



The Be Fit Minute

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With barbeque season upon us, it can be tempting to go a little overboard with cheeseburgers and hot dogs. To stay fit this summer, introduce some variety to your grill and opt for the lean choices listed below.



BEEF GRILLING TIPS

- Look for “loin”: cuts of meat that end with the word “loin” are lean (such as top loin, tenderloin, and sirloin) and come from the tender part of the meat, so they’re perfect for grilling.
- Tenderize: some lean cuts are not naturally tender and need to be marinated prior to grilling. Marinate cuts like flank steak, shoulder steak, and top and bottom round in oil and vinegar or citrus juice a few hours before grilling.
- Slim down your burger: when buying ground beef, aim for at least 93% lean. Don’t be fooled by packaging that markets 80% lean beef: it’s the same as saying “20% fat.”

Take-away: Beef is an excellent source of protein, iron, and B vitamins, but try to limit it to fewer than two times per week. Whenever possible, choose the leaner options listed above.

POULTRY GRILLING TIPS



- Make kabobs: mix up grilled chicken by adding savory peppers and onions, or even some pineapple, to skewers. You can also marinate your chicken in barbeque or teriyaki sauce and then build a healthy skewer by adding a variety of fruits and veggies.
- Avoid dried out meat: put a little fat and flavor inside of the meat by buying bone-in chicken breasts. Cut a slit in the chicken with a knife and drizzle a little olive in the incision. If cooking with boneless breasts, try pounding the meat into thinner pieces so they cook quickly and evenly.
- Watch the wording with ground turkey: when you use quality lean turkey instead of ground beef, you can save about 200 calories, 7 grams of fat, and 4 grams of saturated fat! Just make sure to buy “ground turkey breast,” since commercially prepared turkey burgers are often made with dark meat and skin and contain more fat and calories.

Take-away: Poultry is a great lean protein source but go easy on the sauce: ½ cup of barbeque sauce packs an additional 95 calories and 1000 mg of sodium.

FISH & SHELLFISH GRILLING TIPS



- Oil the grate: coat your grill grate well with oil so that the fish doesn’t stick to it. Or try grilling in foil (this is an especially good option for lighter white fish that can fall apart on the grill).
- Marinate with fresh flavors: marinate fish in fresh-squeezed lemon juice and sprinkle on some herbs such as oregano, cilantro, and garlic for a light, refreshing summer meal.
- Don’t forget shellfish: shrimp, clams, and scallops can all be grilled. Try marinating shrimp in fresh herbs and Dijon mustard or season with fresh ginger, garlic, sesame oil, and a dash of low-sodium soy sauce. When grilling with scallops, choose larger sea scallops for a meatier texture. Grilled clams are super easy: put the clams directly on your grate over the hot fire and as soon as the shells pop open, they’re done.

Take-away: Fish is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which can help fight inflammation and keep our heart at its healthiest. Aim for two servings of fish each week.

FRUIT & VEGETABLE GRILLING TIPS



- Make a mushroom burger: brush a Portobello mushroom with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill for 5-6 minutes on each side until just cooked through. Serve it on a whole grain bun with lettuce, tomato, low-fat cheese, and avocado slices.
- Don’t shy away from fruit: stone fruits (like peaches, plums, and apricots) are great for the grill. To grill peaches, cut each peach in half and remove the pit. Toss the halves with a splash of vanilla extract, almond extract, and a pinch of brown sugar. Grill skin side down until skin is slightly charred. Turn and grill on the other side until you get nice grill marks.

Take-away: Current research indicates that mushrooms may help maintain a healthy immune system. Moreover, consuming a diet rich in fruit and vegetables may help fight infection and reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease.