



# Barbecue Basics

Cooking & Maintenance Guide

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## **ABSTRACT**

This guide serves as an essential resource for both novice and seasoned barbecue enthusiasts, exploring the rich culinary culture surrounding barbecuing and its significance in social gatherings. It covers various types of barbecues, essential equipment, and preparation techniques, ensuring readers are well-prepared to embark on their grilling journey. Detailed cooking methods, food safety practices, and tips for achieving perfect results are included, allowing users to enjoy the art of barbecuing while minimizing common mistakes.



In addition to cooking, the guide emphasizes the importance of post-barbecue maintenance to enhance the longevity and performance of grilling equipment. By providing practical cleaning tips and addressing common pitfalls, "Barbecue Basics" empowers users to maintain their grills effectively. This resource aims to foster a safe and enjoyable grilling experience, making it an indispensable companion for casual family cookouts and more formal gatherings alike.

## **LET'S GET STARTED**

"Barbecue Basics: Cooking & Maintenance Guide" is designed to equip both beginners and experienced grillers with the knowledge needed to master the art of barbecuing. The guide begins by exploring the cultural significance of barbecuing and introduces various types of grills, including charcoal, gas, and electric options. Readers will find essential information on tools, preparation techniques, and cooking methods, enabling them to create delicious meals for any occasion. Safety practices and food handling guidelines are also highlighted to ensure a worry-free grilling experience.

In addition to cooking, the guide places a strong emphasis on the importance of grill maintenance. It offers practical advice on cleaning techniques and tools necessary for keeping barbecues in top condition. By addressing common mistakes and providing tips for effective upkeep, "Barbecue Basics" empowers users to prolong the lifespan of their grilling equipment while achieving optimal cooking results. This comprehensive resource is perfect for anyone looking to enhance their barbecue skills and enjoy memorable outdoor gatherings.

## **THE BARBECUE**

**Barbecue** refers to a cooking method that involves grilling meat, vegetables, and other foods over an open flame or heat source, typically using a barbecue grill. The term can also describe the equipment used for this cooking style, such as charcoal, gas, or electric grills. Barbecuing often involves marinating or seasoning the food beforehand to enhance its flavor.

In a broader cultural context, barbecue represents a social gathering or event where friends and family come together to enjoy grilled food, often accompanied by side dishes and beverages. Different regions have their own barbecue styles, techniques, and flavors, making it a versatile and beloved culinary tradition worldwide.

## **THE HUMBLE AUSSIE BARBECUE**

The Aussie barbecue is a timeless ritual that is ingrained in our culture. Cooking over a sizzling hot grill in the great outdoors has become part of our national



identity and has been used in film, television, music and advertising as a backdrop for events great and small.

Barbecuing is a tradition that bridges cultural differences and brings people together. It is a vehicle for family bonding, community spirit and often for comic relief.



## **TYPES OF BARBECUES**

### **1. Charcoal Grills**

Charcoal grills are popular for their ability to impart a smoky flavor to food. They use charcoal briquettes or lump charcoal as the heat source.

- How They Work: Charcoal is ignited, and the heat is produced by the burning coals. Users can control the temperature by adjusting the air vents on the grill.
- Advantages: Provides a distinctive smoky flavor, often preferred by barbecue enthusiasts. They tend to be more affordable than gas grills.

- Disadvantages: Takes longer to heat up and requires more cleanup, as ash must be disposed of after cooking.

## **2. Gas Grills**

Gas grills are fueled by propane or natural gas and are favored for their convenience and ease of use.

- How They Work: Users ignite the gas burners, which heat the grill quickly and evenly. Most gas grills come with multiple burners for temperature control.

- Advantages: Quick to start and easy to adjust temperatures. They require less cleanup compared to charcoal grills, as there is no ash.

- Disadvantages: Some purists believe gas grills don't provide the same flavor as charcoal. They can be more expensive upfront.

## **3. Electric Grills**

Electric grills use electricity as their heat source, making them suitable for indoor use or areas where open flames are not allowed.

- How They Work: Electric coils heat up when powered on, cooking food directly on the grill surface.

- Advantages: Convenient for indoor grilling and easier to clean. They are also ideal for apartments or areas with fire restrictions.

- Disadvantages: Lack of smoky flavor associated with traditional grilling methods. Limited in cooking capacity compared to larger outdoor grills.

## **4. Pellet Grills**

Pellet grills combine elements of gas and charcoal grilling, using wood pellets as fuel.

- How They Work: A hopper feeds wood pellets into a fire pot, where they are ignited. A digital controller allows precise temperature settings.

- Advantages: Provides a rich, smoky flavor similar to charcoal grilling. They are versatile, capable of smoking, grilling, roasting, and baking.

- Disadvantages: More expensive than traditional grills and require electricity to operate.



## **5. Kamado Grills**

Kamado grills are ceramic or insulated grills that offer versatility in cooking methods.

- How They Work: The thick ceramic walls provide excellent heat retention and insulation, allowing for grilling, smoking, and baking.
- Advantages: High temperature control and versatility. They can be used for low and slow cooking or high-temperature grilling.
- Disadvantages: Generally heavier and more expensive than other types of grills. They can take longer to heat up.

## **6. Smokers**

While technically not barbecues in the traditional sense, smokers are often used in barbecue culture for low-and-slow cooking.

- How They Work: Smokers cook food at low temperatures using indirect heat and wood smoke. They can be offset, vertical, or cabinet-style.
- Advantages: Excellent for imparting deep smoky flavors and ideal for tough cuts of meat that require longer cooking times.
- Disadvantages: Requires more time and skill to achieve desired results compared to other grills.

## **7. Portable Grills**

These are compact grills designed for easy transportation, making them perfect for picnics, camping, or tailgating.

- How They Work: Available in various fuel types (charcoal, gas, or electric), portable grills can be set up quickly and easily.
- Advantages: Lightweight and convenient for on-the-go grilling. They can be used in various locations.
- Disadvantages: Limited cooking space and capacity compared to larger grills..

## **WHEN CAN YOU ENJOY BARBECUE AND MAKE A GOOD EXPERIENCE?**

You can enjoy barbecue on a variety of occasions, making it a versatile culinary experience. Here are some popular times and events for barbecuing:

### **1. Summer Gatherings**

Warm weather is perfect for outdoor barbecues. Family reunions, neighborhood block parties, and casual get-togethers become more enjoyable with grilled food and a relaxed atmosphere.

### **2. Holidays and Celebrations**

Many holidays feature barbecues as a central activity. Popular occasions include:

- Independence Day (July 4th in the U.S.) – Fire up the grill for burgers, hot dogs, and fireworks.



- Labor Day – A long weekend often celebrated with barbecues to mark the end of summer.
- Memorial Day – Kick off summer with a barbecue, honoring the holiday's significance.

### **3. Sporting Events**

Tailgating before football games or barbecuing during backyard viewing parties for major sporting events (like the Super Bowl) are popular ways to enjoy food while cheering for your favorite teams.



### **4. Camping and Picnics**

Barbecuing while camping or having a picnic is a great way to enjoy nature. Portable grills make it easy to prepare meals outdoors, enhancing the overall experience.



## **5. Birthdays and Anniversaries**

Celebrate special milestones with a barbecue. It's a fun way to gather friends and family, offering a relaxed atmosphere with delicious food.

## **6. Cook-offs and Competitions**

Join or host barbecue cook-offs, where enthusiasts showcase their grilling skills. These events often foster friendly competition and community spirit.

## **7. Weekends and Everyday Meals**

Barbecuing doesn't have to be reserved for special occasions. Weekends, particularly during warm months, are ideal for grilling. It can also be a fun weekday dinner option when you want to break the routine.

## **8. Outdoor Events and Festivals**

Many towns host food festivals that feature barbecue as a main attraction. These events offer a chance to try different styles and flavors while enjoying live entertainment.

## **ESSENTIAL GRILLING TOOLS FOR A SUCCESSFUL BARBECUE**

When grilling, you'll need much more than the grill. Here's a breakdown of the necessary supplies for cooking on the grill.

### **Grill**

Regardless of the type of grill you choose—gas, charcoal, electric, or portable—invest in a grill that fits your needs. Gas grills are more convenient than charcoal grills since they are turned on with a knob. But charcoal grills cost less, are portable, and produce more heat. Consider features and your space when selecting a grill.

## **Fuel**

Fuel will depend on the grill model. For a gas grill, you'll need a propane tank or natural gas. A charcoal model requires charcoal briquettes and a few sheets of newspaper (to stoke the fire in a chimney starter). Electric grills only need an electrical outlet.



## **Chimney Starter**

Goodbye, lighter fluid. This upright metal tube lets you start your coals with only a few sheets of newspaper and a match. Buy the largest model you can find for firing up your charcoal grill with ease.

## **Tongs**

Skip the grilling fork, which pierces the meat and causes you to lose flavorful juices. Instead, opt for long-handled stainless-steel tongs, which offer the most gripping power and sturdiness.

## **Spatula**

A necessity for flipping burgers and sliding under a filet of fish, a good grilling spatula should have an offset handle that allows you to easily slip the spatula under food. Silicone and metal spatulas work best for grilling.

## **Basting Brush**

Use a basting brush for applying barbecue sauce during the last few minutes when grilling meat. Look for one with long handles and heat-resistant silicone bristles.

## **Stiff-Wire Grill Brush**

After cooking and enjoying your grilled meal, you'll have to clean the grill. Invest in a long-handled grill brush for cleaning the grill grate. Trust us: It makes the job so much easier.

## **Instant-Read Thermometer**

Instead of cutting into your deliciously grilled steak to check that it's ready, use a thermometer to gauge when meat is cooked. That way, no juices are lost, and moisture is retained.

## **Fire Extinguisher**

Grease flare-ups can quickly become dangerous fires. Keep an extinguisher on hand for emergencies.

## **Grill Light**

If grilling after dark, don't be reduced to checking your food in the dark. Use a flashlight or a grill light, which clamps onto the side of the grill. Newer grill light models are solar-powered; their batteries are charged by the sun during the day, so they're ready to illuminate your meal at night.

## **Paper Towels**

Keep a roll of paper towels on hand for wiping up spills, barbecue sauce, and grease. You could also use a small washable dishcloth.

## **Aluminum Foil**

Protect delicate foods like fish and prevent small items like vegetables from falling through the grate by wrapping them in aluminum foil before placing them on the grill. The foil also helps make the cleanup process easier.

## **Garbage Can**

Keep a trash can—with a tight-fitting lid—outside near the grill for quick cleanup. You can clean as you go while grilling and preparing for your barbecue.

## **TOOLS FOR THE TABLE**

Cooking and grilling the food is one part of a barbecue. Setting up the dining or picnic table is another. Here are our recommended items.

### **Tablecloth**

A tablecloth is essential when eating at a picnic table (especially when camping or at a public park). It also helps with cleanup. Look for an easy-to-wash cotton or vinyl-coated tablecloth.

### **Napkins**

Napkins are a must when eating. If you opt for paper napkins over cloth, pick ones made of recycled paper or other materials.

### **Dinnerware and Glasses**

Of course, you need plates and cups for eating. Whether you choose paper, plastic, or bamboo, a shatterproof set of dishes and glasses keeps a backyard, deck, or patio safe from broken shards.

### **Silverware**

A set of dishwasher-safe utensils stowed in a caddy makes toting forks and knives outside (and back again) simple. If you grill meat often, consider investing in a set of sharp steak knives.



## **Bottle Opener**

A bottle opener is required if serving drinks in glass bottles. Keep one handy with your picnic supplies for easy access.

## **Salt and Pepper Shakers**

Though you may think your grilled food is perfect, everyone has different tastes (and sometimes, dietary needs). Allow everyone to season their food to their liking by providing salt and pepper at the table.

# **BBQ FOOD & COOKING BASICS**

Before getting started with our recipes, learn all the basics of barbecuing, from the difference between smoking and grilling to the types of equipment you can use.

## **1. Grilling vs. Smoking**

- Grilling: This method involves cooking food quickly over direct heat, typically at high temperatures. Grilling is ideal for foods like burgers, steaks, and vegetables that benefit from searing and quick cooking.

- Smoking: Smoking involves cooking food slowly at lower temperatures with indirect heat and wood smoke. This method is perfect for tougher cuts of meat that require long cooking times, such as brisket and ribs, allowing them to become tender while absorbing rich flavors.

## **2. Types of Equipment**

- Grills: The most common barbecuing equipment, grills come in various types, including charcoal, gas, and electric. Each type offers different cooking experiences and flavor profiles.

- Smokers: Dedicated smokers allow for slow cooking with smoke, ideal for achieving deep, smoky flavors. There are several styles, including offset, vertical, and pellet smokers.

- Accessories: Essential tools include grill brushes, tongs, spatulas, and thermometers. These tools help with food preparation, cooking, and cleaning.

### **3. Choosing the Right Fuel**

- Charcoal: Offers a traditional smoky flavor and is preferred by many grilling enthusiasts. Charcoal briquettes are convenient, while lump charcoal burns hotter and cleaner.
- Gas: Propane or natural gas grills provide convenience and quick heat. They are easy to control but may lack the smoky flavor of charcoal.
- Wood Pellets: Used in pellet grills, these provide a unique flavor profile and are easy to use, combining the benefits of gas and smoking.

### **4. Food Preparation**

- Marinating: Marinating meats before cooking enhances flavor and tenderness. Use a mixture of acids (like vinegar or citrus), oils, and spices for the best results.
- Seasoning: Dry rubs or spice blends can add depth to your dishes. Experiment with different combinations to find your favorite flavors.

### **5. Cooking Techniques**

- Direct Heat Cooking: Best for quick-cooking foods. Place the food directly over the heat source for searing and grilling.
- Indirect Heat Cooking: Useful for larger cuts of meat. Place the food next to the heat source, allowing it to cook slowly and evenly.

## **SAFETY TO MAINTAIN WHILE GRILLING**

There's nothing like outdoor grilling. It's one of the most popular ways to cook food. But a grill placed too close to anything that can burn is a fire hazard. It can be very hot, causing burn injuries. Learn simple tips and you will be on the way to safe grilling.

### **SAFETY TIPS**

- For propane grills, check the gas tank for leaks before use in the months ahead. (Watch NFPA's video on how to check for leaks below.)

- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- Place the grill well away from the home, deck railings, and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grilling area.
- If you use starter fluid when charcoal grilling, only use charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire. When you have or are finished grilling, let the coals cool completely before disposing in a metal container.
- Never leave your grill unattended when in use.



## **POST-BARBECUE CLEANING TIPS FOR AUSSIES**

Do you know that around two-thirds of Aussie homes own a barbecue? Along with beaches, sport and beer, the barbecue has become integral to Australian culture and lifestyle. According to a recent study, South Australia has come up as the highest-density barbecue-owning region in the nation.

Indeed, setting up a barbie in the backyard of your home in Adelaide is a great way to enjoy a feast with your family and friends. It is a perfect appliance for preparing delicious steaks, fish, sausages, chicken and burgers for house parties.

Unfortunately, grilling and cooking can accumulate a thick layer of gunk, grease and oil splatters on your BBQ. It could become hard to tackle built-up gunk and grime later on. So, it is good to spruce it up as quickly as possible by strictly adhering to Barbecue safety.

Today, we are sharing post-barbecue cleaning tips to help Aussies maintain their much-loved kitchen appliance for years. The best part is that you don't need fancy products or gadgets for attention-to-detail cleaning.





## **1. Vegetables to Rescue**

This cleaning hack may sound unusual to you, but it can help clean the grills or grates of your BBQ.

### **Onions to Remove Grit:**

When the grill is hot, cut an onion in half and rub it over the grates using a fork. This will dislodge stuck grime.

### **Potatoes to Tackle Rust:**

Slice a potato into thick pieces and place it over your grates. Spray vegetable oil and coarse salt to scrub the surface with the potato slice. This will help you remove rust and grime with ease. Make sure you hire a seasoned team for an expert end of lease cleaning Adelaide before a final rental inspection.

They will transform your dirty premises into a sparkling glory and help you secure the full bond money.

## **2. Brush off Food Particles From Grills**

Be cautious when removing loose food particles when your BBQ is warm but not scorching. Wait for 10-12 minutes, but ensure the grill is still warm when removing accumulated food particles, burnt debris, and gunk with a wire brush.

This is one of the best hacks to avoid baked-on grime and stubborn stains that are difficult to tackle later.

## **3. Degrease using Salt and Lemon**

The citric acid in lemon is antiseptic that works wonder by removing caked-on grease and killing lurking bacteria, while salt is a natural scrubbing powder that simplifies the cleaning process for desired results.

Make sure you gently scrub the BBQ grates and rinse them in hot water. This will leave them shiny again.

Cut a lemon in half and dip it in salt. Now, rub the warm grates with the lemon. The combination of the duo will help remove grease from the surface.

#### **4. Soak Grills/Grates in Hot, Soapy Water**

Grills tend to collect a lot of grease and fat build-up during cooking or grilling. This requires proper products and intense cleaning to break down stains.

After brushing off loose particles, remove the grills and soak them in warm, soapy water for 20-30 minutes. Add ½ cup of vinegar for tough oil splatters and grease.

Leave it for a few minutes and scrub using a 3-sided Grill brush or an old toothbrush. In the final step, rinse your grills and let them dry.



#### **5. Wash Hotplates in Dishwasher**

This hack is perfect if you have a mini to medium-sized BBQ. The hotplates can fit easily into the dishwasher- saving you time and energy.

Make sure you set it to a pot wash cycle to remove gunk, grease and stuck food particles.

Tip: It is good to clean hotplates when warm (not scorching) to achieve sparkling results.

## **6. Use Baking Soda to Clean Drip Trays**

Instead of using expensive cleaning products that contain PFAS, clean drip trays of your BBQ using baking soda. It is a powerful cleaning product that removes stuck grime, burnt particles, grease and stains without causing any damage. All you need to do is to:

- Remove loose debris from the trays using a brush
- Spray warm, soapy water to dislodge stains and gunk
- Sprinkle a generous amount of baking soda and leave it for a few minutes.
- Scrub using a soft-bristled brush. Cover nooks and crannies.
- Rinse and wipe it off with a clean cloth.

Tip: Line your drip tray with aluminium foil to trap fat and food spills when grilling your food.

## **7. Clean Burners with A Vinegar Spray**

Allow your appliance to cool down completely before cleaning burners. You can use a white vinegar solution to remove grease and stubborn stains from the burner.

After a few minutes, scrub the burner tube with an old toothbrush. You can also use a paperclip to unclog the burner tube holes.

However, if you are preparing for the final inspection, book experts for an expert end of lease cleaning in Adelaide. They will help you get your full bond back without any dispute.

## **8. Scrub The Exterior of Your BBQ with a Brush**

Do not forget your barbecue from outside when sprucing it post-grilling. Use warm, soapy water and spray it over the affected area. Leave it for a few minutes until you scrub with a non-abrasive brush or sponge.

You can use white vinegar spray to tackle grease and oil stains effectively. Make sure you wipe down the handles and other components with a damp microfiber cloth.

Tip: Hire professionals for a deep oven & BBQ cleaning in Adelaide if you don't want to do it yourself. They can clean all types of barbecue- gas, charcoal and electric using proven techniques and products.



### **9. Wash Utensils**

Make sure you wash cooking utensils and grilling tools using a vinegar solution. You can also soap them in hot, soapy water.

### **10. Clean the Patio Area**

Dispose of briquettes and charcoal after the post-BBQ party. Remove dirt and grime from the tables, chairs and floors to keep them clean and organised.



Don't allow food spills and oil drips to sit post-barbecue. You can use paper towels or a damp microfiber cloth to wipe them immediately.

This will save you a lot of time and energy.

If you are moving out of a rental property, book experts for a quality end of lease cleaning Adelaide and get your full bond back. They clean the patio floor and exterior areas as per the pre-approved cleaning checklist. With their expertise, you can impress a fussy landlord by returning the entire premises in a sparkling condition.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

The barbecue is a pivotal part of Aussie homes. So, follow these post-barbecue cleaning tips in mind and keep your BBQ grills, grates, hotplates and exterior body gunk-free and shiny using natural cleaning products.



## **10 BBQ MISTAKES YOU'RE PROBABLY MAKING (AND HOW TO AVOID THEM)**

Even though it's one of the most popular cooking techniques around the world, barbecuing is not as simple as firing up the grill and throwing some meat on it.

Think of it as both art and science. It requires technical know-how, patience, precision and preparation along with a dash of good 'ol elbow grease.

Whether you're a newbie or an avid griller looking to step up your alfresco cooking game, keep these simple tips by grilling pros at ChefsTemp in mind for a safe and smooth BBQ experience every time:



### **Mistake #1 Not knowing your grill.**

Evaluating what type of grill you are going to use is the first and foremost thing to consider before you start cooking as it impacts how your food cooks and tastes. The most common types of grills are gas, propane, charcoal and electric. Here's how to easily identify yours:

- A grill with a cord is an electric grill.
- If your grill contains buttons and knobs, it's a gas grill.
- If your grill has a tank beneath its unit, it's a propane grill.
- If your grill doesn't have buttons and knobs, it's likely to be a charcoal grill.

### **Mistake #2 Not oiling your grill.**

Grills need oil to keep meat from sticking to them, because even on a clean grill, food may stick when placed directly on it. The safest way to do this is to rub an oil-soaked paper towel on the cooking grates before you turn the grill.

### **Mistake #3 Using plastic cooking tools.**

Plastic cooking tools can melt with the high heat and flames that occur during grilling, leaving food unhealthy to eat. In addition, they can also impact the flavor of your food, which is why using metal tools is your best bet.

### **Mistake #4 Not preheating your grill.**

ChefsTemp experts strongly recommend preheating your grill for at least 20 to 25 minutes before you start cooking anything. It helps kill bacteria and will ensure your food is cooked at the right temperature.

- 250-300°F for low heat
- 300-350°F for medium heat
- 350-400°F for medium-high heat
- 400-450°F for high heat

### **Mistake #5 Putting water on the grill.**

If you feel that your grill is getting a little too hot, don't panic and pour water on it. The best practice here is to cover your grill with the lid. This will help cut off the oxygen and the flames will start to go down.

### **Mistake #6 Overloading your grill.**

Avoid overcrowding your grill with too much food at once as it needs significant room to cook properly. Instead, try cooking food in portions, this way it will have the time and space it needs to meet your culinary expectations.



### **Mistake #7 Not using a meat thermometer.**

Both the internal temperature and external temperature of food are significant, especially when cooking meat, which is why you'll want to invest in a meat thermometer that quickly measures both—to reduce the chances of overcooking and undercooking.



### **Mistake #8 Being hasty while cooking meat.**

It's important not to rush when cooking proteins as different meats like chicken, lamb, beef, pork and fish have different cooking times and suggested temperatures. Having a meat thermometer handy helps in this instance to make sure each type of food you're making is cooked at the right temperature for the right amount of time.

### **Mistake #9 Not letting your meat rest.**

When you cut into a hot piece of meat that's just off the grill, much of the liquid will come out. ChefsTemp recommends placing your meat on a platter and covering it with foil for 10 minutes before slicing it. This will allow it to rest and the juices will redistribute, creating a more tender, juicier cut.

## **Mistake #10 Pouring on the BBQ sauce too soon.**

Sauces like BBQ sauce that are rich in sugar will quickly crystallize your meat if they're added while the food is still on the grill. Experts at ChefsTemp suggest waiting until your meat is off the grill to add your favorite condiments.



## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, mastering the art of barbecuing involves not only understanding cooking techniques and flavor profiles but also committing to the proper maintenance of your equipment. By familiarizing yourself with different types of grills and cooking methods—whether grilling, smoking, or roasting—you can elevate your culinary skills and create delicious meals that bring people together. Embrace the joy of experimenting with flavors and techniques, as barbecuing is as much about the experience as it is about the food.

Equally important is the care and upkeep of your barbecue. Regular cleaning and maintenance will ensure that your grill or smoker performs at its best and lasts for years to come. By implementing the tips and techniques outlined in this guide, you can enjoy safe and flavorful barbecues, whether for casual family dinners or festive gatherings. Remember, the key to a successful barbecue is a combination of



knowledge, practice, and a passion for cooking outdoors. So fire up the grill and enjoy the rewarding experience of creating great meals!



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