



## Time to break out the grill again

Comments

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By MISHA DAVENPORT Sun-Times News Group

Ah, Memorial Day weekend. A time when man pulls the cover off the grill with a primitive grunt and, after a winter of hibernation, rediscovers the ability to cook.

Rick Gresh, executive chef of David Burke's Primehouse, 616 N. Rush, credits both his parents for igniting his culinary passion, but like many homes, his father ruled over the grill while Gresh was growing up in Cleveland.

"He would cook these great hamburgers, hot dogs, a slow-roasted pork shoulder, basically anything he felt like cooking," Gresh says.

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Start with a butcher you know and trust, advises Rick Gresh, executive chef of David Burke's Primehouse in Chicago. But how dark you char the meat is a matter of personal choice, though most people prefer a deep, golden brown to their grill marks.

(Sun-Times News Group)

Gresh carries on the grilling traditions from his father with his own unique and innovative grilled meats, fruits and vegetables.

He gave us a Grilling 101 lesson. Listen up -- here's what we learned. Gas vs. charcoal

"There are basically two kinds of grills: gas and charcoal," Gresh says. "Both produce different flavors and have their positives and negatives."

Gas heats both quicker and more evenly, perfect for nights when you come home late from work and want to fire up and quickly cook a few chops or steaks.

Unfortunately, gas doesn't provide any additional flavor to what you cook and almost makes the use of a good meat rub essential (aged meat also packs a lot of flavor).

Charcoal grill cooking brings a lot of flavor to things, but meats with a lot of fat in them are more risky over a charcoal grill. Be sure to trim any excess fat and also keep a spray bottle with water handy to control any flare-ups. Adding chips

If you add wood chips to your charcoal, keep the lid closed while you're cooking, Gresh says.

"You want the meat to capture the flavor of the smoke," he says.

If using smoking chips, you also want to make sure you start with a relatively dry piece of meat. Skip the marinades, rubs and oils.

"If you want smoke to attach to the meat you are cooking, you need to have a drier surface for the smoke to adhere to, otherwise that flavor will just run off," Gresh explains.

Choosing your protein

Start with a butcher you know and trust.

"If you're cooking beef, you want a cut that is beautifully marbled. When grilling, you never want a piece that is red as red can be," Gresh says. "Try to avoid big clumps of fat. The more dispersed the fat is, the better it will be."

For seafood, Gresh says to avoid anything that actually smells like a fish.

"The ideal fish should smell very clean and almost crisp," he says. The flip side

It's also important not to overload the grill.

"Don't cover every square inch or you will have nowhere to flip your meat to," he says. "You want to move it to another area of the grill upon flipping because the meat has already absorbed most of the heat from the spot where you were grilling it."

Gresh also says it's easy to know when to turn your meat.

"If it's sticking to the grill, let it sit," he says. "If you have to scrape it, it isn't ready. Let it sit a few more minutes and then give it a turn."

How dark you char the meat is a matter of personal choice, though most people prefer a deep, golden brown to their grill marks.

"Some people prefer grill marks that are golden, indicating the caramelization of the meat," he says. "The blacker the line, the more bitter." A matter of degrees

Use a thermometer to test the internal temperature of your meat.

"Don't overstab or stab on the end," Gresh advises. "Place the thermometer as close to the middle as possible and remember that meat will be less cooked at the bone."

In Gresh's kitchen, beef hits medium rare between 130 to 135 degrees, while medium is 140 to 145 degrees and well done is 160.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's recommended temperatures differ, by USDA standards, 150 degrees means medium rare. (Go to [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov) for a complete list of recommended safe temperatures.)

The USDA says pork should be cooked to 160 degrees but can be pulled from the grill once the temperature hits 155 (the meat will continue to cook while the meat is resting).

Let it rest

And speaking of resting, Gresh says it is an important step in grilling.

"Never, ever eat something right off the grill," he says. "Meats in particular need 5 to 10 minutes of rest before serving."

And don't be afraid to use your grill for things other than meat.

"I even do a grilled pizza at home at least once a week," he says. "I cook the pizza dough like naan, then move it to the top of the grill to finish off cooking with my choice of cheese and toppings."

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