



— MATTHEW EADS —

GRILL SEEKER

BASIC TRAINING FOR EVERYDAY GRILLING





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GETTING STARTED

DISCLOSURE

The Federal Trade Commission is very clear on disclosure laws regarding the transparency of paid advertisement. It's pretty clear cut, but not many abide by those rules—likely because they don't know the rules even exist. That said, I felt it imperative to mention that while I have been offered several cash endorsement deals to promote products in this book, I have declined all of them. To be clear, I haven't taken a single dime from any person or any brand in exchange for endorsement of any products in this book—I don't work that way. It's important for me to stay authentic so you can trust that the things I recommend in this book or on social media are products I actually use. My recommendations are not for sale, and they never will be.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to a couple of great photographers that helped me with this book. Along with my own photographs, I was greatly assisted by Lauren Nagel from bonappeteach.com and Jessica Kim from jesskphotography.com with various shots throughout the book. Many thanks, ladies—your help is greatly appreciated.

TYPES OF GRILLS

We've come a long way since the caveman days of cooking over an open fire (though you *will* find a fun caveman technique on [page 93](#)). Outdoor cooking has evolved from a necessity to a hobby for many and even a competitive event for some. There are a number of different types of grills used today, all providing various advantages and, not surprisingly, all coming with some drawbacks. One of the biggest drawbacks is how confusing finding a grill that works for you can be. Don't worry, that's one of the reasons you bought this book—I've got you.

Below you'll find a brief description of some popular types of grills aimed at arming a new griller with the basic knowledge needed to make the best grill choice for his or her lifestyle and cooking needs. The most important part of choosing a grill is finding one you are comfortable operating on a regular basis. The "coolest" grill may be one that you'll dread using after the newness wears off because of the effort or time it takes to use and maintain it. And if you're not going to use it, you've just invested in a really cool lawn ornament and you still won't have dinner on the table. I use various grills for various things because it's my hobby and passion, but I recognize that won't be true for everyone (but if you get into the hobby with my help, feel free to blame me when explaining your second or third grill purchase to your significant other). Be practical with your decision, and don't be influenced by creative marketing or the coolest new gadget your neighbor has. In short, do you.

THE TRADITIONAL CHARCOAL GRILL

There's nothing more classic or timeless than the good old metal charcoal grill. These have been around for a long, long time and for good reason—they generally work well and are pretty budget friendly. I say "generally" because there are some cheap knock-off brands on the market these days (below the \$89 price point) that aren't built well and don't work well, and you'll be lucky if they last a single summer. In those cases, I'd say don't waste your time or money. These are commonly the models that are found at the local five-and-dime or on a display at the grocery store.

I recommend a more time-tested and consumer-proven model, like the classic Weber kettle or the traditional PK Grill, which can be purchased for between \$200 and \$350. For slightly more than what you'd pay for an el cheapo on the discount rack, you'll have a grill that will last you for thirty years or more. Indeed, there are plenty of 1950s vintage PKs and Webers in use today, passed down from one generation to the next like Grandma's old cast-iron skillet. These grills are lightweight, are heavily supported via online community groups, work extremely well for everyday grilling, and are portable enough for taking to the beach or a sporting event. They work well with either briquettes or lump charcoal, and the temperature control is managed by manipulating the intake and exhaust vents. Further, there is no shortage of accessories for either grill. While they *can* be used for smoking (large cuts like brisket and pork shoulders can indeed be smoked on a standard metal grill), they are generally better suited for straightforward grilling. Of course, there are exceptions to this, like with anything else. These grills offer quick heat-up and cool-down convenience for a budget that

most are comfortable with. They do have some drawbacks. Most prominently, because of poor insulation they are affected by the weather, and a strong breeze or rain can significantly affect their performance.

THE CERAMIC GRILL

If you're shopping for a new grill this season, it would be hard not to come across the ceramic option during your research. Kamado-style cooking has gained massive popularity in recent years, and it has become all the rage due to the versatility these grills offer. There are three major players in the ceramic grill community: Big Green Egg, Primo, and Kamado Joe. All offer better all-weather performance than the standard metal grill, and each has an abundance of support via online forums and user groups.

Because two-zone cooking is essential to grilling, many prefer the Primo. Its patented oval design offers users better control and the widest variance for two—or even three—distinct temperature zones. It's also the only ceramic grill made in the United States. That said, if you're a gadget person, it's hard to beat the made-in-China Kamado Joe in terms of accessories and innovation. Indeed, Kamado Joe sets the pace for innovation. Being made in China isn't a bad thing, by the way—plenty of terrific products come from China—I only point it out as a comparison point. If you're looking for the largest online community, the Big Green Egg (made in Mexico) is the clear-cut favorite. Big Green Egg also benefits from the largest name recognition of the three and is likely the most readily available. You really can't go wrong with any of the three.

The main drawbacks to ceramic grills are cost and reaction time. They are slower to heat up and take longer to cool down. That said, users can grill, smoke, roast, and bake on these, and weather has little effect on their performance because they are so well insulated. Their superior insulation is also why they maintain moisture so well, so the days of dried-out meats from the grill are over. Like the standard metal grill, temperature adjustments are made via intake and exhaust vents. It's recommended that you use the slightly more expensive lump charcoal with these grills, and they *are* more expensive than the standard metal grill. Entry to market on a quality ceramic grill is about \$800 at time of publication. I say "quality" because the market has recently flooded with knockoffs at big box stores that are much cheaper—for a reason. Be sure to check into the warranty and return policy on any of the discount ceramic grills, and even then, consider the logistics of returning such a heavy grill.

THE GAS GRILL

As much as I, and others like me, enjoy stoking up the coals or wood splits and cooking over live fire, there's no denying that gas grills are still king. Sales numbers year after year support this, and there are plenty of reasons to cook on a quality gas grill. Most notably is the convenience. With the turn of a knob, your grill is ready to go. Unlike charcoal grills that use airflow through intake and exhaust vents to control temperature, gas grills achieve this by introducing more or less gas into a burner when the knob is turned. When you're done cooking on a gas grill, you simply turn it off. No excessive ash cleanup, no extended cool-down period— it's literally like using the gas range top in your kitchen ... kinda.

Gas grills do come with some drawbacks, though. Charcoal purists would say the flavor from a gas grill is never as good as that from a charcoal grill. I don't buy into this completely, especially for things like burgers, hot dogs, and thinner cuts of meat. The kinds of foods that people cook most often aren't over charcoal long enough to take on much, if any, flavor from the coals, so in large part that's just purist talk. I like to think of myself as a realist as opposed to a purist, and realistically, a gas grill will do 95 percent of what a charcoal grill will do, while providing more convenience and requiring less cleanup. I'm convinced that I could make almost anything on my gas grill and 99 out of 100 people wouldn't be able to tell that it wasn't done on a charcoal grill.

There are some important things to consider when buying a gas grill in order to prevent wasting your money on disappointment. Unlike charcoal models, where a cheap unit will get the job done temporarily but won't last long, a cheap gas grill won't get the job done OR last long. I've tested countless budget gas grills, and most of them simply don't get hot enough to create the kind of sear that you get from charcoal. Add to that the flare-ups that happen with most budget model gas grills, and the entire experience is underwhelming and disappointing. A high-end gas grill can set you back a decent amount of scratch, but it'll last a lifetime and produce the type of heat needed for excellent food. The list of manufacturers for high-quality gas grills is short, and I've had the best performance from the Lynx grills lineup. The trident burner they offer is capable of producing heat of over 1200°F, which is more than any backyard or professional chef would need—unless they're planning to forge some metal

while their burgers are cooking. Additionally, this intense heat all but eliminates flare-ups. That said, it's also capable of very low temperatures for grilling delicate things like fish. It's made in America and is backed by a warranty that's second to none. Add to that the versatile Lynx lineup, and you can outfit an outdoor kitchen that would fit just fine into an *Architectural Digest* spread.

THE BARREL COOKER

Barrel cooking has been around for many, many years, but it has only recently become popular in the mainstream. Initially, these smokers were built by do-it-yourselfers making use of old 55-gallon drums and were dubbed Ugly Drum Smokers or UDSs. While many still make use of 55-gallon drums today, the UDS has been refined over the years, and now there are a number of manufacturers that build out-of-the-box-ready drum smokers at price points ranging from sub \$200 on the low end to about \$800 for a premium model.

Barrel cookers are used primarily for smoking, but some can also be used for grilling in the right configuration. What makes these cookers unique is the way meat is placed in the barrels. Aside from the traditional placement on a wire rack, barrel cookers also allow users to hang food from hooks inside the barrel for a nice smoke bath. The hanging method accomplishes two goals: First, by hanging vertically as opposed to sitting horizontally, the capacity of the cooker is greatly increased. It wouldn't be difficult to hang sixteen racks of pork spare ribs in a full-sized barrel cooker. Second, and equally (if not more) important, is the effect the juices dripping on the coals has. The food hangs high enough above the coals

so as not to burn, but when the juices drip onto the coals, they create steam, which helps cook and infuse flavor into the meat. Beyond that, it's just a fun way to cook! I use this style of cooker all the time at tailgate events, and the crowd is always mesmerized by this method.

I've used all kinds of barrel smokers, and the budget-friendly brands work well, some being built better than others, which leads to a longer service life. For someone who is serious about the craft of barrel smoking, I'd suggest investing in a higher-end model. Both Gateway Drum Smokers and Hunsaker Smokers make top-shelf barrel cookers that will last a long, long time and have plenty of capacity. Hunsaker may get a slight advantage for its vortex fire box, but Gateway offers the option of having it custom painted, which can also be fun. Really, you can't go wrong with either unit, both made in America.

The downside of the barrel cooker is that while it can be used for grilling, that's not its main purpose, so doing a burger or steak isn't as easy as it is with other types of grills. If your main interest is smoking meat, while only occasionally grilling, this might be a great option. On the other hand, if your main interest is grilling, this probably isn't the right type of cooker for you.

THE PELLET GRILL

With the help of clever marketing, widespread availability, and ease of use, pellet grilling has gained popularity at the pace of a stock car circling a NASCAR super speedway. Though it is similar to a gas grill, "purists" discount this style grill because

it doesn't use charcoal or wood—or even gas. Instead, it uses compressed wood pellets to generate heat and smoke. This type of grill has truly broadened the field of users who enjoy and excel at outdoor cooking.

The grill requires electricity to run an auger that feeds wood pellets to an igniter. Unlike other grills that use a vent system or gas valve to control temperature, the pellet grill generally has a touch pad or dial to select the desired temperature, and the grill then essentially operates like an indoor oven, only outdoors. Set and forget is the concept, and people have definitely embraced it. Pricing on these units ranges dramatically, and there is no shortage of suppliers for these grills. Going cheap on one of these may not be advisable, given the number of moving parts and opportunities for failure, so consider spending a little extra for a higher-end model. Companies like Yoder Smokers and Green Mountain Grills make extremely well-built products. Similar to the barrel cooker, the downside to these units is their poor grilling performance. Most manufacturers will claim that their pellet grill can both smoke and sear, and that may be technically true—depending on your idea of what searing is. The bottom line is that these units make much better smokers than grills.

BASIC EQUIPMENT

So you've bought a grill—now what? It may be tempting to just fire it up and start cooking, but before you do, let's get familiar with some essential tools of the trade. These pieces of equipment will help ensure you're getting the best results every time. Below is my list of basic equipment every novice

griller should invest in before turning on his or her grill. (We'll cover turning on your grill in the next section.)

ELECTRONIC LEAVE-IN THERMOMETERS

These types of units are designed to insert a probe into the meat and *leave it in* so you can monitor the internal temperature of the meat throughout the cooking cycle. They allow for the cook to closely track temperature over time to ensure a perfect doneness without over or under cooking. If you've ever dubiously poked a cut of meat on your grill wondering, *Is it done yet?*, these probes are for you. Plenty of people will tell you they don't need a thermometer because they know how to cook or they go by feel. To that I say, *good luck*. I'm not too proud to use technology in order to ensure a well-cooked piece of meat. I'll take a delicious meal over my pride any day.

Generally, these models come with two channels—and sometimes four or even six. By “channel” I mean the ability to read different temperatures at the same time, without moving a single channel probe. Having two channels allows one probe to be inserted into the meat, while the other is placed in the grill to allow for monitoring of the cooking chamber temperature. Extra channels of course mean the ability to monitor more than one piece of meat at a time, while still monitoring the temperature of the cooking chamber.

Why would you need to monitor grill temperature, since most grills come with a built-in thermometer? Good question. Here's one of the secrets of great grilling—never trust the thermometer that comes with your grill. Those analog gauges

(no matter the grill's price point) are often purchased by the grill's manufacturer from a lowest-price-point third party and are notoriously inaccurate. Also, they read temperature in the dome or lid of the grill, where they are usually mounted, not at the grill's cooking surface, where your food is located. Trust me on this one: pay no attention to those built-in grill gauges. Instead, get yourself a dependable electronic thermometer, and place one probe inside the grill near where your food will cook and another into the food to read internal food temperature.

In most cases, a two-channel will work just fine, but I recommend at least a four-channel model, and I strongly prefer a six channel. Why would you need more than two temperature readings? A couple of reasons actually. First, and most obvious, you'll often want to monitor more than one protein at a time (multiple steaks being reverse seared at once, for example). In that instance, having extra temperature probes is nice because each steak will cook at a slightly different rate. Second, extra channels are useful for cooking large cuts of meat. A brisket, for example, can weigh over 15 pounds and have varying degrees of thickness, so you may want to monitor the temperature in more than one spot. Finally, and one of my favorite uses for my six-channel FireBoard electric temperature indicator, is the ability to check my grills for hot spots. All grills have hot spots, or areas on the cooking surface that get hotter than other areas. By placing the temperature probes around a grill's cooking surface, you'll better understand how your grill behaves. Understanding your grills heat dispersion will allow you to avoid burning your food and embarrassing yourself in front of your friends. Not that I

have ever ruined a several-hundred-dollar prime rib in front of a house full of people or anything.

Nowadays, most all of these types of thermometers have some sort of app associated with them that allows for monitoring via a smart phone. Expectedly, some apps work better than others, so keep that in mind and do some research when you're selecting what's right for you. Pricing on a quality thermometer ranges from about \$70 to \$150. There are a few that I recommend. For a simple two-channel, the Thermoworks Smoke is a nice option and works well, but it's a bit overpriced in my opinion. If you want to expand your capabilities to a four-channel, I recommend the Maverick XR-50 (which is also the lowest price point of the thermometers I recommend). And, of course, the king of leave-in thermometers, which provides the most flexibility, is the budget-friendly six-channel FireBoard Labs smart thermometer.

QUICK-READ THERMOMETER

In contrast to the probe-style of thermometer, the quick-read version is not left in during the cooking process. Instead, this style of probe is inserted briefly into the food, and within a couple of seconds you'll have an accurate reading of your food's internal temperature. This tool is what I would consider a must-have for all cooks at every level. It's very versatile and very dependable. My only regret is that my dad didn't have one of these when he grilled hockey pucks throughout my childhood—he told us they were hamburgers, but I promise they met all NHL regulations. Dad did most everything exceptionally well, but grilling wasn't one of them. In any case,

do yourself a favor and buy one of these gadgets ASAP. Your family and anyone you cook for will thank you.

A quality instant-read thermometer runs about \$100 and will read temperature in less than three seconds. Why not just use the leave-in style? Fair question—the answer is that the wires and the thickness of the probes often don't lend themselves to thinner steaks or burgers that might be flipped often. In those cases, the quick read is the better option. I've used a number of them over the years and have had the best luck with the Thermoworks Mk4, a terrific value.

TONGS

Tongs are absolutely essential for grilling, as you can imagine. The problem is that there are so many on the market that choosing which one to buy can be a bit daunting. Sadly, most of the sets you find are flawed in some way. The most common problems are sturdiness and ergonomics. When looking for tongs, find yourself a pair that is long enough that you don't burn your hand when turning meat, has a strong enough spring to operate the action effectively, and fits your hand. I wouldn't recommend the cheapo tongs you find online. Spend a couple extra bucks for a quality set that will last for years. When I say "extra" I'm not talking about much; for about \$15 you can get a great set of tongs that work well and will last a long time. I've had great luck with the OXO brand, but there are plenty others that do the job as well. What's most important to remember is to use tongs when turning your meat, and *never* use those ridiculous pronged BBQ forks. As you penetrate your meat with these forks, you are releasing the juices from the meat, and that's a no-no.

SMOKE TUBE

For those gas grillers out there, these tubes can be your best friend. One of the biggest knocks on gas grills is that they don't produce the flavor that you get from a wood-fired or charcoal grill. That opinion is debatable to be sure, but a smoke tube can certainly help to bridge that gap. These devices house wood chips or compressed wood pellets and slowly burn them, producing a nice clean smoke to fill your grill and provide that smoky flavor for just about anything you have on your gas grill. Steaks, fish, and so on will all benefit from a smoke tube, assuming a smoky profile is something you desire. These tubes usually run around \$15 and come in various sizes from various manufacturers. Of course, some work better than others, but for the most part they're all very similar in design. I've used the A-MAZE-N tubes with great success, but there are plenty of others that work just as well.

WOOD CHUNKS

For many of my recipes, you'll see me reference the addition of wood chunks to the coals. You'll notice I recommend placing the wood chunks on top of the hot coals in my recipes, which is great for a hint of smoke flavor. For a more robust smoke flavor, closer to a traditional BBQ profile, try placing the wood chunks deep in a bed of unlit charcoal and topping with some hot charcoal. The purpose is obviously to introduce a nice smoke flavor to the food you're cooking, but don't mistake chunks for chips. Both are pretty readily available, but the chips burn up very quickly and don't perform as well as the chunks.

You'll also read in various places that you should soak wood chunks in water before using them; the idea is that a wet chunk will smolder longer. While the concept makes sense, in practice it's sort of a myth. Soaking a wood chunk for even several hours doesn't really do much because the water simply doesn't penetrate deep enough. So save the time and hassle, and don't bother with that practice. It's also important to remember not to get too carried away with the amount of wood chunks you use. In most cases, one or two chunks is plenty. If it starts to look like you upended a wood chipper into your grill, it's time to stop. For an entertaining story about how I learned that lesson, read the blog post on my website, grillseeker.com, called "How Not to Smoke a Brisket."

GRILL BASKET

While maybe not a must-have, a grill basket is certainly nice to have. I grill a lot of vegetables, and without a basket, they tend to fall through the grill grates and burn to a crisp, creating a mess you'll have to clean up later. The baskets come in various shapes, some have handles and others don't, and they are similar to a colander with slightly bigger holes. This allows your veggies (or spaghetti, see my recipe for that on [page 97](#)) to cook over the grill without the food falling through the grate. Pricing on these ranges from \$17 to \$70, which is a big swing. I wouldn't spend \$70 on one of these personally and don't recommend you do either. This is one of those items that I recommend buying a low-cost model and simply replacing it when needed. Properly maintained, even the cheap versions should last several years. Do yourself a favor and give your basket a quick spray of cooking spray before cooking anything in it, as food tends to stick to these.

TECHNIQUES

You've got your grill, you've got your basic equipment, and you've got your meat—it's finally time to start cooking.

Almost.

Before you fire anything up, let's go over the basic techniques that will help you keep your dinners delicious and avoid the unfortunate shoe-leather phase so many grillers go through. Don't worry—I'll talk you through it.

LIGHTING YOUR CHARCOAL GRILL

Let's get started with the basics: lighting your grill. Lighting a gas model is simple and usually done by the turn of the knob. This convenience is one of the most attractive parts of a gas grill. Lighting a charcoal grill can be a bit more challenging for a first timer, and some have even said they are intimidated by it. No need for intimidation! This is a simple process that even the most inexperienced griller can master in no time. First things first: never use lighter fluid. Lighter fluid leaves a chemical taste on your food, even after it's burned off the charcoal, and if you use a ceramic grill, that fluid will penetrate the porous ceramic and your food will forever taste like gasoline.

Having established the no-lighter-fluid standard, I recommend three different techniques for lighting charcoal. The first is done using a charcoal chimney, which can be purchased for around \$20. This tool allows you to dump charcoal into the chimney's top half while using old newspaper or junk mail in the bottom of the chimney as an ignition source. Light the

paper, and within minutes, the coals are ready to go. Simply dump them into the grill, and you're all set. There are some drawbacks to this method, including the sparks that often jump out as the lit coals are being dumped into the grill. There is also the issue of where to set the extremely hot chimney down after you dump the coals into the grill. I don't recommend these for those who have a composite deck, as the sparks that jump from the chimney can often melt the composite surface.

The next option is an electric lighter, like the Looftlighter. Looftlighter was the original electric lighter, but it's been knocked off many times by other manufacturers. This device uses extremely hot air to light your lump or briquettes. Using the Looftlighter or a similar lighter will allow you to pour the unlit charcoal into the grill (preventing the sparks that happen with the chimney method) and light the coals within minutes. Like the chimney, this method has some drawbacks. As mentioned, this is an electric lighter, so if you don't have an outlet near your grill, the lighter is unusable. There's always the extension cord option, but I'm a realist and understand that most people are not going to want to go to that effort.

The final option I recommend is a small fire starter that can be purchased online and in some retail stores. Using this method allows the unlit charcoal to be poured into the grill, again avoiding the sparks from the chimney because the charcoal is not yet lit. There are several different types of fire starters—though many are chemical based, and I don't recommend those for the same reason I don't recommend lighter fluid. Instead, I prefer to use the natural starters that are made of

wood shavings and resemble small bird nests. These things work extremely well but can get expensive over time. They can be purchased for about 40 cents each—which isn't terrible, but the cost can add up if you grill frequently.

TWO-ZONE COOKING

Now that we know how to light the coals, let's talk about how to set up the grill. One of the most common mistakes among novice outdoor cooks is setting up the grill with an even distribution of coals over the entire grill and cooking their food solely over direct heat. It's comparable to cooking a meal on a stovetop burner using only the highest setting. On a grill, cooking exclusively over super-hot direct heat leads to flare-ups and food that is often overcooked on the outside and undercooked on the inside or—even worse—overcooked on the outside AND inside. Remember those hockey puck burgers I mentioned my dad turning out? That's a result of trying to cook a burger all the way through using direct heat.

For roughly 90 percent of what the typical backyard cook is going to make on the grill, there should be two separate areas of heat established in the grill. This is commonly referred to as *two-zone heating*, and it's one of the fundamentals of grilling. Just as the name implies, there are two zones: a very hot direct zone just above the heat source (coals on a charcoal grill or flames on a gas grill) and a cooler indirect zone away from the heat source. In the direct zone, conduction heat transfer is used for fast cooking and searing. In the indirect zone, convection heating is used and acts more like an oven to slowly raise the temperature of the food.

With a two-zone setup, burgers that could be used in a Stanley Cup game are a thing of the past. In most of the grilling recipes in this book, your cooking should happen over indirect heat. This allows slow cooking of your meat—for your entire burger, steak, chop, and so on to gradually and evenly come up to the desired temperature. Additionally, you'll avoid those flare-ups and overcooking the outside of the meat. For the most part, but not always, direct heat will only be used at the very end of your cook in order to get that nice char that looks beautiful and adds an intense amount of flavor to whatever you're serving.

To set up your charcoal grill for two-zone cooking, pile all of your coals on one side of the grill; this will be the direct heat, or hot zone. The other side will have no coals and will be your indirect heat, or cool zone. For a gas grill, only light half of the burners and leave the other half turned off to form hot and cool zones.

Now that you have your grill set up for two-zone heat, the last step before you start cooking is to find out the temperature of your cool zone using one of the recommended thermometers we discussed earlier.

DIRECT HEAT

Just as the name applies, direct heat is that heat directly above the hot coals on a charcoal grill, or the lit burners on a gas model. This is the area of the grill that's the hottest. It's used for searing the outside of meats and vegetables through conduction heating and for cooking hot and fast in the case of thin cuts of meat. Be careful of flare-ups that are prone to

happen when cooking directly over the heat source. As the fats or oils render and drip onto the flame, they can flare up like lighter fluid. (Important note: As stated earlier, I don't advocate using lighter fluid, ever).

INDIRECT HEAT

Just the opposite of direct heat, indirect heat is convection heating, which is used for most larger cuts of meat by placing the food away from the direct heat zone to allow for a gradual increase in internal temperature. Many of the recipes in this book call for starting with indirect heat and finishing with direct heat. Find more on that method in the reverse sear section below. The bottom line: indirect heat is like making your grill into an outdoor oven, while direct heat is like making your grill into an outdoor stove burner.

REVERSE SEAR

You'll see me reference this technique often throughout this book because it's really the basic foundation of cooking any thick cut of meat. With this method, you'll be able to achieve the flavors and appearances of food purchased at high-end restaurants.

Most people start with the searing process; I couldn't disagree more with that technique for most meats. Searing first "to lock in the juices" can leave you with gray overcooked edges on your steak and an undercooked, raw middle. Try cooking a boneless skinless chicken breast using only direct heat; it will be, in a word, terrible. In order to get the center of the meat to a safe eating temperature, you have to dry out the outside of the meat, creating a piece of drywall where poultry once was.

By using the reverse sear technique, you'll end up with even doneness throughout your steak, chicken, or pork. If you master this, every bite of your protein will be perfection—a slight crunch from the crust on the outside while the center of the meat still melts in your mouth.

Reverse searing is achieved by placing your food over indirect heat to start and then moving it to direct heat to finish the cooking process—reversing the typical searing method. Doing so allows the inside of the meat to gradually rise to desired temperature so that the doneness is uniform from edge to edge. Then, at the end of the process, the meat is introduced to extremely high temperatures of direct heat to produce a char on the outside that packs a ton of flavor due to the Maillard reaction. For a greater explanation of the Maillard reaction, see my blog post about it on grillseeker.com.



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