

Welcome to the next edition of our newsletter! Each issue, we will bring you helpful grilling hints, tips, and suggestions, as well as grilling recipes to help make your backyard cookout a delicious success!

Thank you for your interest and being a customer of The Backyard BBQ Grill Company!

Steve and Kelley Adams and family

Buying a new grill

Summer is now officially here; and many people are considering replacing their grill. Each week, I get asked which is the “best” type of grill to buy. In this, and future newsletters, we’ll discuss options for the best and longest lasting models of grills, not by manufacturer, but by feature.

Where to buy—the chain stores and the big box discounters have lower prices, of course. Where is the service and the product know-how? In many cases, it’s non-existent. Consider buying from an independent local dealer, one who sells a lot of grills as a primary business, not just as an add-on. They will have the knowledge, the ideas, the support, and the service necessary to help you with your grill needs for the long term. You may pay just a few dollars more, but they are going to be able to set up, deliver, and advise you on issues that a large chain store just can’t devote their time to. I work with several local dealers, and they are committed to customer service.

Propane vs natural gas—your choice, I see little difference. The natural gas conversion costs a bit more to start, but you won’t have to worry about running out of gas. Of course, with propane, the grill is more portable around your residence; you don’t have to keep it exactly where the gas line is all the time. Obtaining a refilled propane tank is easier than ever now. Many retail stores operate exchange racks for residential tanks, so you can get a refilled tank anytime you need it.

Overall construction—look for a grill made primarily out of metal. Plastics and synthetics won’t corrode, true, but the best grills have fewer plastic parts. Metal is easier to clean in the long run, as well. Stainless construction is very popular right now, and understandably so. It costs a bit more, but if well-maintained, will last a long time. Make sure the stainless is of heavy gauge construction, compare to other grills in different price ranges for an understanding. The heavier the metal is, the longer it will last.

Burners—get one with stainless steel or cast iron burners, if possible. Both will last a long time if maintained. The burners should be covered with a multiple year warranty by the manufacturer, and should be easily replaced by the owner, for when that time comes. Remember that grills for propane and natural gas aren’t interchangeable without a conversion kit. Your grill dealer can help you with that.

In our next newsletter, we’ll look at best recommendations for grill features like types of cooking grids, add-on’s like side burners and rotisseries, infrared searing burner construction, ceramic lava rocks vs. flavorizer bars, etc. Thanks for reading!

“Competition BBQ” Pork Ribs

Ok, this is it; one of my signature recipes. The mother of all great barbecue items, pork ribs. No meat is more popular at summer cookouts, and none is easier, once you get the technique down. My brother and I developed this simple recipe as part of our barbecue cooking team, The Backyard BBQ Brothers. We have won several 1st place awards with this recipe since 2004, and now the secrets can be yours.....it really is easy, but does take time. Try this on your next cookout; you'll be pleased.

The meat

Buy the best—St. Louis style spareribs, not regular spareribs. St. Louis ribs have the extra brisket and bone trimmed off, making the rib more consistently rectangular in shape and easier to cook. They should average about 3 pounds per rack. You will pay a little more, but it's worth it. You could also use baby back ribs with this same recipe. Figure about half a rack per person for serving.

The prep

Unwrap the ribs, and remove the membrane from the back of the racks. (That's the tough, papery substance that makes ribs too chewy). This take a bit of practice, but is easy, once you've done it. From the small end of the rack, using a small knife or even a screwdriver to work up edge of the membrane. Grasp the corner of the membrane with a paper towel or kitchen towel (it's slippery) and using a smooth pulling motion, pull it away from the ribs. If you are lucky, it will come off all as one piece. If it tears, no big deal, just repeat the process until it is all off. That's it!

The seasoning

Use a rib rub; we use a mixture of salt, pepper, paprika, brown sugar, garlic powder, onion powder, cumin, chili powder, all to taste. You can mix your own, or buy a commercial blend or seasoning salt at the market, whatever you prefer. Sprinkle it generously on the ribs, front and back, and rub it in with your hands. You may find it helpful to put the racks on a cookie sheet to lessen the mess. With the membrane off the ribs, the seasoning can now penetrate from both sides of the rack.

The cooking

It's true that the best ribs are cooked over wood or charcoal, but this method adapts well to gas. It take a bit of adjustment, however. Set up the grill for indirect heat. Place a small disposable foil drip pan underneath the center of the cooking grids, and leave the center burner off. Use either the front and back, or left and right burners to create heat from the sides, but not directly underneath the ribs, so they don't burn. You should preheat your grill to medium low, about 250-275 degrees. Make sure you've got plenty of gas, as this method take a few hours. Place the ribs over the drip pan, not directly over the heat. Add some soaked hickory wood chips to your smoker box, if you have one. Cover the grill and cook for about 2-3 hours, rotating the ribs occasionally for even cooking. Remember, this is barbecuing, not direct grilling, it's going to take a while. Do not add sauce, not yet.

After a couple hours, your ribs should take on a nice brownish red appearance from the rub and the cooking. Remove the ribs from the grill, and wrap each rack individually in heavy duty foil. (many competition pitmasters and restaurants use this trick) Return the ribs to the grill, recover, and cook for an additional 1-2 hours. I can't give you exact times, as it will vary depending on the ribs, the grill, outside air temperature, etc. After an additional 1-2 hours, remove the foil, and NOW is the time to use a basting or barbeque sauce, if desired. Brush it lightly on the ribs, turning and rotating, every 15 minutes or so, for another hour. If you like, brown them carefully over your direct heat at this stage, watching carefully so they don't burn.

By now, you've been cooking your ribs at 250 for 4-5 hours, and they should be tender, and the meat should be pulling back from the edge of the rack. Even with the long cooking time, they won't be burned, as they've not been over direct heat. You should be able to tell that they are quite tender, however, without falling apart.

The serving

Serve with your favorite sides...with ribs, mine include corn on the cob or homegrown green beans, sliced tomatoes and cucumbers, or one of my wife's wonderful salads, and for dessert, cold watermelon. If I want something sweet, my mother or mother-in-law are always ready to bake a peach cobbler or brownies. Hungry yet?

Not too hard, was it? Future editions of our newsletter will feature recipes for chicken, steaks, and chops, among other things.



Thanks for reading, and good grilling!