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## Simple Backyard Grilling

### TECHNIQUES OF GRILLING

When I was growing up, grilling, which we referred to as **Barbecue**, was reserved for summer parties and picnics. Grilling was done over wood or charcoal and the cooking was generally my Father's job. Summertime barbecues were basic and usually limited to hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken, and sometimes sausage.

Today the popularity of gas grills has expanded the grilling season to all year round. Various home ranges now include grills, so weather is not even a factor in grilling for the in-home grill master

This class will give you the basics of grilling. Following some simple steps and utilizing basic techniques will ensure successful cooking by method of grilling.

### GENERAL PREPARATIONS & MARINATING

To start the grill should be clean. If using a gas grill preheat on high for 10 - 20 minutes and brush clean with a stiff grill brush. If grilling over wood or charcoal briquettes, start you fire and allow to burn down until the fuel source turns to hot embers and all flames have stopped. Adding wood chips will give a wonderful smoke flavor to foods. Cooking over wood helps develop a rich smoky outdoor flavor to meats, poultry, fish, vegetables breads, rolls, and even pizza. The briquettes are a petroleum derivative and unless preheated completely can give food an off flavor and have proven to be a carcinogen so use with caution.

Today's gas grill is basically the same design as an oven. Similar results can be achieved indoors by using a stove top griddle pan, adding some liquid smoke in the marinade, and finishing in the oven. This is a great way to enjoy grilled flavor when an outdoor grill is not available.

The grill should be brushed lightly with oil to prevent food from sticking. Searing is the crucial step that gives grilled foods a crisp crust and the distinctive grilled flavor and aroma. Always sear food on a hot grill to lock in the natural juices. Placing food on a grill which is not hot enough to sear can allow juices to escape and lead to dry and tough food and cause sticking. This is a good rule of thumb for all foods.

Marinating adds flavor and helps keep meat from drying out. Marinades tenderize meat by breaking down tough fibers and sinews in the meat. Marinades have grown in popularity for meat, poultry, fish, and vegetables.

Sauces should be brushed on toward the end of cooking. Brushing on sauces at the beginning prevents meat from searing. The sauce will caramelize and burn, giving a bitter taste long before the meat is cooked. Dry spice rubs are an excellent method to flavor meats cooked on the grill or in the oven.

Since fish has little fat, cooking times must be short to avoid drying out which gives a very fishy flavor and aroma to most fish. Try to select a firm fish that is not too delicate to grill. Do not marinate fish for long periods of time in an acidic marinade as the acid chemically cooks the fish and can cause the fish to quickly overcook and dry out on the grill.

When cooking on skewers coordinate foods by size and according to the amount of cooking time necessary. Foods requiring longer cooking times can be cut smaller or coupled with larger cuts of faster cooking foods. A bad combination would be putting cherry tomatoes with cubed pork. The tomatoes would overcook and fall apart long before the pork is done.

It is imperative to allow the meat to rest after grilling. Resting allows the meat, which has contracted during cooking, to relax and finish cooking in its own heat. As the meat relaxes the juices flow back throughout ensuring that the whole piece will be uniformly pink from the first slice to the last. **NEVER** cut into the meat to check for doneness. Always check the meat by feeling the spring and resistance. This is a technique which is acquired by experience through time.

It is always better to gauge cooking meats by checking internal temperature rather than just timing. The internal temperature method is very accurate. Cooking times can vary by placement of foods on the grill in relation to the heat source. Foods cooked on a crowded grill will require more cooking time. Thickness and fat content of meat will also vary the cooking time. Thin cuts of meat go from rare to well-done very quickly. Well-done almost always turns to overdone if not carefully watched. Always use tongs rather than a fork for turning and handling meats to avoid losing natural juices.

To check doneness of poultry insert a saute fork into the thickest part of the inside thigh, where the thigh joins the body. The juices will run clear, without any trace of blood, when thoroughly cooked. The internal temperature should reach 160-170° F for medium and 170-180° F for well-done.

### GENERAL INTERNAL COOKING TEMPERATURES

	<u>Rare</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Well-Done</u>
<b>Beef</b>	<b>120-140°F</b>	<b>140-150°F</b>	<b>160-170°F</b>
<b>Pork/Veal</b>	<b>not recommended</b>	<b>160°F</b>	<b>170°F</b>
<b>Lamb</b>	<b>140°F</b>	<b>150°F</b>	<b>160-170°F</b>
<b>Poultry</b>	<b>not recommended</b>	<b>160-170°F</b>	<b>170-180°F</b>

**Veal** is delicate and usually very lean. It should never be overcooked or drastically undercooked; coming from young calves, veal is not a red meat and consequently, cannot be cooked rare, as fully grown beef often is. Veal chops should be served slightly pink at the bone and juicy. It is best to grill only briefly to sear and then finish in an oven with gentler indirect heat.

## **Safety Tips:**

Always use care when handling and cooking food to prevent bacteria from budding and growing.

When grilling poultry make sure the meat is fully defrosted before cooking. Always defrost meat, fish, and poultry in the refrigerator and never at room temperature.

Wash hands thoroughly before starting preparations and handling any meat, fish, and poultry.

Cooked foods should not be left for more than 2 hours without refrigeration.

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

Never place cooked food on the same platter that raw food was on.

Never reuse marinades or return cooked foods to used marinades.

Never contaminate your cutting surface and utensils. Meat, poultry, and fish should be prepared separately with all cutting boards and utensils washed and sanitized before another use.

Be especially careful when handling poultry.

Plastic cutting boards are the least porous and can be easily cleaned and sanitized by using a warm water and bleach solution. They also clean well in the dishwasher.

## **Simple Grilled Steak**

Season the meat with salt and fresh ground pepper. Sear the meat on a hot, oiled, grill turning the meat once on each side to create a crisscross pattern. Turnover and repeat. Cook until desired internal temperature is reached.

When completely cooked, remove from heat, and allow meat to rest for 15-20 minutes before cutting. Cut the meat against the grain at a 45-degree angle in thin slices.

## **Grilled Sausage Peppers and Onions**

Season the cut peppers and sliced onions with salt and fresh ground pepper and grill as show in the video. The sausage needs no seasoning, simple grill until cooked through.

## **Simple Tomato Salad**

My favorite dish when Jersey Tomatoes are in season. Wash, core and cut tomatoes and arrange on a platter or in a bowl, season with salt and fresh ground pepper, top with some fresh chopped basil, and drizzle with good extra virgin olive oil. Toss lightly and serve.

## Grilled Marinated Pork Tenderloin

- 4 tablespoons regular olive oil
- 3 cloves of garlic, sliced thin
  
- 1 orange, juiced and zested
- 1 lemon, juiced and zested
- ¼ pound fresh cherries, pitted split in half
- 1 tablespoons Tamari sauce (can substitute with regular soy sauce)
- 1 Asian garlic chili sauce
- 3 tablespoons fresh chopped parsley or cilantro
  
- 1 pork tenderloins, about 1 lb.

salt and fresh ground pepper

Heat small sauté pan over medium heat and add the olive oil, garlic, sauté until lightly golden brown, and remove from heat. Stir in the juice and zest of the orange and lemon, cherries, Tamari, garlic chili sauce, herbs, and mix well. Remove about 1/3 of the mixture and pour over the pork tenderloin in a small glass or stainless bowl. Allow pork to marinate for 30 minutes to 1 hour. Meanwhile, return the sauté pan to a medium heat and reduce slowly by about half and then season with salt and pepper to taste.

Remove pork tenderloin from the marinade, discard marinade, and grill to desired level of doneness. I cook mine till 140-150 degrees, so it does not dry out. When done allow to rest for about 5 minutes, slice and serve with the reduced sauce from the sauté pan and serve.

Sincerely yours,

David P. Martone, CCP

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