

INTRODUCE  
YOURSELF TO FIVE  
GRILLING  
SENSATIONS.  
YOU'RE WELCOME.



# Grill this?!

BY JAKE LEMKOWITZ FOR USA TODAY

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Your grill is bored.

Sure, it still enjoys charring a good piece of meat. But it can do so much more. Like grilled salad for instance. Sound strange? Definitely. But getting experimental with your cookouts can have delicious results.

Now is the time to discover the incredible versatility of a grill with this list of foods that push the boundaries of typical backyard fare. Go ahead. Make your grill happy.



## ROMAINE LETTUCE

Get your greens in a grilled salad that matches romaine's healthy crunch with a distinctive smoky char. Split a head of romaine lettuce in half lengthwise, rub with olive oil, and grill until both sides are nice and blackened, about two to three minutes a side. Serve the halves whole, either slathered with rich Caesar salad dressing or simply drizzled with a little balsamic vinegar. Hearty lettuces like romaine and radicchio are great on the grill because they stand up surprisingly well to high heat. Served warm, this blows away traditional side dishes.

## PEACHES

Fruit on the grill? There's no better way to round out your barbecue. Dark grill lines on juicy peaches add a savory contrast similar to the burnt crust of a creme brulee. Choose fruit that isn't overripe, so that it has a chance to soften as it cooks. Halve and pit your peaches and cook them cut-side down for three minutes, rotating every so often to get the hashmarks you know you crave. Before taking the peaches off the grill, flip them over and brush them with some honey the same way you'd finish off a rack of ribs with barbecue sauce. In another two or three minutes, the honey will begin to caramelize and you are in business. With a scoop of vanilla ice cream, this is a serious dessert that is perfect for the end of stone-fruit season.



## OYSTERS

Grilling brings out the sweetness of good oysters, making them the ideal beach barbecue wild card. Simple, briny, and delicious. Wash the oysters under cold water and cook them covered on the grill. Nature has provided the oyster with a natural cooking thermometer: You know it's ready to eat when the shell pops open. Pry each shell off the rest of the way with a shucking knife or screwdriver, being careful not to spill any of the oyster's juices. Top each with a little herb butter or hot sauce, and enjoy. There's just something about oysters that classes up the joint, and there's nothing wrong with washing them down with cheap beer.



## AVOCADOS

Earthy, creamy avocados get infused through and through with smoky goodness on the grill. Cut your avocado in half, rub with a little oil, then cook it flesh-side down for about five minutes. Squeeze a lime over the avocado and sprinkle it with salt as soon as it comes off the grill. There's nothing else you have to do to make this taste amazing, but you can spoon some cool fresh salsa into the middle of the warm avocado half if you want to get fancy. Soft enough to eat with chips, grilled avocados are the answer for those tailgates where hand-held food is a must.



## HOMEMADE PICKLES

Making homemade pickles isn't just for little old ladies. With the help of the grill, you can quickly turn cucumbers into homemade pickles—no jars required. All you need are some pickling cucumbers, vinegar, salt, sugar, and dill. Cut the cucumbers into rounds or spears, and cook them over hot coals just long enough to get a char, about two minutes per side. Take them right off the grill and put them in a bowl with equal parts cold water and vinegar, enough to cover the cucumbers. Add three tablespoons salt, a half cup of sugar, and chopped dill to suit your taste. Place the bowl in the refrigerator. The cucumbers will absorb the flavors of the brine and transform into pickles. The longer they marinate, the more flavorful they'll be. Crisp and kissed with barbecue flavor, these are your secret weapon for building the ultimate burger or Chicago-style hot dog.



## GRILLING WITH RICH

Richard Wachtel is the founder of GrillingWithRich.com, a website devoted to mastering the art of grilling everything from bratwursts to brisket, pizza, and peppers. The site includes Wachtel's adventures, celebrity interviews, and instructional videos. USA TODAY's Allie Wright interviewed the grill master himself.

### What is your favorite thing to grill in the fall?

I take some bratwurst and soak it in a beer bath. Then I grill it for about five to 10 minutes and pour the beer in a tin foil pan. I get the flavors going with garlic and onions and then finish the brats off in kind of a steam bath for 10 to 20 minutes. It's fall, it's football season, it's great for tailgating.

### Do you have any tips on how to properly grill out-of-the-box foods, like avocados or peaches?

Cut them up. A simple way is to cut an avocado in half, putting it face down on the grill. Face down is the best way; you get nice grill marks. When grilling avocados, be very careful with the temperature.

Grilled peaches are great for desserts. What I like to do is grill pound cake with the peaches and have a layer of caramel sauce.

### Are charcoal or gas grills better for grilling?

There's a big debate about it. I think there are positives and negatives to both. Charcoal is more of a challenge. Use charcoal if you want to get more into flavors like pecan wood or apple wood. With a gas grill you taste the meat, as opposed to other added elements. Gas grills make regulating the temperature a lot easier by lowering the flame or increasing the amount of propane. Personally, I've fallen in love with charcoal.

### What is your favorite food to grill?

Pizza is a fun thing to grill. I've done three different kinds: plain vegetarian pizza with mushrooms and green pepper; half-veggie, half-pepperoni pizza with smoked sausage; and my famous Grilling with Rich BBQ Chicken Pizza. (For this recipe and more, be sure to check out GrillingWithRich.com.)