

GirlsattheGrill™.com

"If you can eat it, you can grill it!"



Safe Grilling:

By following a few simple precautions, you can ensure that all of your barbecues are as fun and safe as they are delicious:

Fire Safety Tips

- Never place the grill close to a combustible material. The outside of the grill can radiate a lot of heat and accidental ignition could result if placed too close to wood, paper or other flammable material.
- Make sure that your grill is of sturdy construction and doesn't wobble or lean to one side.
- When you're done grilling, place the lid on the charcoal grill and close all vents. Turn a gas grill off at the burners and the source.
- Know where your fire extinguisher is and have it handy in case of a mishap. Closing the lid will reduce the oxygen and eliminate the flare-up.

Food Safety Tips

Food safety concerns should be just as important to you as fire safety. Just follow these few tips to keep your meals as safe as can be!

- Wash your hands thoroughly with hot, soapy water before starting any meal preparation and after handling fresh meat, fish and poultry.
- Do not defrost meat, fish or poultry at room temperature or on a countertop. Defrost in the refrigerator.
- Never place cooked food on the same platter that the raw food was on. This will prevent cross-contamination.
- If a sauce will be brushed on meat during grilling, divide the sauce, reserving part for brushing and part for serving at the table, or bring a basting sauce to a full rolling boil before serving.
- Wash all platters and cooking utensils with warm soapy water.

Use two pairs of tongs, set one aside to handle raw food and mark with red tape (**Red=Stop**) and one to handle cooked food and mark with green tape (**Green=Go**). Only use the "red" tongs for raw food and the "green" tongs for cooked food. This will help prevent cross-contamination.

A Checklist for Picture Perfect Grilling

- Know the direct and indirect rule of thumb
- Preheat grill or let charcoal burn until covered with a white-grey ash
- Keep lid on grill while cooking (closed)
- Oil everything except the cooking grates
- Use more salt than you think you need to bring out the natural flavors of the food
- Leave the food alone! Go have fun and turn once halfway through cooking time.

The Five Secrets to Success

1. Invest in a pair of locking chef tongs, these are widely available at cooking stores, large houseware and department stores. The slender long handles make it much easier to turn food on the grill.
2. Remembering which long handled tongs came in contact with raw food can be difficult. Avoid contamination by labeling one set of tongs with red tape (red means stop, raw food has touched these tongs) and another set with green tape (green means go, cooked foods touched these tongs).
3. Avoid ruining manicured nails by using an extra-long grilling mitt to take food to and from the hot grill.
4. Tie up anything loose. Long hair, long flowing sleeves, long necklaces and charm bracelets.
5. Dress for the weather. Once you've mastered outdoor cooking, you'll be using your grill come rain, sleet, snow or shine. Make sure you dress for the elements.



Grill Safety

- Always read the owner's manual before using a new gas or charcoal grill
- All manufacturers of charcoal and gas grills have specific instruction manuals and warnings as for proper use. Follow these instructions and pay close attention to the warnings.
- Do not lean over a barbecue grill when igniting.
- When lighting a gas grill, the lid should always be OPEN.
- Always keep children and pets a safe distance from a hot grill.
- Gas or charcoal grills should NEVER be used indoors; they are outdoor cooking appliances.
- Every time a refilled LP tank is reconnected to the barbecue, the connections should be checked for leaks.
- Always use heat-resistant barbecue mitts or gloves and long-handled tools.
- When done, cover the charcoal grill and close all vents. Turn a gas grill off at the burner and the gas source.

Cleaning Your Grill

Follow this checklist and grill maintenance will never be a big job

- Preheat every time you use the grill
- After removing the food from the cooking grate, allow food to burn off for 10 minutes.
- After each use, use a brass-bristle grill brush or crumpled aluminum foil to loosen/clean residue on the cooking grate.
- Remove accumulated ashes from charcoal grills frequently.
- Clean once a year with warm soapy water but no harsh abrasives

The Grilling Trilogy

The story of the holy trilogy of grilling (or Grilling Trilogy™ for short) is a simple one. Years ago, I developed this technique to use in my grill trainings for chefs and food writers. I wanted the food to taste good, but I didn't want to spend all day rubbing, marinating or saucing. So, I decided to focus on teaching the techniques of grilling without the flourishes (of other flavors). I am a firm believer that a little bit of oil is essential to great grilled food (more on that later) so I added olive oil. I still wanted the food to taste good and knew that salt was essential to the taste and caramelization process, so I added salt. Finally, I added pepper to add some seasoning without a lot of fuss. That was the genesis of the holy trilogy of grilling.

What I discovered was that provided you buy the best quality raw ingredients (a given), and use the grilling trilogy principles, everything that you grill will be guest-ready and delicious. Remember, in most cases—in life and cooking—less is more and the grilling trilogy is the epitome of that! I promise, if you employ the grilling trilogy, your grilled food will make you the reigning Queen of your Grilling Kingdom!

The Whys and How's behind the Grilling Trilogy

Don't worry about the oil and don't eliminate it. It is truly essential and you don't need to use very much. Coat all the outside surfaces with a thin layer of olive or vegetable oil. I prefer olive oil for everything, but you can use any kind of oil except butter because it burns easily. And remember, grilling is intrinsically low-fat and healthy because you aren't frying or sautéing in oil or butter. If you don't oil the food, it will dry out and become tasteless.



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Think about oil this way: when you go to the beach (white as a ghost) with the goal of a deep dark St. Tropez tan, you must use suntan oil. If you don't, you will burn and dry out. Likewise, your raw food needs oil to caramelize, sear roast and turn golden brown on the outside without drying out on the inside. Now, you get it, Right!?

Likewise, salt is very important. It is a natural mineral, and used in moderation, I think it is the most important ingredient (besides the food itself) for great taste. There are a few things to keep in mind when cooking with salt. Season food with salt just before it goes on the grill, otherwise it will draw the juices to the surface of the meat. We want the juices to stay inside the meat so it is tender and juicy when we serve it. And, start with a little and add to taste, there is a fine line between just right and too much—it's much easier to add than take away.

Notes on Salt

I love salt and all the different kinds of salt that are available to us today. Use Kosher or sea salt for the grilling trilogy and everyday cooking. Splurge and buy Fleur de Sel (flower of salt—hand-raked once a year in France) for your table. The natural shape of the Fleur de sel salt crystals add a mild distinctive flavor and texture to salads, meat and vegetable dishes. But don't stop there, try the Pink salt from Hawaii, Black salt from India, Grey salt from Brittany and any other salt you can find. E-mail me with your favorite salts or if you find an interesting one that I might not have tried. I'd love to hear from other salty girls at the grill! elizabeth@girlsatthegrill.com

And last, but not least, pepper. Pepper is best freshly ground from a pepper mill or spice grinder every time you use it. The flavor that we get from pepper is propelled by the oils in the peppercorns, these oils dry up very quickly which is why already ground pepper has much less taste than freshly ground pepper.

Pepper Tip

Before putting the peppercorns in your pepper mill, put them in a dry sauté pan, stir occasionally and heat gently just until a wisp of smoke is present and you can smell the pepper. Remove and let cool before grinding. This is how you roast a spice to bring out the maximum flavor in the spice. You can do this with all whole spices before grinding them and they will all taste fresher and deeper in flavor. This is the same basic idea behind coffee roasting, and it's up to you to decide how dark you like your spices—or coffee for that matter.