

GRAND TOUR

Food

BARBECUE FOR SOME, GRILLING FOR MANY

By Gena Bell

FAMILY TIME, FOR THE MOST PART, IS FUN. And with spring already here, it is time to brush off that outdoor BBQ (or at least clean the grill) and cook up some finger lickin' food. People have been grilling for millennia and it has been documented as the first cooking method dating back at least 125,000 years. Grilling (or barbecuing, for some) is one of the most popular forms of cooking and every culture has their own version. For Brazilians it is *churrasco*, Japanese *hibachi*, Greek souvlaki, Indian *tandoor*, and Middle Eastern *kofta*.

Barbecue in the United States takes many different forms from traditional southern favorites like smoked ribs, chicken and brisket, to the more recent gas grill method of cooking marinated fish, chicken and steak. All of these techniques fall under one barbecue lid, so to speak, it just depends on what equipment you use and how much time you want to invest in preparing your food.

For the traditionalists, a smoker or charcoal grill is needed to create an indirect heat/smoke chamber to intensify temperature and flavor. For many others with less time and/or patience, a direct heat gas grill with a killer control knob will do the job. However, barbecue fanatics will argue passionately that indirect or traditional barbecuing adds much more flavor than a quick gas sear. But today there are several ways to enhance the flavor when cooking on a direct gas grill.

Dry rubs for instance add a layer of flavor to your meat that you wouldn't get otherwise. Rubs are easy to create or you can purchase them already mixed and ready to spread. What makes rubs fun is that you can experiment with any combination of herbs. One of my favorites is a mixture of cumin, coriander, garlic powder, salt and a pinch of cayenne for a kick. Rub that blend on a great piece of chicken or steak and taste the earthy flavor. For fish and other seafood, a mixture of paprika, fresh lemon zest, salt and pepper will do the trick.

Marinades are another way to add tremendous flavor to your grilled foods. Any combination of acid with oil and herbs creates a marinade. For example, mix together orange juice (acid), olive oil (oil), garlic (herb), and a little brown sugar for a slight citrus lift to your chicken. And for beef and pork lovers...try an Asian twist with a mixture of honey, five-spice powder, soy sauce, sherry, garlic and a little fresh ginger. Soak the meat in marinade for a minimum of 4 hours, overnight is even better. Tip: one thing to remember when preparing marinades is not to mix them in a

metal bowl because citrus may have a reaction with metal and give off a funny taste.

Whether you are a true traditionalist or a savvy grill expert, barbecuing or grilling makes food fun and delicious not to mention (for the most part) lower in calories. So what are ya'll waiting for....start the grills!

MIDDLE EASTERN CHICKEN KABOBS (Serves 4)

1 onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 tablespoon fresh thyme or 1 1/2 teaspoons dried
1 tablespoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1 cup plain yogurt
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts cut into 1 inch cubes
Salt and Pepper

To Prepare:

1. Place all ingredients except the chicken into a food processor and blend.
2. Pour the marinade in a glass bowl and toss chicken to coat.
3. Refrigerate for 6-8 hours or overnight.
4. Turn grill to medium high heat.
5. Remove chicken from bowl and wipe off excess marinade.
6. Thread chicken on wood or metal skewers, leaving space in between.
7. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and place on grill.
8. Grill chicken 6 minutes total, turning midway through the grilling process. Do not burn.

Serve with rice or on top of mixed greens.
Enjoy! **GT**

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