



**FOR THESE FERVENT CHEFS, THE
SIZZLING AND SEARING OF GRILLING
IS MUSIC TO THEIR EARS**

By Suzy Feine | Photography QuadPhoto

Just as quirky lyrics to a catchy tune can linger and swirl through your head for days, the smoky essence of fresh-from-the-grill meats and vegetables can loiter on your palate, making you crave another plateful long after you take the last bite. Once your taste buds have been taken hostage by the grill, it's progressively more difficult to revert back to a meal of mundane pan-fried chicken and steamed zucchini.

These four Twin Cities chefs — Erik Sather, Derek Decker, Jack Riebel and Josh McKenzie — know just how you feel. That's why they've agreed to put you on the fast track to grilling perfection with their own proven tips and mouthwatering recipes, which are a surefire way to kick your own grilling techniques into high gear. So crank up the tunes and fire up the grill — summer has arrived in Minnesota!

Makeup: Nicole Fae | Assistants: Alissa Johnson and Amanda Champion
Special Thanks to Warners' Stellian, JB Hudson Jewelers, Elsworth | Poolhouse location courtesy of Stonewood Renovation, Inc.



GRAZERS ARE FOR GRILLING

The Dixie Chicks sang the praises of “Wide Open Spaces,” and the plus side of living in Minnesota is our abundance of these grassy rolling hills where cattle are pasture-raised to graze. If you’re puzzled over the connection between grass and your grill, find a butcher, such as Erik Sather of Clancey’s Meats & Fish in Minneapolis, who is intimately aware of the vital link. “Our meat is all pasture-raised, which gives the muscles more time to develop on their own; you can really notice the difference in taste,” he says.

Sather recommends the hanger steak to avid grillers looking to shake up their summer grilling. This cut is also known as the Butcher’s Tender since butchers have been known to covet this fine piece for themselves. “This is the muscle inside the organ cavity and there is only one per animal, unlike other muscles,” he says. “Simply grill it with salt and pepper on a really hot grill to get a nice crust on one side, then flip it until it’s rare to medium-rare and slice it against the grain.”

For larger crowds, Sather urges home chefs toward a thick-cut, bone-in rib eye steak, valued for its marbled fat and exceptional flavor. “Since rib eyes have more fat, you’ll need to grill these at moderate heat so they won’t flare up because flames will cause a bitter flavor,” he explains. “I usually pull the steak off the grill at 110 to 115 degrees, and let it rest and relax for a bit to retain the juices.”

For most cuts of beef, Sather uses simple kosher salt as the primary seasoning, which brings out the flavor profile of the beef versus concealing it with heavy marinades and rubs. “When grilling beef, you should notice the different flavors and characteristics that each muscle has, along with the different textures.”

If you opt for a marinade, Sather recommends trying his recipe for Korean beef short ribs. He says you need to ask your butcher for “cross cut beef short ribs” because the meat is cut differently. It’s thin and fatty — perfect for grilling hot and fast. “They take Asian-flavored marinade really nicely. It’s out of the ordinary, but still really easy to cook,” Sather attests.

Big Green Egg ALHD, Large Smoker Grill, Warners’ Stellian, \$749.95, www.warnersstellian.com

KOREAN BEEF SHORT RIBS

2 pounds of short ribs

FOR MARINADE

1 cup soy sauce

6 cloves garlic

1 tablespoon fresh ginger

4 tablespoons sesame oil

1 tablespoon brown sugar

juice of one lemon or 2 tablespoons rice vinegar

1-4 tablespoons Sriracha (Thai-style hot sauce)

FOR THE GARNISH

3 scallions, thinly sliced

4 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds

Get short ribs cut crosswise against the ribs. They should be about ½-inch thick. To make the marinade, purée ingredients in a blender or chop everything finely and mix with a whisk. Marinate for at least a few hours, or overnight for two pounds of short ribs. Grill hot and fast until dark and tasty looking (about 5 minutes). Garnish with sliced scallions and toasted sesame seeds. Serve with some good kimchi.

WINE TIP FOR GRILLED BEEF

With the intensity of flavors provided by grilling, wines should have substance and weight. Select youthful reds with flavors of fruit and oak, and a firm tannic structure. Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Malbec, Sangiovese, Pinotage or Nebbiolo will work nicely. These wines too carry a smoky flavor thus complementing grilled flavors beautifully. If adding barbecue sauce, serve fruity, low tannin wines like Shiraz, Zinfandel or Merlot.

— Kristen Kowalski, *The Wine Market*



EAT + DRINK

FOWL PLAY



When grilling at home, Jack Riebel, executive chef at Dakota Jazz Club & Restaurant in Minneapolis, allows the nature of the social gathering to guide his music selection. “I usually listen to Neko Case when I’m grilling, or if I’m really rocking out, I’ll listen to Led Zeppelin,” he says. “If I’m hosting a dinner party, I’ll put on Esperanza Spalding.”

The daringly distinct sounds of these artists meld with Riebel’s own cooking style. “I like to cook with bold flavors, which lend themselves well to grilling,” he says. Riebel, who fancies himself a true American cook at Dakota, permits his style to run rampant at home with sundry rubs and marinades, and with three varied cooking techniques: the standard barbecue grill, a smoker and a fire pit. “I love the smoker because I can cook with very low heat and infuse a smoky flavor into meats with apple wood or chicory,” he says. “I’m also a huge fan of hardwood charcoal, which I use for grilling on direct heat. And I also cook over direct flame in the fire pit, where I can set cast iron pans full of paella or fish right on the fire. I even roast whole bison rib eye in the fire pit.”

On the grill, chicken is the quintessential protein, according to Riebel. “Chicken thighs are the best part of the chicken to grill; I tend to always use boneless, skinless chicken thighs, which are more economical and have better flavor,” he says. “I’m also a fan of wings on the grill, but I prefer the whole wing; they cook better and each component of the wing has a different flavor.”

For those who sway toward the pyromania style of grilling, Riebel has a word of caution. “Everybody loves good barbecued chicken, but real barbecued chicken is cooked slow and low,” he explains. “Grilling has become such a man’s trait, and it’s funny because men put in more and more charcoal and want lots of heat, and then everything tends to burn.”

Weber 841001, Charcoal Performer Grill, Warners’ Stellian, \$329, www.warnersstellian.com

Men’s clothing provided by Elsworth; Jewelry provided by JB Hudson Jewelers





JERK CHICKEN WINGS

WITH MANGO & BLACK BEAN RELISH

5 pounds whole chicken wings (approximately 24-28 pieces)

Jerk marinade

1/4 cup kosher salt

1/4 cup salad oil

JERK MARINADE

1/4 cup allspice, ground

2 teaspoons cinnamon, ground

2 tablespoons coriander, ground

8 scallions, chopped

5 cloves garlic, minced

2 teaspoons tamarind

1/2 cup water

1/2 cup oil

30 cilantro leaves (reserve stems for orange reduction)

Scotch Bonnet chili peppers (use 2 for mild heat, 4-6 for medium, 6-10 for hot)

Place all ingredients in a blender and purée. Marinade can be made ahead of time and kept refrigerated for up to one week.

MANGO SALSA

1 ripe mango, diced into small pieces

1 cup cooked black beans

2 pieces scallion, thinly sliced

1/2 cup cooked corn kernels (optional)

30 cilantro leaves, chopped (reserve stems for orange reduction)

1/4 cup orange reduction

1 tablespoon salad oil

1 clove of garlic

1 lime

salt to taste

Mix all ingredients in a stainless steel bowl. Squeeze lime juice into mixture and add salt. Let stand 30 minutes to 2 hours. Serve.

ORANGE REDUCTION FOR MANGO SALSA

1-1/2 cups fresh squeezed orange juice

1 tablespoon ginger, chopped

cilantro stems reserved from preparation of jerk marinade and mango salsa

Place all ingredients in a non-reactive pan and simmer until reduced by 2/3, leaving 1/2 cup volume. Strain and set aside for mango salsa.

GRILLING AND ASSEMBLING DISH

Using gloves, rub marinade into chicken wings thoroughly. Cover and marinate overnight in refrigerator. Heat grill, gas or charcoal to 350-400 degrees. Rub chicken with oil and salt, but do not remove excess marinade. Sear evenly on all sides. Cover and cook for 45 to 60 minutes, turning every 10 minutes until internal temperature reaches 165 degrees. Remove and let rest. Garnish with salsa and serve.

WINE TIP FOR GRILLED CHICKEN



Grilled white meats can handle full-bodied, slightly smoky white wines. Try an oaked Chardonnay, a Marsanne or Pinot Gris. Because chicken is leaner than beef, there's no need for an overly tannic wine. But if you want a red wine — try Primitivo, a young Tempranillo or an Italian Valpolicella. If using marinades or barbecue sauce, these red wines will still accompany effectively.

— Kristen Kowalski, *The Wine Market*

FRESH CATCH



Before he checks the daily menu or analyzes the incoming produce or even preps his workspace, chef Josh McKenzie docks his iPod and cranks the volume in the kitchen at Erté Restaurant in Minneapolis. “I love all kinds of music: old jazz, Miles Davis, John Coltrane and the newer, heavy stuff,” he says.

Music kick-starts McKenzie’s day and carries him through the afternoon of prep work before Erté opens for dinner service. Much of his kitchen prep work time is occupied by seasonal menu selections and weekend specials, which McKenzie has creatively dished out for the past six years at Erté. Usually embracing some type of seafood, such as thick-cut tuna steaks or grilled crab cakes, the specials change nightly and keep McKenzie’s culinary talents inventive. “Our specials are dictated by what is fresh and in season,” he says.

As fresh seafood comes into the restaurant, McKenzie adds a dash of this or a splash of that to infuse the seafood with additional flavors. “With seafood, I like to use a lot of citrus, such as grapefruit, limes and oranges; the seafood picks up a hint of the flavors in the marinade,” he says. “Or, I’ll make a rub with salt, sugar, pepper and different spices depending on what I’m aiming for; I like to be experimental.”

At home, McKenzie habitually grills fresh fish over charcoal for a more natural flavor. “When grilling, it’s important to use items that can hold up to the grill, such as shrimp or meatier fish filets; delicate filets, like trout, can fall apart,” he explains. But when he gets a hankering for delicate fish, McKenzie will place the filet on top of a sheet of foil or a wooden plank. “I also like to wrap delicate fish in banana leaves, which gives the fish some added flavor.”

As one who knows his way around a kitchen, McKenzie offers these words of advice to those who shy away from the grill: “When it comes to cooking in general, people are timid and afraid to try,” says McKenzie. “The only way to get good at grilling is to keep trying; experience is crucial.”



GARLIC AND LIME SHRIMP WITH SHAVED FENNEL AND ORANGE SALAD

20 jumbo shrimp, shelled and deveined
3 cloves of garlic
1/2 cup lime juice
4 tablespoons olive oil
pinch of salt and pepper
4 long skewers

FOR THE SALAD:

1/2 cup tequila reduced by half
1 large fennel bulb, sliced thinly
1/2 red onion, sliced thinly
1 bunch of green onions, sliced thinly
4 oranges, (2 sectioned)
1/4 cup juice from remaining oranges
2 tablespoons honey
1-2 teaspoons dried chili flakes
pinch of salt and pepper
1 bunch of chopped cilantro

Mix garlic, lime juice, olive oil and salt and pepper together. Pour lime and garlic mix over shrimp. Marinate 2-4 hours or overnight.

TO MAKE THE SALAD:

Reduce tequila by half — boil rapidly on a stovetop. Combine reduced tequila, fennel, red onion, green onion and orange sections in a large mixing bowl. Add remaining juice from oranges. Mix thoroughly and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Grill the shrimp over medium heat. Flip halfway through the cooking process, about 3-5 minutes per side. Plate the skewers over the salad and sprinkle with chopped cilantro.

WINE TIP FOR GRILLED SEAFOOD



White wines will complement grilled seafood best, particularly if the fish is seasoned or sauced. The many forms of Sauvignon Blanc, including California Fumé Blanc or white Bordeaux, will pair nicely with shellfish. For meatier fish like salmon or tuna, try Italian Arneis or California Chardonnay. The most reliable red wines are Pinot Noir or Beaujolais. These have low tannin and hence will not make the fish taste metallic. A rosé of Pinot Noir should not be overlooked. — *Kristen Kowalski, The Wine Market*





EAT + DRINK

INSPIRED BY FIRE



When Kanye West sang “Inspiration is free” in his song titled “Gone,” it’s entirely possible he was referring to Minnesota’s own Derek Decker, chef of Café Agri in Minneapolis, and the inspiration he finds during his stroll

through the Minneapolis Farmers’ Market in the summer. “I let the inspiration come to me day to day. As soon as the Farmers’ Market opens up, we get to play around with so many unique things that are available in Minnesota,” he says. “Or when the owner of Café Agri comes in with a bushel of whatever, I find inspiration at that moment and that’s where our daily specials come from.”

Café Agri, short for Agritourism, focuses its efforts on sourcing locally grown and raised organic components for all of its dishes. This can be difficult during the winter months in Minnesota, “so we purchase cellar-friendly root vegetables from local farmers, and pickle fruits and vegetables from last summer,” says Decker. “This helps us keep the menu interesting and allows us to utilize as much local produce as possible.”

Decker is a big fan of grilled, organic corn as an accompaniment to nearly any type of summertime meal. “Just soak the ears, husk and all, in saltwater for one hour to prevent the corn from drying out while on the grill,” he says. “Then place the corn directly onto the grill grate and turn it frequently. You’ll get some charring on the husks, which is fine. Once it’s tender, peel back the husks and serve it Mexican style with a mixture of butter, salt, fresh lime juice, chili powder and pepper.”

An unlikely partner of the grill is polenta. Decker likes to infuse organic coarse corn meal with a wild mushroom stock prior to chilling it, cutting it into triangles and grilling it. Married with grilled whole asparagus, red onion chutney and a Pinot Noir and shallot reduction, the polenta turns into a slice of heaven. “The hot polenta with the cool chutney and reduction glaze is perfect for summer,” he says.

WILD MUSHROOM & ASPARAGUS POLENTA

POLENTA

4 cups polenta (corn meal)
3 quarts mushroom stock
1/2 cup fresh chopped parsley
1 tablespoon thyme (dry or fresh)
pinch of crushed red pepper
salt and pepper to taste

Bring stock to a boil on a stovetop, and whisk in the corn meal and seasonings. Reduce heat to low, and whisk for 30 minutes. Transfer the mixture to an oiled sheet pan, and spread mixture evenly to all sides and corners, smoothing the top surface with a spatula. Refrigerate for about an hour or until completely cooled. Polenta should be very firm. Cut polenta into equal portions.

To Grill:

Grill must be clean and oiled so polenta doesn't stick. You can also use aluminum foil on grates to prevent sticking. Grill time should be 10 to 12 minutes.

GRILLED ASPARAGUS AND ASPARAGUS PURÉE

2 bunches of asparagus
salt, pepper and garlic powder to taste
extra-virgin olive oil

Make a purée of asparagus by first blanching your asparagus in heavily salted water for about 8 minutes or until tender. Combine half of the asparagus with salt, pepper and garlic powder in a blender. As the asparagus is blending, drizzle enough extra-virgin olive oil to create a very smooth purée. This can be served hot or cold.

Grill remaining asparagus for the dish.

PINOT NOIR REDUCTION

1 medium-sized red onion, finely diced
1 bottle of Pinot Noir
1 cup sugar
pinch of salt

Combine red onion, Pinot Noir and salt in a saucepan. Let this reduce on a stovetop until thickened and reduced by at least 2/3. Then add a cup of sugar. Stir. Remove from heat. Let stand for ten minutes, then transfer to a blender. Blend reduction until smooth.

RED ONION CHUTNEY

2 large red onions, diced
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons minced garlic
1/8-1/4 teaspoons ground cloves (depending on preference)
1 cup chopped raisins, or dried currants
1 tablespoons fresh chopped parsley
pinch of salt
1/4 cup red wine vinegar

In a saucepan, slowly heat garlic, raisins, salt and ground cloves for about five minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in diced onions, parsley and red wine vinegar. Cover in a plastic container and refrigerate until cold.

ASSEMBLING DISH

Put a layer of the asparagus purée on the bottom of the plate. Place the polenta triangle on top and drizzle with Pinot Noir reduction. Add some red onion chutney on top, and finish with 2 or 3 pieces of whole grilled asparagus.

WINE TIP FOR GRILLED VEGETABLES



Grilling makes vegetables more versatile. It concentrates their flavors, bringing out some sweetness and making them a match with fruit-forward reds like Garnacha, Shiraz or Zinfandel. With earthy mushrooms, Pinot Noir is a given. Don't overlook seasonal rosés. Their fruitiness, crisp acidity and non-tannic structure create an interesting contrast between sweet and smoky. In white wines, look to New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc — particularly if asparagus is on the menu. — *Kristen Kowalski, The Wine Market*

