



Life with Grilling

The Joy of Grilling and Barbecue



# 10 of the Most Underrated Grilling Tips

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## 10 of the Most Underrated Grilling Tips

If you have been grilling for a number of years I'm sure that you have come up with a few grilling tips of your own. Well, since grilling and barbecue is one of my passions, I have come up with a **list of 10** of, *what I feel*, are the most *underrated* grilling tips of which my fellow grillers should be aware.

### 1. NEVER use lighter fluid when lighting charcoal.

When I was younger, my Dad used to start all of our charcoal fires with *lighter fluid*. You know, that gross chemical that you drizzle all over the charcoal before you toss a match on it and it explodes with a *poof* as it lights up. Believe me, I loved it when my Dad lit the charcoal this way but I know now that there is simply no need to do that anymore. You'll find the answer in the next tip.

### 2. A chimney starter always works like a charm for starting a charcoal fire!



*Weber Chimney Starter*

A chimney starter is the only way that I start my charcoal fires. It works every time and it's just a matter of waiting a few more minutes than the lighter fluid method. [This article](#) will give you the exact steps in lighting a fire with a chimney starter.

It is just a matter of adding some crumpled up newspaper or paraffin wax to the bottom section of the chimney starter, lighting it, and waiting for the charcoal above to light. So simple and it works every single time!

### 3. Clean your grates *right after you grill*.

Most people tend to clean their charcoal or propane grills right before they start grilling. I do just the opposite. The heat on the grates after you have just removed your grilled foods is the best cleaning agent that you could imagine. Just give your grill a few swipes with your wire brush or cleaning stone and any remnants still on the grate will easily fall off. It's really a simple thing to do but it's not something that we all remember to do. For me it's a habit and it's nice to open up my grill to a clean grate every time.

### 4. Vegetable oil, corn oil, or olive oil work perfectly to avoid sticking on a grill grate.



*Wiping grill grate with oil*

Each time I grill, I fill a small bowl with some vegetable oil or whatever oil that I have on hand. I then fold up a paper towel into about a small rectangle and with my tongs I dip it into the bowl with the oil.

I then spread it onto the grate that is either just starting to heat up or just beforehand. This is especially great for grilling fish or vegetables which tend to stick to the grill grate. It's an excellent tip and





it avoids you from having to buy a special spray to prevent sticking.

**5. Always soak wood chips for at least an hour or more before grilling.**

This one might be self-explanatory but there are **2 reasons for soaking wood chips** that you are going to use directly on your coals or in a smoker box on top of your burners in a propane grill. The **1st** is that the reason you are adding wood chips to a grill is so those wood chips will impart a smoky flavor and aroma to the food. If they aren't wet they will not smolder and impart smoke. The **2nd** reason is that if you don't soak them then they will simply ignite on top of the coals and won't emit the kind of smoky flavor for which you are looking. This is not true for an offset smoker. Never soak your wood with an offset smoker, *assuming you are using logs*, as the wood is going to be your heat source and you can adjust the heat by adjusting the amount of wood added to the firebox.

**6. Indirect grilling techniques will yield exceptional results.**



*Indirect grilling a chicken*

If you have never utilized indirect grilling techniques, you should definitely explore this type of grilling. You can use this technique with both a propane grill as well as a charcoal grill. Being an avid charcoal griller, this is definitely my preferred method.

I think I have mastered, *if I say so myself*, the art of indirect grilling a chicken or multiple chickens at one time. [This article](#) goes into more of an in-depth description of using the indirect grilling technique. It is simple and the results are *spectacular*. Indirect grilling is basically using your grill as an oven and

whatever you are cooking is not directly over the fire.

**7. A Mop Bucket and Mop Sauce will impart an extra twist to your grilled meats.**



*Mop Sauce and Bucket*

I had never heard of using a mop sauce before I started watching Steven Raichlen on PBS. He is a master at grilling on any type of cooker. We ALWAYS use a mop sauce whenever we indirect-grill anything. You can basically create your own mop sauce from anything you already have in your home.

One primary ingredient in our mop sauces is Jack Daniels whiskey. I usually start mopping the meat about 15 minutes into the process after the initial cooking occurs. After that I do it every 10-15 minutes until I run out of the sauce. It adds an added flavor,

color, and juiciness to the meat you are cooking. [This article](#) will give you some more information on the mop bucket and mop that I utilize.



**8. Adding cross hatch grill marks to your food is easy and adds a professional look!**

One of the simplest thing to do to your grilled foods is to add cross hatch grill marks. Step 1 is the most important one which is to get your grill as hot as possible. Once you have reached optimum temperature, place your steaks or whatever you are grilling and place them at a 45 degree angle. After a couple of minutes simply turn them in the opposite direction 90 degrees so that they are essentially turned 45 degrees in the opposite direction. When they are ready to turn just repeat the process on the other side to get your much sought-after cross hatch grill marks.

**9. Lump charcoal will give you a quick and hot fire.**



*Lump Charcoal*

Do you know the difference between lump charcoal and charcoal briquettes that are manufactured by a company like Kingsford? Well, [this article](#) will give you the definition of both. A quick description of lump charcoal is that it is simply hardwoods that have been buried in trenches, covered with metal or dirt and lit at one of the ends. Over a number of days the logs smolder and any sap or water that is in the wood completely burns off. The end product is charcoal but the pieces of lump charcoal do not have distinct shapes like the briquettes do (*as you can see in the image to the left*).

If you are looking for your charcoal fire to get up to temp really fast, lump charcoal will get you there faster than the briquettes. BUT, there is a drawback in that the lump charcoal will burn off faster than the manufactured briquettes. So, it basically depends on what you are looking for in a fire. If it's quick and hot, use lump charcoal. If you want a steady temp over time the charcoal briquettes may be your best choice.

**10. Get yourself a pair of fire-resistant gloves.**



*Weber Premium Grill Gloves*

One investment in which you should make especially if you use charcoal for grilling or real wood with a smoker is a good pair of fire-resistant gloves. I bought this pair manufactured by Weber a while back and use them regularly whenever I am working with lit charcoal. Safety should be your number 1 concern whenever you are working with a live fire.

Even if you only use a propane cooker, it is wise to keep your hands covered with a good pair of fire-resistant gloves. There are so many different types out there but I prefer the glove-version since it is easier for me to pick utensils up like tongs when I have fingers available. I am not a big fan of the oven-type mitts as I don't have as much control over what I am carrying or manipulating.