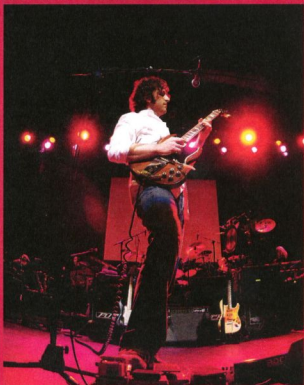


Greater New Orleans Living

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BUSINESS • HEALTH NEWS • CELEBRITY • DINING OUT • FACES AND PLACES



Grilled to Perfection

Five tips for a healthful barbecue

By Molly Kimball

There's no easier way to host a summertime party: Heat up the grill, ask your friends to bring their favorite food and sit back and enjoy. Not only is it super simple, but it can also be super healthy.



Tip #1 Think Outside the Box

The chicken box, that is. It's too easy to get poultry burnout with boneless, skinless chicken breasts. To spice things up, incorporate other lean protein options like pork loin, center-cut chops, lamb sirloin and filet mignon. Experiment with the wide variety of low-fat chicken sausages available; pineapple-bacon and olive-artichoke are two of my personal favorites. Prawns and scallops are also *delish* on the grill. Because they are low in fat, they're easy to overcook, so be extra careful.

Tip #2 Soak It

Using unique marinades is another way to add your own touch to a summertime cookout without adding significant fat or calories. Marinades with acidic ingredients (think lemon juice, vinaigrettes, Worcestershire sauce) help to tenderize the meat, as well as add flavor. The tenderizing benefit is only skin-deep, however. It only soaks into the outer 1/4 inch, so be sure that the marinade covers the entire surface of the meat. It also helps to make several shallow cuts in the meat before marinating to allow the liquid to soak in further.

Tip #3 Get Your Five-a-Day

Add veggies to your grilling repertoire. You don't have to worry about overcooking vegetables—they're practically foolproof. Marinated vegetables will caramelize when grilled, resulting in completely different flavors and textures than you get with steamed veggies. Try the standard onions, mushrooms,

asparagus, red and yellow peppers, zucchini and squash. Tired of these? Venture out with beets and turnips. They're shockingly tasty when cubed and grilled with just a bit of olive oil, sea salt and fresh ground black pepper.

Tip #4 Get Your Five-a-Day (cont'd)

Create the perfect ending to a summertime barbecue with scrumptious fruit kabobs as a light, refreshing dessert. Try skewered pineapple and strawberries, cantaloupe and honeydew. Brush with a bit of honey or drizzle a balsamic reduction to enhance the fruits' natural flavors. The only rule to bear in mind is to use fruits that will withstand the heat and be firm enough not to dissolve into a soggy mess.

Tip #5 Cut Your Risk of Cancer

When meats are cooked at high temperatures, substances form on the meat's surface that are linked to an increased risk of multiple types of cancer. These compounds particularly come from the smoke that's formed when fat drips from meat onto the grill. Fortunately, we can limit the formation of these compounds with our first four tips: Use leaner meats (trim excess fat), grill more fruits, more veggies and incorporate marinades. Adding marinades can also reduce the formation of these cancer-causing substances. You can minimize the development of these compounds by grilling meats on sheets of aluminum foil—just make small holes so that any fats can drain. Turning the meat frequently on the grill is also key to reducing the buildup of carcinogens.

Beat the Heat

Water isn't the only liquid that will help stave off dehydration



I work outdoors and was wondering, as the temperatures continue to climb, what, in addition to drinking lots of water, can I do to prevent dehydration?

Robert • Metairie



Hi, Robert,

Wow, working outside in the New Orleans heat? That's rough!

First, let's start with quantity. People often think they're drinking plenty of liquids, but often they still don't consume enough to meet their needs. To figure out how much fluid you need, simply divide your body weight by two. This is your fluid baseline, the minimum number of ounces you need to stay hydrated on a typical day. If you're losing a lot of sweat, however, you'll need to take in even more fluids. How do you know how much more? Step on the scale before and after working outdoors. For every pound of sweat lost, you'll need to take in an additional 16 ounces, above and beyond your baseline fluid needs.

Anything without alcohol or caffeine counts toward your fluid needs. So in addition to water, you can also reach for sports drinks, lemonade, fruit

juices, milk, chocolate milk, or decaffeinated iced tea. Just be mindful of a beverage's sugar content if weight is a concern.

Now moving on to electrolytes. Our sweat is not simply water. We also lose potassium, sodium, magnesium and calcium when we have heavy sweat losses, so at least some of your fluid replacement options should provide these electrolytes. Electrolytes are essential for proper muscle function and water balance. Suboptimal electrolyte replenishment can lead to muscle cramping, muscle soreness, impaired rehydration and, at the greatest extreme, heart failure.

Incorporating sports drinks will do the trick (there's also a wide range of sugar-free sports drinks available). You can also try diluted fruit juices. If these aren't appealing, try incorporating a nutrition bar into your day. Most will provide a good bit of these four main electrolytes.

Be well,

Molly

Please write or email your questions or comments to molly@livingneworleans.com. We'd love to hear from you.