

GRILL & THRILL

10 SMART TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER GRILLING SEASON

PICK A LEAN PROTEIN

Choose lean cuts of chicken, fish, turkey, beef, or pork (look for “loin” or “round”), or go plant-based with tofu.

PORTION WITH PURPOSE

Stick to the recommended portion sizes—MyPlate is a great guide to help balance your plate.

FLAVOR WITHOUT THE SALT

Use no-sodium marinades or salt-free spice blends—about ½ cup marinade or 1 Tbsp rub per pound of protein. Or make your own!

ADD A POP OF COLOR

Load your grill with colorful veggies—red bell peppers, zucchini, corn, mushrooms, and more. The more color, the more nutrients.

TRIM THE FAT, NOT THE FLAVOR

Choose skinless meat or remove skin before grilling. Grill on medium heat and avoid charred or burnt pieces.

BE SAUCE-SAVVY

Check labels for added sugar and sodium in condiments. Better yet, try making your own tasty, healthier versions.

MAKE SIDES FROM SCRATCH

Skip the packaged sides and make fresh salads, grilled veggies, or homemade slaws.

GO FOR WHOLE GRAINS

Swap out white bread and rice for whole wheat buns, brown rice, or quinoa for extra fiber. (Looking to go carb free? You can put romaine lettuce leaves on the grill, too, to crisp them and use as a wrap.)

CLEAN UP RIGHT

Scrub the grill grates and pans after each use to keep your setup safe, clean, and ready for next time.

GRILLED FRUIT = SWEET FINISH

Fruits like pineapple, peaches, and watermelon are delicious and healthy straight off the grill.

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KEEP IT CLEAN!

Before you fire up that grill for your next backyard feast, take a minute to do a little pre-check!

CLEANING A GAS GRILL

1. Start with the grease pan and collection tray. Overflow means drips, mess, and a lot of hands-and-knees cleaning you don't want to deal with.
2. Next, hit the grates. A quick scrape with a wire brush while the grill is hot will burn off leftover bits from your last cook. No brush? Wadded-up foil or a curly scour pad does the trick too. Wipe clean with a damp rag (use tongs!) once cooled completely and finish with a light coat of vegetable oil to keep things seasoned and smooth.
3. Check the burner hoods (the metal plates that sit directly above the burners). They keep flare-ups in check by catching grease, so make sure they're not overloaded. If they're gunky, a scrub with hot, soapy water should do it. While you're at it, turn on the burners and inspect the ports for clogs.

READY FOR A DEEP CLEAN?

If your grill's seen a few too many cookouts, it might be due. Remove the grates, burner hoods, and grease tray, and scrub everything—plus the inside of the firebox and lid—with hot, soapy water or a safe degreaser like Simple Green. Rinse well, dry completely, and reassemble.

Clean grill = better flavor, less mess, and no unexpected flare-ups.

CLEANING A CHARCOAL GRILL

1. Start with the grates. Scrub them with a steel brush before you cook, when the coals are at their hottest. Don't have a brush? Wadded foil or a stainless steel scour pad works too. Finish with a clean, damp rag and a light coat of oil.
2. Dump the ashes after each use. Wait until the coals have cooled completely to avoid hidden embers. For extra safety, use a small lidded metal trash can for disposal. Important: Never extinguish hot coals with water—this creates lye, which is corrosive and dangerous.

READY FOR A DEEP CLEAN?

Before you dive in, brush or vacuum out any dry ash (a shop vac works great). Next, hose down the grill and lid, inside and out, to get rid of leftover ash. Now, scrub with hot, soapy water or a food-safe degreaser.

If you're using degreaser, let it sit for 20 min before scrubbing with a plastic scour pad. Rinse well, and for that extra clean finish, a quick soapy rinse will do the trick.