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101 Fast Recipes for Grilling

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THERE, in all of their Fourth of July glory, are 101 grilling ideas begging to be tried. A vast majority take less time to prepare and grill than it takes to watch your coals turn white. (If you use gas, they're still almost as fast as heating up the grill.) Some of them feature ingredients like corn, eggplant and **tomatoes**, which will be better a month from now, at least in the Northeast. But there are also suggestions for foods in season right now that not everybody thinks of putting on the grill. Please note that salt and pepper are (usually) understood.

Vegetables and Fruits

- 1.** A winter dish, summer style: Brush thick slices of fennel bulbs with olive oil and grill over not-too-high heat. Cut oranges in half and grill, cut-side down. Put fennel on a bed of arugula or watercress, squeeze grilled oranges over top. Garnish with fennel fronds.
- 2.** Best grilled artichokes: Cut artichokes in half, scoop out the choke, parboil until tender. Grill, cut-side down, until lightly browned; grill a couple of halved lemons, too. Combine the juice from the grilled lemons with melted butter and spoon over the artichokes. Finish with parsley.
- 3.** Tahini **tofu** steaks. Thin tahini with lots of lemon juice and some minced garlic. Cut a brick of firm tofu into four slabs and brush with sesame oil. Grill over a moderate fire, turning a few times, until marked and crisp outside and custardy inside. On the last turn, baste with the tahini sauce. Serve on thick tomato slices with a drizzle of soy sauce and chopped basil, Thai if possible.
- 4.** Spice-rubbed carrots: Roll peeled carrots in cumin, salt, pepper and brown sugar. Char, then move them away from direct heat and cover the grill until carrots are tender.
- 5.** Grill bread; grind in a food processor to make coarse bread crumbs. (You can add garlic and/or parsley and/or Parmesan, or not.) Grill asparagus until tender. Top with bread crumbs and olive oil.

- 6.** Brush slices of beet with olive oil and grill slowly until tender and lightly browned. Top each slice with a little goat **cheese** and some **salad** greens.
- 7.** For perfectly ripe tomatoes only: Grill tomatoes, any size, until hot and lightly charred but not bursting. Drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and serve with fresh mozzarella (or, even better, burrata) and grilled bread.
- 8.** Halve and grill radicchio (or Belgian endives); drizzle cut sides with honey or plain vinaigrette, pesto or parsley pesto. Or just brush with oil and finish with a little grilled prosciutto.
- 9.** Grilled guacamole: Halve and pit avocados; lightly char them, then scoop out the flesh. Grill halved red onion, too. Chop, combine, add tomatoes, lime, garlic and spices if you like.
- 10.** Grill corn. Serve with mayo with minced garlic, pimentón and parsley.
- 11.** Grill more corn. Serve with curry-powder-laced yogurt and minced onion.
- 12.** Grill corn again. Serve with coconut milk, cilantro and mint.
- 13.** Root vegetable of your choice: Slice celeriac — or jicama, big potatoes, daikon or yams — and grill slowly, until very tender and browned. Drizzle with olive oil or melted butter and sprinkle with chopped rosemary or sage and olive oil.
- 14.** Choose another root. Slice it, but this time char lightly and leave it crunchy. Chop and toss with chopped cilantro, a pinch of cayenne and juice of grilled lime.
- 15.** Rub thick zucchini slices with a mixture of fresh or dried dill, yogurt, olive oil and lemon. (Or use pesto or parsley pesto.) Grill slowly.
- 16.** More shopping than cooking: Grill an array of radishes on little skewers, four to six each. Serve with butter, salt and bread.
- 17.** Halve Belgian endives. Brush with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper and grill over moderate-to-low heat, turning once or twice, until soft and browned. Finish cut-side up and sprinkle with grated Parmesan; close the grill to melt cheese.
- 18.** Lightly char whole or halved heads of baby bok choy; drizzle with soy sauce and top with chopped scallions.
- 19.** Peel and thickly slice a not overly ripe mango. Brush very lightly with neutral oil and grill

just until softened; sprinkle with cilantro and/or mint and lime juice (you might as well grill the lime first, too).

20. Grill pineapple (or anything, really, from pork to tofu to eggplant). Make a sauce of half-cup peanut butter, a tablespoon (or more) soy sauce, a dash (or more) sriracha chili sauce, a handful of basil or mint and enough warm water to thin. (I'm tempted to say, "Throw away the pineapple and eat the sauce," but the combination is sensational.)

21. Waldorf salad revisited, sort of: Grill cut apples until browned but not mushy; grill chunks of Napa or savoy cabbage, also left crisp; grill halved red onion. Chop or shred all together with blue cheese, walnuts and a little yogurt.

22. Cut a slit in as many ripe figs as you like; stuff with herbed goat cheese (or cream cheese mixed with chopped nuts) and grill slowly. Appetizer or dessert? Your call.

23. Grill red, orange and/or yellow peppers; toss with olives, capers, balsamic vinegar and olive oil.

24. Quick grilled pickle: Rapidly char thick slices of cucumber; toss with salt, vinegar and sugar; let sit for 15 minutes, then drain.

25. Charred salsa verde. Toss whole husked tomatillos, scallions and jalapeños in olive oil and grill until charred. Remove the blackened skin from the chilies and chop or blend everything with diced avocado, lime juice and cilantro. Eat with chips or top grilled chicken with it.

Meat

26. Mideast lamb chops: Shoulder cuts are the best and the cheapest; just don't burn them. Marinate them briefly in yogurt, lemon, cardamom and mint. Serve with lemon and parsley.

27. Midwest pork chops: Again, shoulder; again, don't burn. Marinate briefly in spicy mustard, chopped garlic and apple cider.

28. Six-minute steak (or maybe four): Salt skirt steak and grill it, quickly. Top with queso fresco, thinly sliced red onion (you could grill it first, if you like) and the juice of grilled lime.

29. Six-minute steak, plus a little marinating time: Soak skirt steak in a mixture of soy, lime juice, garlic, ginger and sugar (or mirin) before grilling. (The time it takes to heat the grill is long enough.)

30. Smear chicken leg quarters (or thighs) with a paste of garlic, chopped rosemary (thyme,

too, if you like), olive oil and the juice of grilled lemon. Grill away from heat, covered; crisp briefly over high heat.

31. Steak au poivre: Sirloin strip is ideal. Press lots of cracked black pepper into both sides, sprinkle with salt and grill over fairly high heat, about three to four minutes on each side. Slice quarter-inch thick before serving.

32. Crisp (and better) duck à l'orange: Score the skin of duck breasts and press rosemary leaves, salt and pepper into both sides. Grill skin-side down over low-ish heat until crackly, then turn and grill briefly. Serve with grilled orange halves.

33. Smear hanger, skirt, flatiron or other steak with mustard. Grill and serve with grilled shallots.

34. Brush chicken thighs — boned or not — with basil, parsley or cilantro pesto. Boneless and skinless thighs can be grilled over direct heat; thighs with skin should be started away from heat.

35. Fast lamb leg: Use steaks cut from the leg, and rub them with a mix of warm spices: cumin, coriander, cinnamon and turmeric. Grill quickly, serve hot.

36. Spread flank steak or butterflied lamb leg with garlic, parsley and lemon zest. Roll and tie, or fold. (Or grill without further fuss, adding more paste occasionally.)

37. Moist grilled chicken breast? Yes: Pound chicken breast thin, top with chopped tomato, basil and Parmesan; roll and skewer and grill over not-high heat until just done.

38. Call it grilled chicken Parm: Pound breast thin, top one side with sliced tomato, mozzarella and Parmesan; fold in half, seal with a toothpick or skewer and grill for a few minutes on each side.

39. Pork (or veal) saltimbocca: Pound pork or veal cutlets thin; top with ham (prosciutto preferably) and cheese (maybe Gruyère). Roll, cook on skewers and serve with pickles.

40. Slice pork shoulder thin. Fry lots of sesame seeds, minced garlic, fresh minced chili in sesame oil; off heat, stir in some soy sauce. Grill the pork fast over high heat, smearing with the sesame paste right after flipping. Serve with lettuce leaves and cilantro, basil and/or mint for wrapping.

41. Bacon-wrapped hot dog. You know you want one.

Fish and Shellfish

42. Grill thick onion slices; purée in a blender with olive oil and lemon juice. Grill scallops for about four minutes; serve with the vinaigrette.

43. Salmon tartare with grilled stuff: Lightly grill radishes, scallions, lime halves and, if you like, plantain disks. Serve the plantains under, and the other things next to, chopped raw salmon (preferably wild) seasoned with salt and pepper.

44. Grill sardines or mackerel; serve with a squeeze of grilled lemon, grapefruit or both.

45. Stuff whole gutted trout with slices of lemon and chopped marjoram or oregano. Wrapping in bacon is optional. One per person is best.

46. Not so easy, but so impressive: Stuff squid bodies with chopped chorizo (optional), garlic-toasted bread crumbs, lemon zest and parsley. Close with toothpicks. Char quickly over a very hot fire.

47. Shrimp, Part 1: Rub with chili powder and salt, and grill quickly. Finish with cilantro and the juice of grilled lime halves.

48. Shrimp, Part 2: Rub with olive oil, salt and cumin. Finish with the juice of grilled lemon halves; garnish with chopped marjoram, if you have it, parsley if you don't.

49. Shrimp, Part 3: Rub with curry powder. Drizzle with warm coconut milk and chopped mint, basil and/or cilantro.

50. Grilled tuna niçoise: Brush tuna with olive oil and grill; keep it rare. (You might grill some new potatoes while you're at it.) Serve with more olive oil, lemon juice, cherry tomatoes, olives, grilled red onion and parsley. Green beans and hard-cooked eggs are optional.

51. Grilled clams on the half shell: Get them shucked (or cook in the microwave or on the grill until opened); top with bread crumbs, parsley, lemon, minced cooked bacon (optional). Grill until topping is hot.

52. You think you don't like bluefish? Grill it, then drizzle with a mixture of chopped fennel fronds (or crushed fennel seeds), melted butter and the juice of grilled grapefruit or orange.

53. White fillets with spice: Mix salt, sugar, chili powder and paprika. Rub on sturdy white fish fillets (make sure the grill grates are clean and well oiled).

- 54.** Buy shucked oysters. Top with juice of grilled lemon. Period. (You could grill shallots, mince and make a grilled mignonette, but this is better.)
- 55.** Grill soft-shell crabs, brushing with melted butter and Tabasco. A little charring of the claw tips isn't a bad thing.
- 56.** Simmer octopus tentacles until tender (this may take a couple of hours); cool. Grill; cut into attractive little rounds and drizzle with lemon and olive oil.
- 57.** Grill wild salmon (preferably king or sockeye) until not-well-done. Toss diced cucumbers with fresh dill, olive oil and lemon juice. Serve salmon hot, slaw cold.

Kebabs

- 58.** Shrimp and chorizo. Serve with lemon or a little vinaigrette.
- 59.** Lamb and carrots. In last few minutes, brush with miso thinned with a tiny bit of mirin (or sherry, wine or water).
- 60.** Lamb and onions. Brush with a mixture of cumin and olive oil as they sizzle. You can add bell peppers, too, but somehow the stark minimalism of this is pleasing.
- 61.** Odd, but good: Strawberries and cherry tomatoes, finished with basil-laced balsamic vinegar.
- 62.** The New York special: Italian sausage, peppers and onions.
- 63.** The California special: Figs, with chunks of good bacon.
- 64.** Kebab or hero? Your choice: Cut brussels sprouts in half; grill slowly on skewers, with chunks of sausage. Both slowly crisp as they cook.
- 65.** Bread salad on a stick: Cubes of bread, black olives and cherry tomatoes. Don't grill too long, and drizzle with basil or thyme or parsley vinaigrette.
- 66.** Peaches, plums, strawberries and watermelon. Finish with a sprinkle of salt and perhaps a drizzle of balsamic vinegar.
- 67.** Cubes of mango and chunks of white fish; brush with a mixture of soy, fish sauce, sriracha chili sauce and chopped mint or cilantro. Serve with a mai tai.

68. Go Hawaiian or Italian: Wrap pineapple or melon in prosciutto. Grill briefly.

Salads

69. Grilled coleslaw: Lightly char wedges of green and red cabbage and carrots. Let cool, then shred and toss with a little mayo, vinegar, salt and sugar.

70. Grill halved new potatoes or fingerlings (microwave or parboil first for a few minutes to get a head start), red onions and scallions. Chop as necessary and toss with chopped celery, parsley, mustard and cider (or other) vinegar. I make this annually.

71. Toss grilled Lacinato kale leaves with a little Caesar salad dressing (or olive oil, lemon and Parmesan) and grilled croutons.

72. Char iceberg wedges and cherry tomatoes (skewer these first). Top with blue cheese dressing.

73. Lightly grill ripe figs; brush with balsamic. Chop and toss with arugula and blue cheese. Sprinkle with olive oil.

74. Steak salad with almost no steak: Halve endives or radicchio; brush with oil and grill. Sprinkle with bits of blue cheese and bits of charred steak.

75. Ratatouille: Grill chunks of zucchini, yellow squash, mushrooms, eggplant, onion and tomatoes (or use cherry tomatoes), all until lightly browned and perfectly tender. Toss with fresh marjoram or oregano, thyme, basil and olive oil.

Burgers

76. Greek salad burger: Ground lamb with grated feta, chopped calamatas and a little oregano. Top with tomato, red onion and cucumber.

77. The pickled onions make it: Soak sliced red onions in diluted vinegar and salt while you prepare everything else. Combine ground lamb with grated carrots and cumin; grill, then top with onions.

78. Asian burger: Grind pork, combine with grated daikon and a little soy sauce. Brush with hoisin or miso and top with sliced-and-salted cucumbers.

79. Grind beef, combine with crumbled blue cheese and chopped toasted walnuts. Top, if it doesn't sound too effete, with sliced grilled pear.

80. A chicken or turkey burger worth eating: Cook and chop bacon; mix with ground chicken (or turkey) and grill.

81. Another: Grind turkey, combine with chopped basil, shove a cube of mozzarella into the center, grill until well done (the cheese will melt). Top with tomato and more basil.

82. Grind salmon (actually, it's better if you grind half and chop half) and combine with chopped scallions and soy sauce. Grill medium-rare, top with mayo spiked with ginger, soy and/or lime.

83. Philly cheesesteak burger: Grind beef and grill with mushrooms and onions; top with aged provolone.

Sandwiches and Breads

84. Actual grilled cheese: Use good bread, good cheese, tomato slices and maybe a little mustard; brush with melted butter or olive oil and grill with a weight on top.

85. Glorified grilled cheese: Use grilled pineapple, grilled ham, cheese, pickles and mayo; grill with a weight on top.

86. Grill bell peppers until blackened and collapsed; cover, cool and peel. Grill eggplant planks, brushed with olive oil (or pesto if you have it), until very tender. Make a sandwich with balsamic vinegar, mozzarella and basil. This is also good with strip or skirt steak: grill meat until medium-rare, then slice and salt.

87. Grilled quesadilla (simple): Fill a flour tortilla with queso fresco, Monterey Jack or Cheddar; add chicken, shrimp and/or tomato. Fold and grill until cheese melts.

88. Grilled quesadilla (not as simple): Grill and strip corn from the cob; grill red-onion slices and chop them. Combine both with chili powder and bind with a tiny bit of mayo or yogurt. Put between two flour tortillas with cheese and grill. Serve with grilled lime wedges.

89. A different kind of Cuban sandwich: Grill pork steaks (best from the shoulder, about half-inch thick). Put on baguette spread with well-seasoned mashed black beans, queso fresco, chopped red onion (grilled or not), cilantro and lime juice.

90. Grill pork steaks as above; grill red onions. Slice the meat, chop the onions, toss with thinly sliced apples and roll in lavash bread or stuff in pita with yogurt-dill dressing. You can use the meat as an accent, or as the dominant ingredient.

91. Grill sweet Italian sausage and some figs. Combine on a toasted hot dog bun; mustard is optional.

92. Grill split kielbasa or chorizo (the Spanish type). Serve in buns, filled with chopped Manchego and mayo spiked with pimentón. Some chopped dried apricots would be good, too.

Desserts

93. An idea whose time has come: Halve and grill peaches, nectarines or apricots. Brush with barbecue sauce or, if you want to be sophisticated, a mixture of bourbon, sugar and mint, or simple syrup laced with basil.

94. An idea whose time will come in September: Halve and grill pears or apples. When they're done, drizzle with yogurt, honey and a pinch of cardamom.

95. Grilled fruit salad, and why not? Toss grilled watermelon (really good), peaches, plums, pineapple and kiwi with honey, a little salt, lemon juice and tarragon (not much), chervil, basil or mint (or a combo).

96. Cut grapefruit in half. Sprinkle with brown sugar; grill, cut-side down. You might top this with chopped pistachios or a little honey.

97. Grilled shortbread or poundcake (store-bought is totally fine) topped with grilled fruit sauce, strawberries in sugar, yogurt, [ice cream](#), whatever.

98. Grilled angel food cake or poundcake (again, store-bought is fine) topped with Nutella, chocolate sauce, sorbet, etc.

99. Grilled s'mores: Put graham crackers (or other good quality flat cookie) on foil, top with marshmallows and chocolate and another cracker. Grill until the chocolate and marshmallow begin to melt.

100. Cut bananas into thick rounds (like scallops almost), char quickly and serve with caramel sauce, brown sugar, vanilla ice cream, Nutella ... whatever.

101. Actually, this is a drink: Skewer green olives, then char them a bit. These would be a good garnish for shrimp, chorizo or anything else. But instead, make yourself a fantastic dirty martini.