



EARTHWORKS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS & CONTRACTORS, INC.

Sam Bucas' Tips For The Back Yard Grillmeister

1. Use plenty of charcoal, it doesn't cost much, and it gives you a much longer "length of fire" window - perfect to linger over drinks with friends and to coordinate with the "inside cook" on the other parts of a dinner menu.
2. Build the right kind of fire. Build a multi-level fire for the direct heat grilling of thinner cuts of meat like steak, chops, kabobs, and small pieces of chicken and position coals on either side of the grill for indirect grilling of larger cuts like roasts, whole chickens and turkeys.
3. Use those spices - Salt, pepper, and spice rubs and pastes - don't forget that squirting on some lemon or lime juice, when the food comes off the grill, brings out that incredible grill flavor.
4. Get the "doneness thing" right - use that instant-read thermometer and check often - there's nothing worse than a dry, overcooked, grilled piece of meat.
5. Experiment with smoke-roasting, get some chunks of oak, hickory, apple, or mesquite, soak it in water for an hour and add it to your fire to get that rich, smoky flavor.
6. Don't cover the grill when using the direct heat method for smaller cuts like steak, chops, kabobs, cut-up chicken, etc. Build a multi-level fire and deal with flare-ups by moving meat to that part of the grill that doesn't have any coals. Putting on the cover and letting fat drip on the coals creates an acrid, oily smoke that coats the meat and gives it a bad taste. Leave that cover off and get that bright, clean grill taste that everyone loves. When smoke-roasting or cooking with the indirect method (roasts, whole chickens, etc.) you will have the cover on.
7. Don't use "easy-starting" charcoal briquettes - they are impregnated with chemicals and can give an "off flavor" to your food. Buy a chimney starter and you won't have to worry about starter fluids. Sam got his last starter chimney at one of those big "box" stores.
8. Have your favorite beverage handy.
9. Consider a "Texas-Style" grill that has a separate firebox attached to a larger indirect cooking chamber, and sometimes a third smoke-roasting chamber. This allows for lots of flexibility in grilling, you can cook small to medium amounts of food on the firebox side of the grill using the direct heat method and you can cook large (or small) amounts of food using the upper indirect-heat cooking chamber. The upper chamber can also be used to cook large amounts of food using the direct-heat method.