

# GRILLING FUELS, TOOLS, AND RULES

Whether you're grilling chicken breasts (see page 14), salmon (page 6), or using your covered grill to approximate Southern barbecue (page 18), these recommendations for the best fuels and the right tools, along with some tips for making the process work more smoothly, should come in handy.

## FUELS

Commonly available fuels include (clockwise, from top right) charcoal briquettes, lump hardwood charcoal, wood chips, and hardwood logs. We recommend hardwood charcoal if you can get hold of it. If you want to add some smokiness, we recommend hardwood logs or wood chunks. If using wood chips for smoke flavor, wrap them in aluminum foil, poke some holes in the foil, and put them directly on the coals.



## STARTING THE FIRE

Our favorite way to start a charcoal fire is to use a flue starter, also known as a chimney starter. To use this simple device, fill the bottom section with crumpled newspaper, set the flue on the grill grate, and fill the top with charcoal. When you light the newspaper, flames will shoot up through the charcoal, igniting it. When the coals are well lit, dump them out onto the grate and add the rest of the charcoal.



## BASIC TOOLS



Many grill manufacturers produce long-handled tools for use with the grill, such as those pictured at left. These tools are perfectly fine, but you can usually get less expensive, sturdier tools by buying them individually at a hardware store.

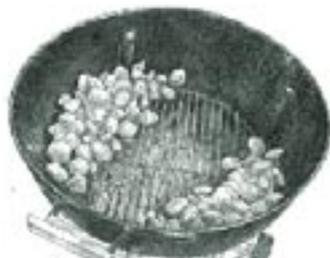
A long-handled fork, paintbrush, spring-loaded tongs, dogleg spatula, and wire brush for cleaning the grill, all pictured at left, are among the handiest tools to have.

## ARRANGING THE FIRE

It is important to build a fire with two levels of heat, which can be done in one of two ways:



1. Place the coals all on one side of the grill. This is the most useful configuration when you will be cooking at least part of the time directly over the coals.



2. Place the coals on either side of the grill. This is a useful configuration for indirect cooking because food placed in the center of the grill will get indirect heat from two sides.

## OTHER HANDY GRILLING ACCOUTREMENTS

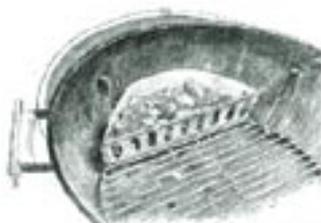


For smoke-roasting or barbecuing, an oven thermometer wedged and then taped into the vent hole will keep track of the temperature inside the grill.



Some manufacturers now sell grill grids with hinged sections, which makes it much easier to add charcoal to the fire during grilling.

Rib racks make it possible to cook a large number of ribs simultaneously.



Half-moon-shaped baskets can be used to keep coals neatly along the edges of the grill.



Another option for this task is a wire "fence" that hooks to the grill grate.

# GRILLING TIPS

When grilling a lobster, take a cue from Jasper White, author of the forthcoming *Lobster at Home* (Scribner's) and place it on the grill underside up; the hard shell will protect the meat from burning, and the juices will stay in the shell rather than dripping into the coals.



To help prevent sticking, oil vegetables and lean-fleshed fish lightly before placing them on the grill. Toss vegetables in a bowl with oil, salt, and pepper; brush fish very lightly, using a brush or your hand.

To check the gas level in your propane tank, do the following:



1. Pour a cup of boiling water over the tank.



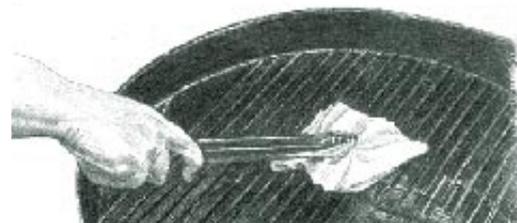
2. Feel the metal with your hand. Where the water has succeeded in warming the tank, it is empty; where it remains cool to the touch, there is still propane inside.



You can use an indirect fire to cook many items simultaneously. Here, steak grills directly over the coals, vegetables cook around the periphery of the fire where the heat is medium, and bread toasts along the edges of the grill.



Before you begin grilling, assemble all of your tools and place them on a table set right next to the grill.



Just before placing fish on the grill grid, you might want to dip a large wad of paper towels into vegetable oil, grab it with tongs, and wipe the grid thoroughly to lubricate it. This will also clean any remaining residue off the grid.



If small pieces of charcoal tend to fall through the lower grill grate, place a small cooling rack on the grate at a 90-degree angle, making a smaller grid.



When threading meat onto skewers, push the pieces closely together if you want the meat to cook less, and space them slightly apart if you

want the meat more thoroughly cooked.

Onions that are cut into quarters with some of the root end left intact will hold together on the grill.



To prevent round items like cherry tomatoes and mushroom caps from rolling around when you turn over the skewers (resulting in the same side once again facing down), thread them onto double skewers.

