

BBQ Tips



Grill preparation is essential so before you start cooking ensure your grill is well cleaned and oiled with a damp cloth moistened with cooking oil.

Preheat the grill (charcoal or gas) ensuring you have two areas for different cooking temperatures. Using one for direct heat and one for finishing and gentle cooking.

Whole Fish

When cooking a whole fish, it's key to be patient. Avoid placing the fish onto direct heat and give the underside skin time to crisp before turning the fish.

A large carving fork can be really useful when your fish is ready to turn. Slide the fork under the fish to roll it over, rather than stabbing the top to turn it.

When your fish is cooked the eyes will be white and the area around the gills will also be white (not translucent). Taking a thin skewer to the thickest part of the flesh, push the skewer into the fish and if there's no resistance, your fish is done.

As the tail end is thinner, avoid having this area on the hottest part of the grill so it doesn't overcook.

Stuffing a whole fish with sliced citrus fruit and herbs is a good way to impart flavour and retain moisture. The fish can be simply tied with damp string criss-crossed over and under the fish.

Fillets

If grilling fillets, always cook them skin side down and avoid turning. If your barbecue doesn't have a lid, you can always cover the fish with a metal baking tray to keep the heat in and help it cook from both sides.

More delicate fish fillets or those without skin can be wrapped in foil parcels with added liquids such as white wine or lemon juice and fragrant herbs.

A cedar plank pre-soaked overnight in water is another interesting and delicious way to cook fish fillets. Aside from imparting a smoky flavour to the fish, it's an easy way to keep the fillet intact when grilling. You will need a lid or cover to ensure heat is retained and the fish is evenly cooked.

Dry or wet marinades are a good addition to any barbecued fish as it will give them a more interesting and complex flavour.





Shellfish

Butterflied king prawns, lobsters and scallops in their shell are all great additions to your barbecue menu. Cook them shell side down with a flavoured butter on the flesh side. As the shells heat up, the flesh will cook from the grill side up and melt the butter. Make sure you have a sturdy pair of tongues when removing from the grill as the shells will be very hot!

Fish kebabs

The possibilities here are endless in terms of fish selection, adding vegetables and marinades. Opt for firm fish that cubes well such as tuna, swordfish, monkfish tails, cod cheeks and peeled raw prawns.

You can be inventive with the skewer too by using rosemary and bay sticks or lemongrass. Whether you're using natural skewers such as these or wooden ones, make sure these are well soaked in cold water before threading the ingredients on. This will stop the wood or sticks from catching fire on the grill. Metal skewers are fantastic too as they cook the fish from the centre, but make sure you have a heat protective glove as the metal will be very hot once the fish is cooked.