

May 15, 2011

Is It Done Yet?

Using an instant-read thermometer is the most accurate way to judge the doneness of meat. Be sure to insert the tip of the thermometer into the center of the meat, away from any bone or fatty areas. And remember that the internal temperature of the meat will rise 5 to 10 degrees after you remove it from the heat and let it rest.

Here are the temperatures suggested for taking meat off the grill before resting:

Burgers: 145°F for rare to medium-rare, 150°F for medium, 160°F for medium-well to well-done.

Whole chicken: 165° to 170°F; juices run clear when a thigh joint is pierced.

Boneless chicken breasts: 160°F; feels firm to the touch; meat is opaque.

Chicken drumsticks, thighs and wings: 170°F; feels firm to the touch; meat releases easily from the bone.

Ingredients for Classic Barbecued Chicken

1 chicken, about 4 lb., neck and giblets removed, cut into 4 pieces

Basic poultry brine (recipe follows)

Freshly ground pepper for sprinkling

Granulated garlic for sprinkling

2 cups barbecue sauce

Ingredients for Basic Poultry Brine

8 cups water

5 Tbs. kosher salt

2 Tbs. dried basil

2 Tbs. coriander seeds

1 Tbs. peppercorns

1 Tbs. yellow mustard seeds

1 tsp. granulated garlic

2 bay leaves

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- **Use two heat levels:** The chicken gets a quick sear over direct heat, but most of the grilling is done over indirect heat. That lower heat helps to develop an intense barbecue flavor.
- **Sauce it up:** Using indirect heat allows you to brush the barbecue sauce on the chicken earlier without fear of the sauce burning. That extra brushing time means you'll end up with more of the signature tangy flavor of good barbecue.

Classic Barbecued Chicken

Put the chicken pieces in a large sealable plastic bag and pour in the brine. Seal the bag closed, squish the brine around the chicken and refrigerate overnight.

At least 30 minutes before you plan to begin grilling, remove the chicken from the brine and discard the brine. Rinse the chicken pieces briefly and pat dry with paper towels. Lightly sprinkle on all sides with pepper and granulated garlic.

Prepare a charcoal or gas grill for indirect grilling over medium heat; the temperature inside the grill should be about 350°F. If using charcoal, bank the lit coals on either side of the grill bed, leaving a strip in the center without heat, and place a drip pan in the center. If using gas, preheat the burners, then turn off 1 or more of the burners to create a cooler zone. Brush and oil the grill grate.

Place the chicken pieces on the grill over the direct-heat area and sear, turning once, for 2 minutes per side. Move the chicken pieces to the indirect-heat area, cover the grill and cook for 30 minutes. Now, start brushing the chicken with the barbecue sauce, turning and brushing the pieces every 5 minutes, for about 15 minutes more. The chicken is ready when it is firm to the touch and the juices run clear when a thigh or breast is pierced with a knife tip.

Transfer the chicken pieces to a platter and serve immediately. Pass the remaining sauce at the table. Serve 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Grill Master*, by Fred Thompson (Weldon Owen, 2011).

Basic Poultry Brine

In a large bowl, combine the water, salt, basil, coriander, peppercorns, mustard seeds, granulated garlic and bay leaves and stir until the salt dissolves. Use immediately. Makes about 8 cups, or enough for 1 chicken.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Grill Master*, by Fred Thompson (Weldon Owen, 2011).

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Technique Class: On the Grill: Burgers and Chicken

Grilling Methods

Whether you're grilling burgers or chicken, it's important to understand which basic grilling methods apply: direct heat or indirect heat.

Direct-Heat Grilling

For this method, the food is placed directly over the fire of a charcoal or the heat elements of a gas grill. The food cooks relatively quickly—usually in less than 25 minutes—over intense heat, which sears and caramelizes the surface, boosting the flavor. Some grill cooks use a lid to reduce flare-ups and control the temperature. Others insist the grill be uncovered at all times. If you plan to swab the food with a sugary sauce, do it just before it comes off the grill so the sauce doesn't burn from exposure to the intense heat.

Good cuts to use: Burgers, steaks, chops, pork tenderloins, boneless chicken pieces, kabobs, fish fillets, shrimp and vegetables.

Indirect-Heat Grilling

Here, the food is placed away from the heat source, so it cooks from reflected heat. In a charcoal grill, that means arranging the hot coals so that either the center of the bed or one side of the bed is not delivering direct heat, and then placing the food above that space and covering the grill. In a gas grill, that means turning off one or more burners, placing the food over the turned-off burner(s) and keeping the lid on. Use this method for foods that cook for more than 25 minutes.

Sometimes you are grilling foods that benefit from a good sear and also take longer than 25 minutes to cook. Barbecued bone-in chicken is a good example. Sear the pieces over direct heat until they are nicely browned, then move them to the cooler area of the grill, cover the grill and let them finish cooking in the reflected heat.

Good cuts to use: Beef roasts, leg of lamb, thick-cut pork chops, pork loins, whole chickens, bone-in chicken pieces.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Grill Master*, by Fred Thompson (Weldon Owen, 2011).

Tips for Making Great Burgers (continued)

- Use your hands or a burger press to form the patties. Again, don't overhandle the meat or compact it, which can cause the burgers to become too dense.
- Cook the burgers over a medium-hot fire in a grill. Turn them only once and don't press down on them when cooking, which will cause the juices to escape and encourage flare-ups.
- For safety's sake, cook beef burgers to medium or medium-well.
- If desired, about 2 minutes before the burgers are done, place the buns, cut sides down, at the edge of the grill until lightly toasted.

Ingredients for Cheeseburgers

1 lb. ground chuck

1 lb. ground sirloin

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

6 slices of your favorite cheese

6 hamburger buns, spilt

Ripe tomato slices, crisp lettuce leaves, red onion slices, bread-and-butter or dill pickle slices, mayonnaise, mustard and ketchup for serving

Tips for Making Great Burgers

These tips will help you prepare flavorful, juicy burgers with ease.

- For beef burgers, use ground chuck with 15 to 20 percent fat. Ask the butcher to grind it for you and then cook it the same day. Or, if you have a meat grinder, grind the meat yourself just before cooking to ensure optimal freshness.
- Use different meats together to provide layers of flavor. Choose meats that have sufficient fat in them to retain moisture.
- To enhance the flavor of the meat, add seasonings and other ingredients, such as finely chopped onion, garlic and Worcestershire sauce. The possibilities are endless!
- Your hands are the best tools for mixing the ground meat with the other ingredients (though follow the specific directions in your recipe). Wash your hands well with soap and hot water before and after mixing. Use a light touch and don't overmix; handling the meat too much will melt the fat and produce an unpleasantly dense burger. *(Continued at left)*

Cheeseburgers

The cheeseburger is an American culinary icon, and anyone who fires up a grill needs a recipe that honors that status. A good cheeseburger is a pleasure, but a great cheeseburger is an experience.

Prepare a charcoal or gas grill for direct grilling over high heat. Brush and oil the grill grate.

In a large bowl, using a spoon, not your hands, gently mix together the ground chuck and sirloin. Run your hands under cold water and then divide the mixture into 6 equal portions. Shape each into a patty about 1 inch thick, being careful not to compact the meat too much. (Check to make sure the patties fit the buns, too.) Season on both sides with salt and pepper. Make a depression in the center of each patty with your thumb (see note below). Refrigerate until the grill is ready.

Place the patties, indent side up, on the grill directly over the fire and cook, turning once, until they are nicely charred on both sides, 4 to 5 minutes per side for medium. During the last 2 minutes of cooking, place a cheese slice on each patty and put the buns, cut side down, along the edge of the grill. After about 2 minutes, the cheese should be melted and the buns toasted.

Place the burgers on the bun bottoms and place the tops alongside. Set out condiments for diners to add as desired. Serve immediately. Serves 6.

Note: Making an indentation in the center of each patty with your thumb prevents the “swollen-belly syndrome”—burgers that are not as juicy as they should be and are puffed up and smaller than you intended.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Grill Master*, by Fred Thompson (Weldon Owen, 2011).

Beyond the Basic Burger

A juicy grilled hamburger sandwiched inside a toasted bun is a perennial favorite at barbecues—yet there's so much more you can do with the basic burger. Dress it up with melted cheese, grilled onions, sliced tomatoes or whatever toppings you please. Or stuff beef burgers with a savory filling before shaping into patties and grilling.

When stuffed with a savory filling, the basic burger takes on a whole new dimension. Listed at right are four different fillings—or create your own combination. The options are endless!

Stuffed Burgers with Pepper Jack Cheese

Our burger press makes fast work of stuffing meat patties with savory fillings. Here, beef burgers are filled with piquant pepper jack cheese, then grilled and topped with guacamole and crispy bacon.

Prepare a medium-hot fire in a grill. Place a la plancha (cast-iron griddle) on the grill to preheat.

In a bowl, combine the avocados and lime juice and mash them together with a fork. Season with salt and stir in the cilantro. Set the guacamole aside.

Divide the ground beef into eight 3-oz. portions and shape each into a ball.

Using a stuffed burger press according to the manufacturer's instructions, make 4 burgers, stuffing each with ½ oz. cheese. Season the burgers with salt and pepper.

Place the burgers on the la plancha or directly on the grill grate and cook, turning once, about 4 minutes per side. Place the burgers on the buns and top each with ¼ cup guacamole and 2 bacon slices. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

How To Grill the Perfect Barbecued Chicken

Classic barbecued chicken doesn't begin with boneless, skinless chicken breasts. You have to have bones to develop great flavor. Nor do you want your chicken to be burnt on the outside and raw on the inside, which is what happens to too many cooks. Here is how to fix those problems and more:

- **Brine the bird:** Brining adds some flavor but more importantly, it ensures a moist result. It also makes the timing a little less fussy. If you get distracted and the chicken pieces stay on the grill 5 minutes too long, it's no big deal.
- **Pat it dry:** Don't forget this step before you throw the chicken on the grill. Patting the pieces dry with paper towels helps the surface caramelize, which is the slight charring that takes place once the meat hits the heat. If the surface is moist from a brine or marinade, it will steam rather than sear, and you'll miss out on that tasty caramelization.

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Burger filling options:

4 bacon slices, cooked until crispy and crumbled

2 oz. blue cheese, crumbled

3 oz. feta cheese, crumbled

Zest of ½ lemon

1½ tsp. minced fresh oregano

2 oz. feta cheese, crumbled

1 small yellow onion, diced and caramelized

2 oz. Roquefort cheese, crumbled

1 small yellow onion, diced and caramelized

2 oz. pepper jack cheese, crumbled

1 Tbs. fresh lime juice

Kosher salt, to taste

1½ Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro

1½ lb. ground beef

2 oz. pepper jack cheese, grated

Freshly ground pepper, to taste

4 hamburger buns

8 bacon slices, cooked until crispy

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8 bacon slices, cooked until crispy