

This Mother's Day,
let the men do all the cooking

By Stephanie Conner

Boy Meets Grill



Let's face it, boys love to *play with fire*. So, for Mother's Day — or Memorial Day or even next Saturday — *let the men* of the house take the *lead on dinner*. But as Kurt Hauser, Pechanga Resort & Casino Assistant Executive Chef, points out, *grilling is more* than matches and lighter fluid. It's all about control.

"It's important to know that when you're entertaining and socializing, the second you start your barbecue, your first and foremost priority is to remain in control," Hauser says. "It's an intense cooking method and can be dangerous. You want to know what's happening to your product."

GRILL TALK

Grilling is a classic culinary technique. After all, cooking on fire was the first form of cooking, Hauser points out. But that's no reason to be a caveman when you grill. Here's how to make your next meal sizzle with perfection.

1. Take care of your grill. "It's really a bummer when you go to someone's house and the barbecue is rusty and the grill is caked up with whatever they cooked the last time," Hauser says. "Your barbecue should be in tiptop condition."

2. Think clean. Make sure the grill and the bars are clean. This serves healthy sanitation purposes as well as conductivity. "The rack not only holds

the product off the fire," Hauser says. "It transfers the heat." When you're done cooking, while the grill is still hot, clean the barbecue, Hauser suggests. "That way, when you do your secondary cleaning, it'll be a lot easier. Clean your barbecue before you start cooking and after you finish every time."

3. Think fresh. Always use the freshest ingredients available, Hauser suggests. "And experiment on the grill," he adds. "Try new things. There are all kinds of foods you can cook on a barbecue. Don't hold yourself back."

4. Don't drip. When you grill, Hauser advises, make sure the drippings don't fall directly into the fire. "When the fat drips into the flames, there's smoke, which can leave a smoky film on your food," he warns. "Drippings also can spatter the ashes up onto your food."

5. Be prepared. "Have everything ready to go before you start," Hauser says. He recommends having a table outside by your grill, so you don't have to juggle things around while you're cooking.





Grilled Golden Shrimp

(Serves four people)



Ingredients:

1 serrano chili
½ c. cilantro
2 oz. tequila
1 oz. lime juice
1 Tbsp. agave nectar
(substitute honey)
2 oz. olive oil
1 Tbsp. turmeric
1 Tbsp. black mustard
seeds
12 huge shrimp
sea salt

Directions:

Slice the serrano chili paper thin. Pick the cilantro leaves off the stems. Place both in a noncorrosive container along with all other ingredients (tequila through black mustard seeds).

Mix well and toss the shrimp in the mixture. Let them marinate for 4 to 6 hours in the refrigerator.

Make sure that the grill is very hot and seasoned. Grill the shrimp to your perfection. If desired, a skewer may be used to make a brochette if desired. Do not let the shrimp brown too much—they should keep a bright golden color.

Season them with sea salt to your taste just before serving. This recipe is a great appetizer on an apple slaw, as an entrée with rice and vegetables, or as a surf-and-turf combination with the flank steak recipe on page 13.



Flame-Toasted Fruit Tastings

(Serves four people)

Plum and Honey Thyme



Santa Rosa Plums are best grilled firm and tart with a rosy red color. Cut them in half and remove the pit. Place on a very hot, clean grill with the skin side up.

Remove the thyme leaves from the twigs until you have about one teaspoon and mix with a quarter cup of honey. When the plum is sizzling hot and the skin has tightened almost to the point that it splits and the juices squirt out, place it on the plate with the round side down and drizzle some of the thyme honey just across it and onto the plate.

Pineapple and Jalapeño Candy



Mince seedless filets of jalapeño. Add to a quarter cup of turbinado sugar and rub all over a quartered section of pineapple. Grill until the sugar caramelizes. Turn from side to side for even cooking. Slice while still warm and place on the plate. Some enjoy fresh oregano in this combination.

Rosemary Watermelon



Using a 2-inch plastic pipe as long as the watermelon with the ends cut off. Remove the heart by plunging it right through the center. Push the firm, seedless core out of the tube and slice into four

1-inch discs. If you have extra, that's OK. Mince fresh rosemary and sprinkle it onto the flat surfaces of the watermelon discs. Place on a very hot clean grill and allow the grill marks to sear into each watermelon disc in one direction only and just on one side. Lift off the grill with a spatula and place on the plate with the grill marks up.

Blood Oranges and Peppermint



For this recipe, you'll need purple-stemmed peppermint. It is darker and shinier than spearmint. Peel the blood orange with your knife, removing all the pith. Roll all sides in the coarsely chopped mint. Place on the grill and allow to caramelize a bit darker than the other more delicate fruits.

Tips for Flame-Toasted Fruit Tastings

The trick is to get one piece of all four of these on the plate at the same time or close to it. Not all fruit is created equal, so you will want to start the harder (denser) ones first because they will require more time than the more delicate ones. Getting everything to come together on the plate at the same time will require some finesse and careful planning as well as a good handle on the condition of your fruit.

Toasting a marshmallow until a golden brown, crispy shell encases a creamy, sweet and gooey center is the perfect accent for the plate along with your favorite cookie!

Citrus and Herb Flank Steak, Sweet and Savory

(Serves four people)

Ingredients:

3-plus pounds flank steak
2 c. medium sherry
4 Tbsp. molasses
3 Tbsp. tamarind paste
2 Tbsp. fish sauce
½ c. olive oil
1 Tbsp. lemon zest
1 Tbsp. orange zest
1 tsp. grated garlic
1 tsp. shallot slices
1 Tbsp. flat parsley
1 Tbsp. fresh thyme
1 Tbsp. fresh coarsely ground tellicherry peppercorn
½ tsp. sour salt
1 tsp. sea salt crystals

Directions:

Mix sherry, molasses, tamarind paste and fish sauce together in a noncorrosive dish, and marinate steak in the refrigerator for at least 24 hours. Remove and drain well.

Blot off extra marinade. Let air-dry while you combine olive oil, zests, garlic, shallot, herbs and pepper in a dish. Brush onto steak, making sure herbs and spices remain on steak.

When the grill is hot, add the steak. Flank steak is best medium rare.

Don't let it get too hot because the molasses might encourage blackening. When the steak is cooked to your specifications, place it on a cutting board and let it rest for 10 to 15 minutes then slice across the grain on a bias (45-degree angle).

Season with both salts as it goes onto the plate. (Test the sour salt first so you don't get too much.)



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Men sure love their toys—and their tools. And grilling tools are no exception. “You can always tell how seriously people take what they do when you see their tools,” says Kurt Hauser, Assistant Executive Chef at Pechanga Resort & Casino.

For starters, Hauser recommends stainless-steel, commercial-grade tools, adding that they should be kept inside to keep them in tiptop condition. Here's what to add to your grilling collection:

Tongs

Picking up foods that are in one piece and delicate, such as small steaks, scallops or shrimp.



Spatula

Flipping burgers and picking up anything that will fall apart with tongs.



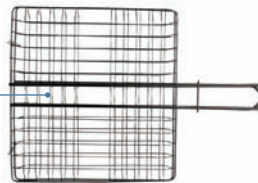
Fork

Transferring larger, thicker food items.



Basket

Cooking small foods that could fall through the grate, such as artichokes, small veggies, small scallops or nuts.



Spray bottle

Putting out flare-ups. (Be sure to spray below your food.)

