

BARBECUE COOKING GUIDE



HOW TO SET UP A CHARCOAL BARBECUE

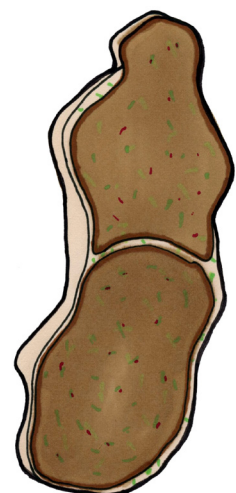
1. To get charcoal and/or wood to light, you need to give it a helping hand. Use a pile of small sticks and a few scrunched up balls of dry newspaper. You can also buy firelighters or lighter fluid, or small bags of charcoal bundled in bags that have been presoaked with lighter fluid.
2. Pile the charcoal in the barbecue with whatever lighting aid you're using, and light it with a match. The coals will catch fire and burn with a flame for about half an hour. If it dies down really quickly try fanning it with a newspaper to feed the fire with oxygen.
3. When the flames have died down and the coals are turning white and glowing red they are ready for cooking over. Use a poker to spread the coals out across the barbecue. Pile them high on one side and low on the other to give you two different temperature levels; really hot and slightly cooler. That way, you can sear stuff like sausages and steaks on the hot side, then move them to the warm side to cook through.
4. Lay the metal grill over the top of the coals. Give it a few minutes to get good and hot before putting any food on it to cook, and clean it with a stiff wire barbecue brush or scrunched up ball of tin foil while you're waiting for it to heat up.

BARBECUE TOP TIPS

What can you barbecue?

The simple answer is, everything! Fish, shellfish, vegetables, breads, fruits and all types of meat and poultry can be barbecued. But different things need to be cooked in different ways. Smaller cuts of meat and poultry, like steak or chicken breast, can go straight on to the barbecue and will cook fairly quickly; whereas larger cuts like a leg of lamb or a rack of ribs should be covered with tin foil and cooked almost all of the way through in the oven, then transferred to the barbecue to crisp up and finish off.

Think of your barbecue as another heat source, like your oven or hob. Try wrapping veggies in foil parcels with a little olive oil and seasoning then steaming them over the barbecue or baking them in the coals depending on how moist the veggies are – just make sure you seal the parcels really well. You can do the same with fruit and a knob of butter.



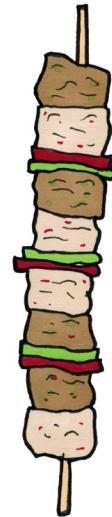
Try making your own flatbreads and cooking them on the hot side of the barbecue, or if you've got some lovely fresh bread to serve with your food, warm it through over the cooler side.

If you've got a barbecue with a lid, you can create more of an oven environment. Putting the lid down means you can get a roasting hot atmosphere so your food will cook from all sides, meaning it cooks more quickly and more evenly. This is useful for all types of meat.

COOKING TIPS

You can add loads of extra flavour to meat by using a simple marinade or spice rub. Marinades are wet and they contain oil and acid, such as lemon juice or vinegar, and some seasoning, such as pepper, herbs, garlic or ginger. Rubs are dry and they are generally just made up of spices, dry herbs and a little salt. Try different combos of herbs and spices with oil and seasoning, rub it into the meat and leave for anything from 30 minutes to 8 hours to do its thing. It will take the meat in a whole new direction.

To make meat or fish go a bit further, try chopping it up and skewering with vegetables to make kebabs. If you're using wooden skewers, soak them in a tray of cold water first so they don't burn as much.



WHILE YOU'RE COOKING

When fat drips from meat and hits the coals it can flare up into flames. These flames will char the outside of your food and make it taste burnt so keep an eye out for this and try to move food away from the flames as you see them appear.

If you're cooking veggies directly on the barbecue grills, try to keep a section of the grill specifically for them, or clean the bars with a stiff wire brush or scrunched up tin foil after cooking meat or fish. This is to avoid cross-contamination (see *Food safety: avoiding cross-contamination*). Similarly, if you want to barbecue fruit, make sure you thoroughly clean the grill before starting. There's nothing worse than meaty-tasting fruit!