, so does a smoker.

Many people prefer to do their smoking during daylight hours rather than leaving a smoker unattended during the night. In this case, you may need to wake up very early to put the meat on to ensure it is cooked at

mealtime. Ribs can take 5 to 7 hours to smoke, while briskets and roasts may need an hour or more per pound. Always use a thermometer to check internal temperature before serving smoked meats. As you gain experience, you may be able to better judge the cooking times needed for certain foods. Start with meats that are at room temperature before placing them on the smoker.

Smoked foods can be flavorful and tender. They may take a little longer to achieve than other cooking methods, but most home chefs find the results are worth the added effort.

■ Metro Creative Connections



FATHER'S DAY SPECIAL!

Easy as a push of a button. Set it & Forget it!



GRILL LIKE A CHAMP

\$599⁰⁰ Take an additional \$50⁰⁰ off

GREEN MOUNTAIN GRILLS

HARDWOOD PELLET GRILLS
When It Comes to Grilling, Taste Rules . . .

Schuurmans Farm Supply

5 Miles West of Tyndall on Hwy. 50 Corner of Hwys. 50 and 37
Ph. (605) 589-3909 or Cell (605) 464-1113
www.schuurmansfarmsupply.com