



# Top 10 Grilling Tips

By Molly Watson, About.com

## **1. Use the Right Equipment**

My must-haves include flat all-metal skewers (I grill a lot of vegetables), a small spray bottle filled with water to tame any errant flames, a silicone basting brush with fine bristles, a wire brush to clean the grill, and a pair of extra-long metal tongs for moving things around on the grill.

## **2. Start With a Clean, Oiled Grill**

A clean grill reduces two banes of the cook: sticking food and flare-ups. Scrub grill clean with a stiff wire brush or grill brush, then brush entire grate with a neutral-flavored cooking oil such as canola, grapeseed, or vegetable oil. Keep the grill clean by covering it with the lid when you're done grilling each time - the trapped heat will help burn off food and make the grill easier to clean.

## **3. Bring Ingredients to Room Temperature**

Moving meat (or vegetables) straight from the fridge to the grill leads to uneven cooking. Let foods come to room temperature for about 30 minutes before putting them on the grill.

## **4. Score Steaks and Chops**

Leave 1/4 to 1/2 inch of fat on steaks and chops for natural basting and great flavor in the cooked meat **but** be sure to score the fat so the meat doesn't curl up while on the grill.

## **5. Wrap Fish In Leaves**

Protect fish from the heat of the grill by wrapping whole fish or fish fillets in edible leaves - grape leaves, fig leaves, banana leaves, and corn husks are all great choices.

## **6. Use Herbs as a Basting Brush**

Tie a bunch of herbs together - rosemary works particularly well - and use them as a basting brush. Sure, they add a bit of flavor, but it also looks great and is completely disposable!

## **7. Prevent Flare-Ups**

Flare-ups burn food, add bitter char, and increase carcinogens in grilled foods. Starting with a clean grill will help, so will cooking with the lid on (completely or slightly ajar). To manage flare-ups that occur despite these precautions, keep a small spray bottle filled with water at the grill, ready to spritz rogue flare-ups.

## **8. Flip Once**

Limit handling items on the grill. Grill completely on one side before turning or flipping, and then cook completely on the other side. Minimizing handling helps meat hold onto its juices, and everything develop attractive grill marks!

## **9. Touch Your Food**

Chefs can tell when meat is done just by poking it. With a little practice, so can you. Raw meat feels very soft, rare meat is still soft, medium rare is fairly resistant but still yields a bit, medium springs back at you a bit quicker, medium well and well will be solidly firm. This is something you can only learn with practice - so start poking!

## **10. Let Food Rest**

This tip is particularly important for all poultry and meat. Let meat rest - sit at room temperature (tented with foil to keep warm, if you like) - to allow the moisture and heat inside to distribute evenly. Resting is the final step in cooking meat. Ten minutes is good for steaks, larger cuts need more time - up to 45 minutes for a whole turkey.