

Try Adding Some Fruits and Vegetables to Your Grilling Menu

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Summer grilling is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and have healthful, flavorful meals. Fruits and vegetables add color, texture, flavor and nutrition without adding many calories. Grilling adds a smoky flavor and caramelizes natural sugars to enhance sweetness.

Most people shortchange themselves on fruits and vegetables. Eating more fruits and vegetables can reduce your risk for cancer and heart disease. Fruits and vegetables also add fiber to your diet, a component that many adults and children lack.

Tools of Grilling

The most common types of grills are gas, charcoal and infrared. You also can grill in the oven or on the stovetop with correct equipment. You may need tongs, baskets, skewers, brushes and spatulas.

■ Outdoor Grills

The three major types of grills used for outdoor grilling are propane or gas grills, charcoal or barbecue grills, and infrared or electric grills (less common). For all grills, read the owners manual for tips on cooking, cleaning and maintaining your grill. Also, be sure to refer to the temperature settings for your particular type of grill. Controlling the temperature is important for all grilling practices.

■ Stovetop and Oven “Grilling”

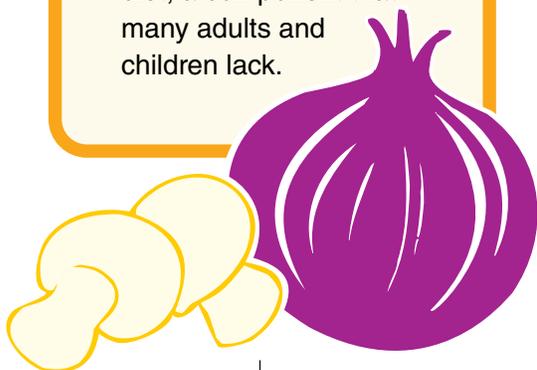
Special heavy pans have grill-type grates that allow you to get nicely grilled fruits and vegetables without having to go outside. You also can use a broiler pan in the oven, but avoid using your oven’s broil setting because grilling heat comes from below, not above.

Grilling Temperatures

Grilling can provide direct or indirect heat. Direct heat means food is grilled directly above heat. Indirect heat means the food is not directly above heat but still is being heated.

Here’s an example of indirect heating on a two-burner gas grill: Turn the right-side burner off and place aluminum foil down as the cooking surface for the food, then turn on the left-side burner. The heat is not directly below the food being cooked.

- Low = below 250 F (not recommended for grilling most fruits or vegetables)
- Medium = 325 to 375 F
- Medium-high = 375 to 450 F
- High = above 450 F (not recommended for grilling fruits or vegetables)



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Grilling Tips and Ideas

- Rinse produce and prepare for grilling. Remove the stems, seeds and cores from fruits and vegetables before grilling.
- When preparing whole fruits or vegetables, cut them into slices unless otherwise specified.
- Prepare bell peppers by cutting off the top and bottom of the pepper. Remove the core and then cut the pepper in half from top to bottom. (This way, you end up with two flat rectangles that are grilled skin side down.)
- When using skewers, choose vegetables and fruits of like thickness and water content. Cut them the same size to ensure even cooking.
- Use separate plates and utensils for raw meats and fruits or vegetables to prevent cross-contamination.
- Take your time and be patient. You may think you are burning something and remove it before it is done. Follow recipes and remember, grilling can be trial and error.
- Sprinkle wedges of apple or pear with cinnamon and a touch of brown sugar. Grill for about five minutes per side.
- Brush peeled, whole bananas with canola or sunflower oil and add to the grill just until the fruit turns golden and has grill marks, or about five minutes per side.
- For a fun alternative to the summer classic s'mores, cut a ¾-inch-deep slit down the length of an unpeeled banana. Pry the slit open and stuff with 2 tablespoons of chopped dark chocolate or your favorite candy bar. Wrap the banana in foil and grill for about five minutes on each side.
- Grill peaches and nectarines for a side dish to go with steak or pork tenderloin. After cooking, the fruit can be diced and made into a salsa or relish by adding fresh herbs, chili peppers and lime juice or vinegar.

Grill Some Fruits and Vegetables

The following information provides approximate times to grill various vegetables and fruits. Use a grilling basket for the smaller items. Brush vegetables lightly with your favorite oil and add some seasonings as desired. Try grilled fruit as a tasty side dish or dessert.

Table 1. Approximate Grilling Times for Fruits

Vegetable	Grilling Time	Type of Heat
Apples	Whole, 35 to 40 minutes	direct heat
	½-inch slices, four to six minutes	indirect heat
Apricots	Halved, pit removed, six to eight minutes	direct heat
Bananas	Halved lengthwise, six to eight minutes	direct heat
Cantaloupes	Wedges, six to eight minutes	direct heat
Peaches and nectarines	Halved, pit removed, eight to 10 minutes	direct heat
Pears	Halved lengthwise, eight to 10 minutes	direct heat
Pineapple	Peeled, cored and cut into ½-inch-thick rings or 1-inch-thick wedges, five to 10 minutes	direct heat
	Cubed one-inch by one-inch four to five minutes	
Strawberries	Whole, four to five minutes	direct heat

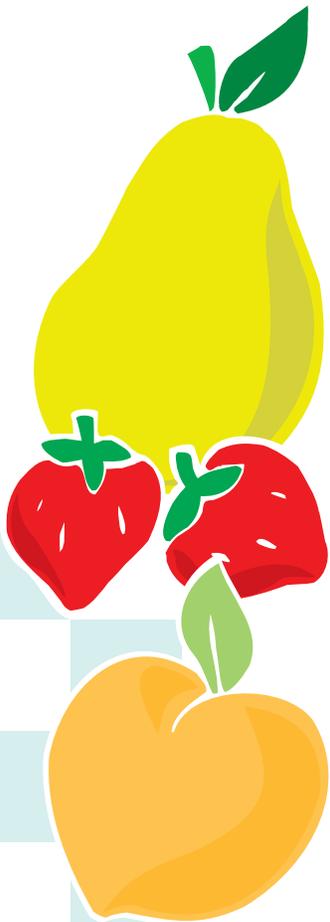




Table 2. Approximate Grilling Times for Vegetables

Vegetable	Grilling Time	Type of Heat
Asparagus	Six to eight minutes	direct heat
Bell peppers	Whole, 10 to 12 minutes Halved or quartered, six to eight minutes	direct heat
Corn	Shucked, 10 to 12 minutes In husk, 25 to 30 minutes	direct heat
Eggplant	½-inch slices, eight to 10 minutes Halved, 12 to 15 minutes	direct heat
Green beans	Eight to 10 minutes	direct heat
Green onions	Whole, three to four minutes	direct heat
Onions	Whole (do not peel), 45 to 50 minutes Halved, 35 to 40 minutes ½-inch slices, eight to 12 minutes	direct heat indirect heat direct heat
Leeks	14 to 16 minutes	direct heat
Mushrooms	Shiitake or button, eight to 10 minutes Portobello, 12 to 15 minutes	direct heat
Potatoes	Slices, ½-inch, 14 to 16 minutes New potatoes, halved, 20 to 25 minutes Whole potatoes, 45 minutes to one hour, indirect heat	direct heat direct heat indirect heat
Romaine lettuce	whole head halved, one to two minutes	direct heat
Summer squash (yellow or zucchini)	½-inch slices, six to eight minutes halved, six to 10 minutes	direct heat
Sweet potatoes	Whole, 50 to 60 minutes ¼-inch slices, eight to 10 minutes	indirect heat direct heat

For more information, see “Grill Something Different” (FN1420) from NDSU Extension at www.ag.ndsu.edu/food. Always use separate cutting boards or plates to keep fruits and vegetable separate from raw meat.

Recipes

Key to Abbreviations

tsp. = teaspoon pkg. = package
Tbsp. = Tablespoon g = grams
c. = cup mg = milligrams



(NDSU photo)

Simply Grilled Fresh Veggies

1 medium zucchini ½ Tbsp. olive oil
1 medium yellow squash Pinch of salt
1 medium red bell pepper

Preheat grill to medium heat. Wash the pepper, zucchini and yellow squash thoroughly; cut lengthwise into halves. Remove the seeds and membrane from the pepper. In a large bowl or edged baking pan, lightly brush squash, zucchini and red pepper with ½ Tbsp. olive oil. Let stand for five to 10 minutes. Grill for six to eight minutes each side. Remove from grill; slice into ½-inch slices. Add a pinch of sea salt to taste.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 40 calories, 2 g fat, 2 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 10 mg sodium.

Sweet Grilled Fruit Skewers

1 small pkg. of strawberries
1 medium pineapple (cubed 1 inch by 1 inch)
1 tsp. canola oil or olive oil
Pinch of sugar
Bamboo skewers

Soak four bamboo skewers in water for 25 to 30 minutes before use.

Preheat grill to medium heat. Wash the strawberries and the exterior of the pineapple. Cut the tops off the strawberries to remove the green leaves. Cut the top and bottom off the pineapple. Then carefully slice the skin off, remembering to core the pineapple. Finally, cube the pineapple slices. Push the fruit onto the skewers, alternating strawberry and pineapple. Lightly brush the fruit with canola oil and let stand for five to 10 minutes. Grill for six to eight minutes, carefully turning the skewers to grill all sides of the fruit. Remove when the fruit is soft and has caramelized grill marks. Top with a pinch of sugar.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 70 calories, 1.5 g fat, 1 g protein, 15 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 0 mg sodium.

Homemade Grilled Pizza Dough

Note: To save time, you can purchase store-bought pizza crust or flat bread. You can top this dough with your favorite toppings or follow the Grilled Mediterranean Pizza recipe.

3 c. whole-wheat flour (all-purpose) ½ tsp. garlic powder
1 (.25-oz.) active dry yeast packet 1 Tbsp. brown sugar (packed)
2 Tbsp. vegetable oil 1½ c. warm water
½ tsp. salt

Combine all dry ingredients and stir until mixed thoroughly. Add warm water (approximately 120 F) and oil to dry ingredients, and mix until the dough thickens. On a floured surface, knead the dough 15 to 20 times. Place the dough back in the bowl and cover with a dish towel. Let stand for 15 to 20 minutes.

Makes eight servings. Each serving has 190 calories, 4.5 g fat, 6 g protein, 35 g carbohydrate, 5 g fiber and 150 mg sodium.

Grilled Mediterranean Pizza

1 Tbsp. cornmeal
1 large zucchini
1½ Tbsp. olive oil
½ Tbsp. minced garlic
½ c. Italian blend shredded cheese
½ c. fresh mozzarella (sliced ¼ inch thick)
½ medium red onion
1½ c. cherry tomatoes (sliced)
¼ c. fresh basil or 1 Tbsp. dried (optional)
1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar (optional)
Pinch of black pepper (optional)



(NDSU photo)

Preheat grill to medium-high heat. Rinse the zucchini and red onion under cool water. Cut the zucchini into halves. Peel the onion before cutting into ¼-inch-thick rings. Cut as flat as possible to cover more surface area on the grill. In a large bowl or edged baking pan, lightly brush the onion and zucchini with ½ Tbsp. olive oil. Let stand for five to 10 minutes. Place face down on the grill for six to eight minutes each side or until tender. Remove from grill; cut into pizza-size topping. In a small bowl, mix 1 Tbsp. olive oil and ½ Tbsp. garlic.

Turn the grill to high heat. Divide the dough into four equal portions and press into 6-inch circles on a floured surface. Lightly sprinkle cornmeal on one side of each crust. Grill the non-cornmeal side down for one to two minutes until blistered. Flip the pizza crust and grill for an additional one to two minutes.

Reduce grill to medium-high heat. Remove the crust from the grill and brush the top of each one with garlic-oil mixture. Add toppings. Grill for four to five minutes or until cheese is melted or golden brown. Top with basil and black pepper, and drizzle with balsamic vinegar (optional).

Makes eight servings. Each serving has 340 calories, 15 g fat, 14 g protein, 39 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber and 230 mg sodium.

For more information about nutrition, visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/food.

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