

# Everything you wanted to know about grilling!

Ah, yes... the season of the GRILL! From tailgate parties to everyday family meals, the grill masters come out and show what they have to offer. However, just because summer and grilling are obvious pairings, that does not mean you should only show your grilling skills through burgers, steaks, hot dogs and ribs. For **great flavors, HUGE variety, and better health**...think fresh seafood. With the national government encouraging everyone to eat seafood at least twice a week, there is no better time to start than now. Seafood is naturally high in protein, a good source of omega-3 fats, and provides a number of different vitamins and minerals that are beneficial to your health.

When we say the options are endless, we mean it. Plus, grilling seafood is easy, and most definitely NOT just for the grill "masters". There are so many different seafood options to cook on the grill, as well as seasonal flavors to enhance your meals; you should never have to eat the same thing twice.

Oily fish like **Tuna, Salmon, Swordfish, Halibut and Mackerel** are great! Use steaks and fillets at least a 1/2 inch thick, or whole dressed fish. Skin on fillets work nicely too, as they will hold together well and add extra flavor. Also, don't be afraid to grill a more delicate fish like grouper, snapper, flounder, catfish, and tilapia. Simply place your seasoned fillet on a well-greased piece of foil, fold over the edges and get grilling!

Shellfish are also great selections for the grill. **Oysters, Clams, Shrimp, Lobster Tails, and Crab Legs** are all excellent and extremely tasty! Just add a little butter and you have yourself a gourmet meal.

**Grilling Planks:** Grilling with planks will not only keep your fish fillets intact, but it will give you extra flavor with a smoky aroma. To prepare a plank, pre-soak it in wine, beer, (seasoned) water or cider vinegars for at least an hour. After soaking, brush a small amount of oil on the plank to prevent sticking and place the seafood on the plank and place the plank directly on the grill. Grilling with cedar plank will give you extra variety, and extra flavor!

**Skewers:** A new spin on your traditional chicken and steak kabobs. Shrimp, scallops, salmon, tuna, swordfish, halibut and more are all excellent on traditional or cedar skewers. Simply add seasoning or marinade to your fresh seafood selection, place on the skewer as well as fresh vegetables and fruits and grill away.

**Seafood Burgers:** Put a spin on your traditional dish by substituting red meats with seafood. Craving a burger? Place a fresh seafood patty/sized fillet in a bun for a delicious seafood burger topped with fresh veggies or fruit. (We love salmon patties topped with fresh pineapple!)

Grilling seafood this time of year is all about the **SEASONAL flavors**. Cooking with fresh fruit and vegetables make an excellent addition to any seafood selection, as well as fresh spices and flavorful marinades. We also recommend cooking seafood over a bed of lemons, oranges, grapefruits or other fruit slices for additional flavor and extra moist fillets. Not only can you cook with fruits, but you can also add them as a seafood topping for a fresh citrus flavor. Here's your chance to get creative!

## GRILLING TIPS

Grilling gives a smoky flavor and crisped texture to finfish and shellfish. It works best for meatier, firmer-fleshed finfish cut in to steaks or fillets with skin. However, flakier finfish, skinless fillets, and smaller shellfish can be grilled using a grill basket.

Prepare seafood for grilling by very lightly spraying both sides of it with olive oil or vegetable oil. Once oiled, season seafood with salt and pepper. Or, marinate the seafood in your favorite combination of juice, herbs, spices and oils. Shake off excess marinade before grilling to avoid flare-ups.

If using a gas grill, begin by preheating it for at least 10 min on the highest setting with the lid closed. For charcoal grills, allow the fire to burn down so that you can comfortably hold your hand above the coals for only 2-3 seconds. Next, clean the grate by scraping it with a grill brush then wiping it with a wad of paper towels dipped in a light coating of oil (grasp the paper towels with tongs to avoid burning your fingers). Both a very hot grill and a clean grill grate will help prevent seafood from sticking.

Finfish, large shrimp, and scallops may be placed directly on the grill grates and cooked until opaque. Smaller varieties are easier to turn if placed on water-soaked wooden skewers/planks or in a grill basket. Shellfish, including mussels, clams and oysters, may be placed directly on the grill and cooked until their shells open-about five minutes. Discard any that do not open after cooking. With a little more preparation, whole lobsters, lobster tails, king crab and whole crabs may be grilled.

As a general rule, seafood steaks and whole fish will take about 10 minutes to cook for each inch of thickness. Thin fillets will take less time. If fillets have skin, place them skin side down and do not move the fish for at least two minutes to build up a crust that won't stick. If grilling smaller fillets, make a few shallow slashes through the skin, which will keep the fillet from curling as the skin cooks and shrinks.

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