



Fire It Up!

Get the summer cookin' with the essential backyard barbecue

Mouth-watering hamburgers, steak and chicken kabobs. Grandma's potato salad, baked beans and delicious deserts.

Friends, laughter and a genuine good time. Where can you find these delectable items? At the pivotal **Backyard Cookout**.



Grilling is one of the oldest and simplest cooking methods. The intense grilled flavor cannot be matched by any other method. Plus, grilling is a healthy option since you very rarely use butter, cream or fats. However, the most important aspect of this fun activity is the unquestionable fact that cooking outdoors is fun.

There are many varieties of grills on the market today. They range from inexpensive hibachis to the extremely expensive covered grills. Grills are fueled by gas, electric or charcoal. Gas grills are easy to start, warm up quickly and usually cook predictably, giving meat a full, grilled flavor. Electric grills also are easy to start and offer precise temperature control, but they take a bit longer to heat up than gas models do. Charcoal grills provide an intense, smoky flavor prized by many, however they don't always light easily, they burn less cleanly than gas and their heat is harder to regulate. The essential determinant, however, is not the grill but the griller. Whatever your choice is, if you learn your piece of equipment you can achieve the treasured taste of grilled food.

To become a master griller you need to outfit yourself with the proper tools. The basics: wide metal spatula, grill tongs, meat fork, grill brush, basting brush, barbecue mitts, meat thermometer, and spray bottle. Some nice additions include a super wide spatula, skewers and a vegetable wok/grill topper.

Summer is right around the corner so it is time to dust off the grill, get out your tools and start putting them to work. Invite friends and family over and plan to have an amusing celebration of the season. When planning a barbecue party, a couple of things must be taken into consideration. Keep in mind what you will serve and what activities you will provide.

Creating a menu for your party takes careful consideration. It is always a good idea to include hot dogs and hamburgers for children while adults may wish to have steak and seafood. Potato salad, baked beans, garden salad and veggies are excellent side dish choices. Almost any vegetable can be cooked on the grill with a little oil and seasoning all wrapped in tin foil. And for dessert, pies, cakes and fresh fruit are all crowd-pleasers. Don't forget to include plenty of drink options for both old and young too.

Once you have your menu planned, you should start to ponder what activities you will have at your party. In case you don't have a pool, it's nice for your guests to have a fun game to play. Croquet, volleyball, washers and horseshoes are some fun options.

It's as simple as that! A summer barbecue party is a relaxing and festive way to take pleasure in this splendid season. Enjoy the intense flavor only grilling can provide; enjoy your friends and enjoy summer!

