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 let them finish cooking in the reflected heat. The chicken is ready when it is firm to the touch and the juices run clear when a thigh joint is pressed. At least 30 minutes before you plan to begin grilling, remove the chicken from the bag closed, squish the brine around the chicken and refrigerate overnight.

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).
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 side down, along the edge of the grill until lightly toasted.

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, 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.

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 ⅛ oz. cheese. Season the burgers with salt and pepper.

Prepare the burger 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 ⅛ cup guacamole and 2 bacon slices. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

Stuffed Burgers with Pepper Jack Cheese

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

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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