

## Barbequing: An American Tradition

No matter if it is the 4th of July, or just another day in the summer, chances are someone in your area is barbequing. Barbequing has become a standard American tradition for families. The reason as clear as to why, not only does the food that comes from barbequing have a taste that is unmatched by other cooking methods, but barbequing presents a reason for families to gather together. Some of my most memorial experiences happened outdoors at one of my families many get-togethers.

### Planning A Barbeque

First, no barbeque would be complete without guests and proper outdoors weather. Plan ahead of time, checking with your potential guests for scheduling conflicts and issues. Finding a date and time that is suitable for everyone should not be too hard as long as you give everyone enough advanced notice. Alternatively, be sure to check the weather for that type of year. If you live in a climate that cannot be predicted, then you may want to have a backup plan just in case unusual weather comes. You cannot predict things like rain and thunderstorms ahead of time, but you can make sure that you hold your barbeque during the time of year that will be pleasant to your guests. A barbeque in cold weather may hold more negative memories of trying to keep warm rather than good memories of family and friends.

Barbequing has been around since early cavemen figured out that food tasted great after being cooked on an open fire. Perhaps one of the main memories attached to a family barbeque is what was on the menu that day. Barbequing opens a whole array of types of foods available. The type of foods you serve should largely depend on your crowd and the event in which you are celebrating. With the wide range of possibilities, you are sure to find at least a few items that will please your crowd.

Make sure that you prepare ahead for your barbeque. 12 to 24 hours before you plan on beginning the party, make sure to thaw, prepare, and marinate the meat you will be cooking. Once you have the meat stored away, soaking up the marinade, then you must start thinking about what types of side dishes you will be having. If you want a completely traditional barbeque, you may want to stick with traditional sides. Traditional barbeque sides include potatoes and potato salad, baked beans, and coleslaw. Your traditional condiment bar should include pickles, relish, and onions. These foods are typically served at barbeques because they are easy to prepare and store until the event happens. You may want to cook other items, but any barbeque is complete with just the items listed above.

A themed barbeque may present more opportunities to hold a festive event. With a themed event, you can splurge on the atmosphere and decorations. Matching tablecloths, napkins, and plates can be found at any local store. You can also match your décor to the party. For example, a luau could simply be creative colored utensils, leis, and Tiki torches, all of which are extremely cheap. You can even reuse the Tiki torches later!

Your party area should be set up before guest arrive. It only takes a few minutes to get everything ready, but the reaction you get from your arriving guests may make you feel like you were preparing and decorating all day. Depending on the situation, you may or may not want to have the food already cooking on the grill. The smell will surely be inviting if you start cooking ahead!

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