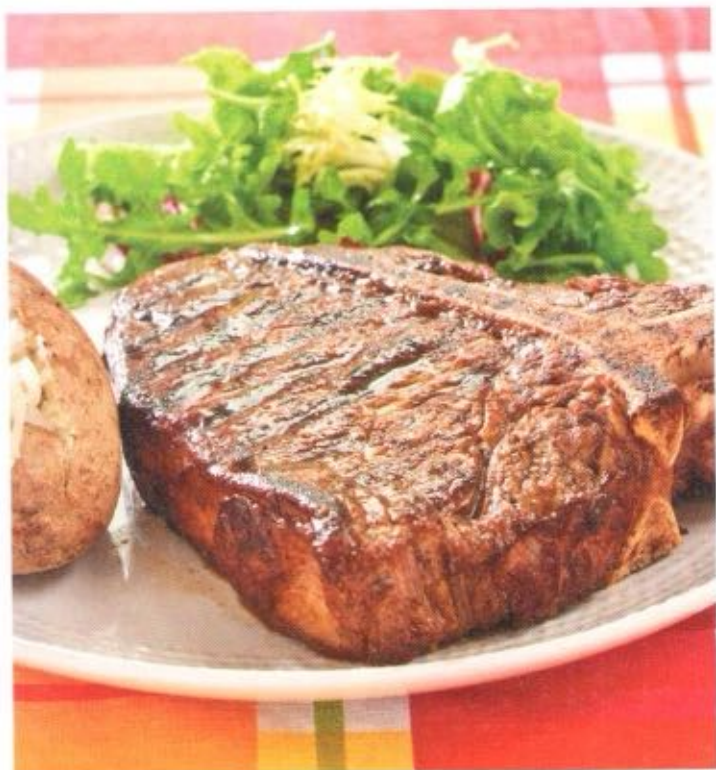


Test Kitchen Cooking Class How to Grill Thick Steaks

While anyone can slap a slab of meat on the grill, cooking a steak that really sizzles takes a little more finesse. Make your steak a cut above the rest.



For the best crust and a juicy interior, you need more than a hot fire.

GRILLED THICK STEAKS Serves 4

To achieve a great crust, steaks must be dry, a characteristic that steakhouses get by aging their meat. To mimic the effect, we rub the steaks with cornstarch (which absorbs moisture) and salt (for flavor). We also rely on the freezer: Just 30 minutes uncovered in the freezer's intensely dry environment sufficiently dehydrates the exteriors of steaks.

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 4 steaks (with or without bone), about 1½ inches thick
- Pepper

1. CHILL STEAKS Combine salt and cornstarch in small bowl. Pat steaks dry with paper towels and rub with salt mixture. Place steaks on wire rack set inside rimmed baking sheet and freeze until steaks are firm and dry to the touch, at least 30 minutes or up to 1 hour.

2. HEAT GRILL Heat all burners on high, covered, for 15 minutes. Leave primary burner on high and turn other burner(s) off. (For charcoal grill,

light about 100 coals; when they are covered with fine gray ash, spread over half of grill. Set cooking grate in place and heat, covered, with lid vent open completely, for 5 minutes.) Scrape and oil cooking grate.

3. GRILL STEAKS Season steaks with pepper. Grill, covered, over hot fire, turning once, until well browned, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Move steaks to cool side of grill and continue to cook to desired doneness, 5 to 6 minutes for rare (120 degrees on instant-read thermometer), 6 to 7 minutes for medium-rare (125 degrees), or 8 to 9 minutes for medium (135 degrees). Transfer to plate, tent with foil, and let rest 5 minutes. Serve.

FOR BONE-IN STEAKS

Are you grilling a T-bone or porterhouse? Prepare Grilled Thick Steaks through step 2. In step 3, place the steaks over the hot side of grill with the tenderloin portion of the steaks closer to the cool side of the grill. Proceed with the recipe as directed, cutting the meat off the bone and slicing crosswise ½ inch thick.

The Fundamentals of Successful Grilling

INGREDIENTS Start with the Right Steak

Even a steakhouse can't make a tough, flavorless steak tender and delicious. Starting with a thick steak is key, but which cut? With all of the options at the market, it's hard to know what to choose. Here are our favorites:



STRIP STEAK

Good flavor with lots of marbling.

RIB-EYE STEAK

Very flavorful with lots of marbling and a smooth, fine texture.

FILET MIGNON

Mild flavor (too mild for some), meltingly tender, surprisingly lean.

T-BONE

Strip and tenderloin in one, fatty (in a good way) flavor and texture.

PORTERHOUSE

Strip and tenderloin in one, but tenderloin is larger than in T-bone steak.

SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT Get the Essential Tools and Fuels

There are dozens of tools for grilling, but in our experience, simpler is better. As for fuel, if you're cooking on gas, there's nothing to it. If you're building a charcoal fire, use a fuel that gives off lots of heat but has no off-flavors (translation: avoid lighter fluid).



TONGS

Like heatproof hands.

CHIMNEY STARTER

The best way to start your fire. We prefer the large size.

LUMP HARDWOOD

Quick, clean, high heat.

BRIQUETTES

An excellent and always-available standby.

TECHNIQUE Build the Fire Correctly

To grill thick steaks, you need a fire with both hot and cool zones: hot to sear, and cool to finish cooking through gently.



HOT ZONE COALS For charcoal, add about 100 coals to a chimney starter. When they are covered with fine gray ash, dump the coals in a pile on one side of the grill. They should reach to about 2 inches below the grill grate.

HOT ZONE PRIMARY BURNER ON HIGH For gas, heat all burners on high for 15 minutes. Leave primary burner on high and turn other burner(s) off.