



OUTDOOR COOKING MAGIC NEWSLETTER

It always tastes better when it's cooked outdoors!

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Welcome to the Outdoor Cooking Magic Newsletter!

We've had some great weather for the winter and I've been able to cook outside without fighting the cold and snow as much as other years.

In a survey that I ran (and continue to run) last year, I'm surprised that so many people cook outdoors year round. In fact, 83% of people who have responded to my survey say that they cook outside all year round!

I continued to wonder if most of those people lived in areas that had warmer winters (California, Arizona, Florida, etc.). Unfortunately, I had not captured that information in the first survey that I ran. But when I decided to run a second survey and make some modifications, I asked for that

information. So far, people from such warm winter climates as Connecticut, Virginia, Nebraska, Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, and Canada say that they cook outdoors all year round. In fact there is one responder who is in his 80's from Nebraska that said he cooked outdoors even in the winter! By the way, I'm joking about this being warm winter climates. I grew up in Kansas, and it's pretty cold there in the winter!

My hat is off to all of you who love to do this enough that you obviously brave the elements to enjoy that great food that you can cook outside!

Scott

Dutch Oven Magic



I had always struggled to figure out how I could cook with my dutch ovens in my backyard. It wasn't a problem when I went camping--we'd take it and cook some delicious meals on the campfire. But I didn't have anywhere to cook in my backyard.

So we decided to investigate the local fire ordinances and found that I could build a fire pit and have a fire in my backyard (max size: 3' wide, 3' high). So I built a small firepit in my backyard. I live in a more rural area, so that wouldn't work for many of you. That made it easier to cook with my dutch ovens and every so often I would haul everything out to the firepit toward the back of the yard, build a fire, and cook! But it was a bit of a chore to take

everything back there, stay around the fire, clean everything up. It was still fun on a cool night to be able to do that, but I was looking for a way to have it be a bit more convenient.

My solution was to buy a dutch oven table. This is a metal table that is 32" long and 14" deep and has a lip around it to contain the coals. It also has a wind break that can be used to block the wind. It was easy to put together and set up on my deck. Now, anytime I want to cook with my dutch ovens, I simply go out to my deck, start some coals, and cook on my dutch oven table! Much easier than the firepit method (but maybe not as fun!). See <http://www.outdoorcookingmagic.com/dutch-oven-table.html> to order a dutch oven table.

Last year, I polled my list to see what other

suggestions they might have for this. Several mentioned getting two metal oil or feed pans like you could get at a car parts store or local farm store. They run about \$6 each. Invert one to keep the heat away from the ground or patio, and then set the other one on top, with the coals and dutch oven inside it. I've got other ideas on <http://www.outdoorcookingmagic.com/where->

Grilling Magic

When you grill, adding a little smoke can provide some additional flavor to whatever you are grilling. It's fairly easy to do and is a nice touch.

You can buy bags of various kinds of wood chips online or at many local stores. See <http://www.outdoorcookingmagic.com/wood-chips.html> for a variety of wood chips.



Apple, cherry, and peach wood chips go well with poultry, game birds, and pork. Alder is nice with fish, chicken, and pork. Hickory is good with ham, pork, and ribs. Mesquite goes well with steak, duck, and lamb. Pecan is good with turkey. I like to use a mixture, so I often use hickory and apply or cherry.

You can use wood chips to add a smoky flavor no matter what type of grill you use. If you are using a charcoal grill, simply add a handful of chips to the coals. If you are using a gas grill, put the chips on a sheet of aluminum foil and then seal up. Poke some holes in the top and then place the foil packet on top of the gas flame.

The goal is to get the chips to smoke without catching fire. You'll need to experiment a little, but this works best in an environment that is not full of oxygen. Closing the damper a bit will help reduce the amount of oxygen in the grill.

cook-dutch-oven/, but those are a couple of ideas to get you started if you haven't figured out where or how you might use your dutch oven in your backyard.

There is also a lot of different opinions regarding whether the chips should be soaked in water ahead of time or not. I've always soaked for about 30 minutes. But recently, I've been reading that soaking really doesn't help. All that really happens is that the moisture is reduced to steam before the chips start to smoke. That simply delays the smoking, rather than making it last longer.

The better solution might be to soak some chips, but to add both unsoaked and soaked chips to your grill. The unsoaked chips will start smoking sooner and by the time they are done, the soaked chips will be dried and will start giving off smoke. This may make it a little bit easier on you as you won't have to add additional chips as soon.

I haven't actually tried this yet, but I'd read of many people on the internet that say there is no reason to soak the chips. Try both ways and see which way works for you.

So that's how you can add some smoky flavor to your grilled food. This works will with meats and can add some nice flavor to veggies as well. I've done some grilled acorn squash with a touch of smoke flavor that was absolutely delicious. Try it with some of your favorite grilled dishes and see if you enjoy the flavor that a little bit of smoke adds.

BBQ Pitmasters

Last year, I happened on a TV series called BBQ Pitmasters that followed several BBQ competition teams around the competition circuit. It is produced by TLC, The Learning Channel and was quite entertaining. Not only were there great tips and ideas for how to create great BBQ, but there were some very entertaining folks. Like any reality show, there are some that you love and some that you love to hate! From Myron Mixon, one of the great southern BBQ experts to Lee Ann Whippen, owner of Wood Chicks BBQ in Chesapeake, Virginia, it was fun to see how they approached their cooking. It showed the triumphs and the failures of these teams. You can get the DVD for this first season at <http://www.outdoorcookingmagic.com/bbq-pitmasters-dvd.html>. This first season premiered in 2009 and I found it on one of the channels on DirectTV.

There is also a second season that was filmed in 2010, which had a different flavor, where different teams competed each week for an invitation to the finale where the winner received \$100,000. I have not found this one on TV yet, but will keep looking.

Myron Mixon, BBQ competitor in the first season, and judge in the second season, stated on his Facebook account on January 29, that filming for the third season is underway!

Recipe Corner

Baby Back Rib Rub

Ingredients

1/2 cup onion powder
1/2 cup garlic powder
1/4 cup paprika
1/4 cup kosher salt
1/4 dark brown sugar
2 Tbsp chili powder
1 Tbsp cumin
1 Tbsp black pepper
1 Tbsp salt

Mix the ingredients together and use on ribs, brisket, pork chops.

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