

ON THE GRILL

TIPS for a winning tailgate at home

FAMILY FEATURES

This season, why pick up the phone to place that routine, game-day pizza order when you can score rave reviews from family and friends by firing up the grill for a backyard tailgate party with all the sights, sounds and smells of the stadium? Football analyst Mike Golic and champion pitmaster Chris Lilly both believe that game day tastes better on a charcoal grill, and are sharing their favorite recipes and tips.

Golic, a former defensive lineman and host of ESPN's "Mike & Mike in the Morning," knows how fun game day can be — even off the field and in his own backyard.

"I have a family full of football fans, so game days are big at my house," said Golic. "Gathering around the grill in my backyard is one of my favorite ways to reconnect after a busy week."

Chris Lilly, champion pitmaster and owner of Big Bob Gibson Bar-B-Q in Decatur, Ala., couldn't agree more. He also insists that grilling for game day is one of the best ways to extend the summer and take advantage of the extra hours of sunlight provided by the extended daylight saving time period.

"Nothing beats the unmistakable, smoky aroma of a charcoal cookout on a crisp, fall day," said Lilly. "And lighting the perfect charcoal fire is easier than most people think. Simply apply a moderate amount of lighter fluid to charcoal briquettes, light immediately and let the coals burn until they are white-hot before placing food on the grill. It shouldn't take more than 15 minutes."

Kick'n Corn

Recipe created by football analyst, Mike Golic, on behalf of Kingsford charcoal

Difficulty level: medium
Prep time: 30 minutes
Cook time: 10 to 12 minutes
Makes: 6 servings

- 6 large ears of corn in the husk
- Hidden Valley Original Ranch Salad Dressing, for dipping

Hot Sauce

- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup chopped plum tomato
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 tablespoon cayenne pepper
- 1/2 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, cut into chunks, reserved

Peel husk back from corn and remove silk. Do not remove husk. Set aside.

Combine sauce ingredients, except butter, in blender and puree until smooth. In medium saucepan, bring sauce to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 10 minutes until sauce thickens slightly. Turn off heat and whisk in butter chunks until melted.

Brush corn with sauce and wrap tightly in husks. Grill for 10 to 12 minutes, turning every 2 to 3 minutes to prevent husk from burning. When cooked, peel back husk and serve with ranch dressing for dipping.



Steak and Vegetable Skewers With Soy-Ginger Marinade

Recipe created by champion pitmaster, Chris Lilly, on behalf of Kingsford charcoal

Difficulty level: medium
Prep time: 20 minutes, plus 2 hours for marinade
Cook time: 8 to 10 minutes
Makes: 6 servings

- 2 onions
- 3 bell peppers
- 2 1/2 pounds steak, 1 inch thick
- 6 skewers (if using wood skewers, soak in water)

Marinade

- 1 cup soy sauce
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons ground ginger
- 3 tablespoons vinegar
- 3 1/2 teaspoons garlic salt
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 3/4 teaspoon black pepper

Combine marinade ingredients and mix well. Cut onions and peppers into 1-inch pieces. Cut steak into



1-inch cubes. Divide marinade in half and marinate vegetables and meat in separate gallon-size resealable bags for 2 hours.

Remove vegetables and meat from marinade. Place steak, onions and peppers on skewer, alternating varieties.

Build a charcoal fire for direct grilling. Grill kabobs over coals (approximately 450° to 500°F) for 4 to 5 minutes on each side. Remove from grill and serve.



Backyard Tailgate Strategies

To host your own backyard tailgate, use these winning game-day strategies from Golic and Lilly:

Pass It On. No backyard tailgate is complete without a halftime game of tag football. Hand off your football wisdom to your littlest tailgaters by teaching them the art of the perfect pass — the release and follow through are the most important elements and can be the difference between throwing a wobbly "duck" and a perfect spiral.

Blitz for Burgers. To achieve a perfectly grilled burger, only flip once. This is essential! Look for a pooling of natural juices in the center of the burger — that's when you know it's time to flip to the other side.

Level the Playing Field.

A typical chicken breast is thicker on one side than the other, which can make it difficult to cook evenly. To solve the problem, before placing on the grill, simply press the heel of your palm firmly against the thickest part of the breast until even with the rest of its surface.

Skewer the Competition.

Grilled kabobs are a guaranteed crowd pleaser. When grilling those that incorporate strips of meat, chicken or even individual shrimp, make sure the skewer goes through the food twice so each piece will stay in place. Or, cut the meat into cubes and spear once for an even, easy cook. Also, be sure to soak wood skewers in water before placing them on the grill, as dry skewers will burn.

Play It Safe. When it comes to grilling, safety comes first. It's more than likely that glowing embers remain in the grill for quite some time, so a good rule of thumb is to wait at least 12 hours before emptying residual ash.

For more ways to bring the tailgate home, including additional tips and recipes from both Golic and Lilly, visit MealsTogether.com. While there, find out how to enter the "On the Grill" promotion for a chance to tailgate with friends and family at a bowl game or with race car drivers at the season-ending race in Homestead-Miami.