

SMOKER OR GRILL

Ideally, a smoker is the best type of cooking device used to barbeque. Smokers come in all sizes and shapes, some burn on wood or charcoal while others are electric. At any rate, the heat from any type of smoker is a cooler heat, which cooks the meat at slower pace, allowing the smoke to penetrate the outer layer of the meat.

Traditionally a grill is used for grilling pork, beef, fish, chicken, etc directly over a fire that is fueled by gas or charcoal. Some folks think they are barbequing steaks, when they are actually grilling a steak. You can; however, use a grill to cook meat that you will apply barbeque sauce to. It just takes more patience and attention.

HELPFUL HINTS

1. **Cooking Brisket:** I usually cook a brisket at 200 degrees for approximately one half hour per pound of meat. Since a brisket is such a large chunk of meat and a little on the stringy side, it will often absorb too much smoke; therefore, I won't usually cook a brisket entirely in a smoker. I cook a brisket in the oven (in a roasting pan) at 200 degrees until it has about an hour left to cook. Then I transfer it to a smoker to finish cooking.
2. **Cooking Chicken:** To cook chicken on a grill, I always put down a layer of foil and I'm no closer than the middle or top rack. Chicken skin burns easy and it's hard to get done to the bone, especially white meat. So, cook it slow, turning frequently. You'll know it's done when the chicken is firm and doesn't bleed when you squeeze it. Chicken is one of the hardest meats to get just right. Practice times three.
3. **Smoking on a gas grill:** Don't try to smoke large cuts of meat like this, but this method will help you get a nice smoky flavor to smaller cuts like a small rack of pork ribs, chicken, fish, etc. Take several small pieces of the wood of your choice, i.e. hickory, mesquite, oak, etc. and soak them in water for at least a couple of hours. (Be certain the wood is totally immersed in water.) Place the pieces of wood in a shallow (throw-away) tin pan, or something similar. Line the meat rack (at least the second or top rack) with heavy duty or two layers of foil. Preheat the grill to usually around 300 degrees. Place the meat on the foil (wipe the foil lightly with oil to keep the meat from sticking) and place the tin with wood chips on the lower rack. Close the grill and let the wood chips do their job. Be careful, because occasionally the wood chips will catch on fire. When that happens I use a spray bottle of water and put the fire out and close the grill lid.
4. **To use BBQ sauce as a marinade:** Dilute sauce by mixing two beers to each cup of BBQ sauce. Mix well.
5. **Never** marinate meat with full strength sauce.
6. Only when the meat has finished cooking can you baste with full strength sauce.
7. Cooked meat that has been coated with full strength sauce can only be left on the grill for a few minutes, turning the meat frequently to prevent scorching.
8. Keep in mind that you can use this sauce on oven-cooked foods as well. The smoky flavor in the sauce will convince your guest(s) that you spent all day over a smoker or grill!