



May is National Grilling Month!

Wash off the deck furniture and bring out the chairs pads. Set up the croquet course! We're headed out of the kitchen... it's grilling season!

"I can't grill fish. It always sticks, and rips when I turn it. It comes off the grill looking like mangled canned tuna!"

When it comes to grilling, this is one of the most frequent complaints I hear from my cooking students. Simple to fix. You will need a grill scraper and brush (mine has both tools on one handle), a pair of tongs, a wad of paper towel, some vegetable oil in a ramekin, and a good, thin, flexible fish spatula.

First, your grill must be hot. Don't let your significant other tell you, as mine does me, that one minute after turning on the gas grill that it is hot enough to grill. I am fortunate to have a thermometer on the front of my grill hood, so I can disabuse him of that notion with numbers (always helpful when dealing with an analytical person). It takes almost 10 minutes on HIGH for my grill to reach 500 degrees. That's where I want it to be to burn off any food left from prior use.

The additional reason you want the grill to be hot is the same one that has you heating your pan on the stovetop before browning/searing any protein. The creation of a crust on the protein allows an easy separation from the pan. If you nudge the protein and it doesn't separate easily from the pan, it's not yet ready to move. Same theory here, where the protein surface contacts the grill grates.

Second, your grill grates must be clean. After allowing the grill to reach a high temperature (see above), take your grill scraper and scrape any burnt-on crud off the grill grates. No embarrassment here... we all have crud on our grates. Scrape first with



Mary Fabrikant

the scraper; then switch to the wire brush to get all the little particles off. **Don't skip** this step or your food will have little black bits clinging to it. May 2011 Newsletter

Third, oil the grates well. Pick up your wad of paper towel with the tongs. Dip it deeply into the vegetable oil and run the oiled paper towel across the hot grill grates. Coat the grate well, making sure to hit all the areas that you plan to use. *A note about grill oil pads: Grilling stores and grilling sections of home improvement stores sell packages of pads pre-soaked with high heat grilling oil. These work well, but are more expensive than 2 sheets of paper towel and some vegetable oil. Use them if you like.*

Lastly, now that your grill is hot and oiled, **place your fish presentation side (the pretty side that will face up on the plate) down.** Immediately turn the grill down to medium and close the cover. Have a sip of wine. Relax but don't go too far away. After 3 - 4 minutes, depending on the thickness of the fish you're grilling, open the grill cover (if you have a thermometer on your grill, notice that it has gone down to ~350 - 375 degrees). Check a piece of fish that is sitting over a hot spot by lifting a corner with a fish spatula. All gas grills have hot and cold spots...learn where yours are and the battle is half won. The fish should lift off the grill grate easily, and have very sexy grill marks on it. If it does not lift easily give it one more minute with the cover closed.

Turn the fish fillets or steaks over and give'em another 4 - 5 minutes, again depending on thickness. Fish is done when it flakes or separates easily with a fork.

A note about tools: A fish spatula is one with a very thin and flexible angled blade, designed to slip easily under delicate fish, either in a pan or on the grill. It's also very useful for slipping under warm cookies on a sheet tray and flipping pancakes on Sunday morning. Invest in one, and you'll find yourself reaching for it frequently.



Fish Spatula

Orange Margarita for a Poolside Party!

Nothing says summer like a poolside party. The combination of the hot sun, cool water, sizzle of the grill and closeness of friends make it one of the most anticipated parties of the year. Whether you are grilling an exotic fish or a juicy filet, you cannot overlook the opening act. I'm talking, of course, about the perfect summer beverage.

There are thousands of options when it comes to a drink while you grill, and everyone has their own opinion. Men may tell you that this has to be beer, ranging anywhere from a local microbrew to a classic Coors. Women tend to vary their drinks and can be found grilling with a glass of Pinot Gris or sipping a Lemon Drop. So what is a host to do when preparing for a party?



Jennifer Schulte

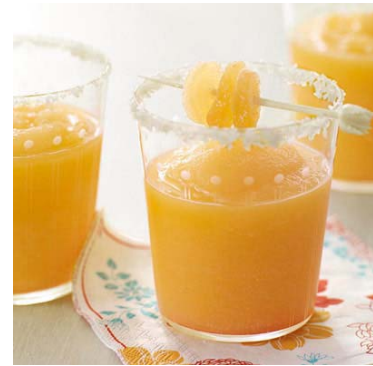
My summer cookout standby is any variation on the Margarita. Margaritas are beloved by millions and can be adapted to create your own unique recipe using a variety of nectars, purees, fruits and spices. Need more inspiration? Host a pool party "planning meeting" and try out this recipe for Orange-Ginger Margaritas!

Orange-Ginger Margaritas

Makes 6 - 8 servings

[Print this recipe](#)

- 1 can (12-ounce) frozen orange juice concentrate
- 10 ounces tequila
- 6 ounces ginger liqueur (like Domaine de Canton)
- 1 teaspoon grated ginger
- 4 cups ice
- 2 tablespoons kosher or margarita salt
- Crystallized ginger, chopped, for garnish



INSTRUCTIONS

Place frozen orange juice concentrate (reserve 2 tablespoons), tequila, ginger liqueur, ginger, and ice in a blender and mix until ice is crushed.

Place reserved juice concentrate on a small plate and salt on another small plate. Dip rims of 4 glasses in concentrate and then in salt. Fill glasses, garnish with crystallized ginger if desired, and serve.

Great Summer Salsas for Grilled Fish and Chicken

Classic Mango Salsa

Makes about 1 cup

[Print this recipe](#)

- 3 ripe mangos, peeled and diced into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 shallot, minced
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded, finely diced
- 2 tablespoons juice from 1 lime
- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Place mango in small bowl. Add remaining ingredients and toss.



Classic Mango Salsa

Tangerine-Ginger Salsa

[Print this recipe](#)

- 4 tangerines, rind and pith removed and segments cut into 1/2-inch pieces (about 1 cup)
- 1 scallion, sliced thin (about 1/4 cup)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons juice from 1 lemon
- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS

Place tangerines in fine-mesh strainer set over medium bowl and drain for 15 minutes.

Pour off all but 1 tablespoon tangerine juice from bowl; whisk in scallion, ginger, lemon juice, and oil. Stir in tangerines and season to taste with salt and pepper.



Tangerine-Ginger Salsa

Cucumber Mint Salsa

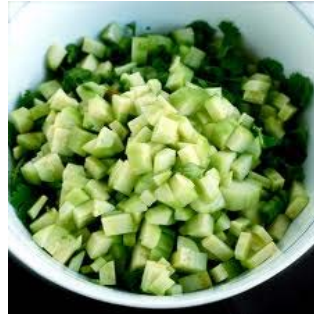
Makes about 2 cups

[Print this recipe](#)

- 1 English cucumber or 3 Kirbys , peeled, seeded, and cut into 1/4-inch dice (about 2 cups)
- 1/2 small shallot, minced (about 1 tablespoon)
- 1 serrano chile, seeds and ribs removed, minced (about 1 tablespoon)
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1 - 2 tablespoons juice from 1 lime
- Kosher Salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine cucumber, shallot, chile, mint, 1 tablespoon lime juice, and 1/4 teaspoon salt in medium bowl. Let stand at room temperature to blend flavors, 15 minutes. Adjust seasoning with additional lime juice and salt.



Cucumber Mint Salsa

Recipe of the Month

Balsamic Glazed Grilled Plums with Vanilla Ice Cream

[Print this recipe](#)

- 2 C. premium vanilla ice cream
- 1/2 C. balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tbspn. brown sugar
- 1 tspn. vanilla extract
- 1 Tbspn. lemon juice
- 1/4 tspn. black pepper
- Non-stick Cooking Spray
- 4 ripe plums



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat a grill or grill pan to high heat. Spray fruit with nonstick cooking spray to keep it from sticking and grill plums 3 minutes on each side.
2. While fruit is grilling, pour balsamic vinegar into a small pot and place pot over medium high heat. When vinegar heats to a boil, reduce vinegar by half, 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Combine sugar, vanilla and lemon juice and pepper in a small bowl. Whisk in warm balsamic vinegar.
4. Place hot, grilled fruit on dessert plates. Drizzle the balsamic glaze over fruit and serve with vanilla ice cream.

What People are Saying...

"We used Mary to cater and do event coordination for our daughter's Bat Mitzvah in November, 2010. Not only was she truly amazing in dealing with the details, hers and the other vendor's (oversized dance floor, decorations/centerpieces, color coordination), but the creativity and quality of her food, the presentation, the staff and her overall management were nothing short of outstanding. Truly an event professional and culinary artist of outstanding calibre. Did I mention that the food was delicious?"



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