



Suite 600, 1901 North Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209 USA
Phone: (703) 522-0086 • Fax: (703) 522-0548
Email: hpbamail@hpba.org
Web Site: www.hpba.org



Contacts:

Deidra Darsa
Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association
703.522.0086
darsa@hpba.org

Vanessa Smith
Fleishman-Hillard
916-492-5314
vanessa.smith@fleishman.com

NATIONAL BARBECUE MONTH SPARKS MOOD FOR OUTDOOR COOKING

New Consumer Poll Reveals Family, Friends and the Great Outdoors Fuel America's Love for Outdoor Cooking

ARLINGTON, VA (April 30, 2009) – People's love affair with outdoor cooking is heating up as the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA) kicks-off May as National Barbecue Month and the beginning of outdoor cooking season. This month, and all summer long, the appeal of having fun with family and friends coupled with the desire to be outside set the mood for Americans to cook outdoors, according to the 2009 HPBA National Barbecue Month Consumer Poll.

“Food serves as the cornerstone of any gathering of friends and family,” said Derrick Riches, About.com Guide to Barbecues & Grilling. “Add in the relaxed atmosphere of the backyard to any barbecue or cook-out and you can see what attracts so many people to this popular pastime. There's no better way to spend a summer evening than cooking outdoors with family and friends.”

Key Ingredients

When deciding to attend a cook-out, consumers say the guest list is important. Almost all poll respondents – 94 percent – say the burning reason to go to a barbecue or cook-out is to spend time with friends and family. Others rank a casual atmosphere and the opportunity to meet new people as incentives to attend. And, one in five consumers love an invitation from a host who is a barbecue enthusiast.

While today's outdoor chef is dishing up grilled hors d'oeuvres, fruits and desserts, the poll revealed that beef is the number one choice for an outdoor cooking menu (38 percent), followed by chicken (23 percent), then seafood, including salmon, shrimp or lobster (19 percent). On the flip side, some consumers have a penchant for going meatless and prefer grilled veggies (five percent).

“Across North America, people love the tradition of summer cook-outs,” said Leslie Wheeler, HPBA Communications Director. “It's a great activity that creates affordable fun, especially at a time when consumers are choosing to eat at home more often.”

Setting the Mood at the Last Minute

For those planning outdoor parties take note: 43 percent say the best barbecue or cook-out is one that is planned a few days ahead of time. But last minute get-togethers are still an option as 38 percent of the poll respondents prefer a spur-of-the-moment gathering instead. And despite today's online obsession, two-thirds (65 percent) of consumers polled prefer a good old fashioned phone call to emails or online invitations.

When considering what tunes to set the mood, oldies or country music were the most popular genres among poll respondents, followed by rock/alternative then jazz and R&B.

Tips & Techniques from HPBA and About.com's Derrick Riches

Whether planning a backyard barbecue for two or 20, HPBA and About.com's Derrick Riches offer the following tips and techniques to use this summer and all year long. "Every outdoor cook seems to have secrets and tricks," said Riches. "Remember that what works for someone else might not work for you. Try some of these tips and techniques to get started, but remember the best way to find what works for you is to get cooking outdoors!"

1. Trim excess fat from meat and poultry to reduce grill flare-ups. Use the appropriate grill temperature to cook your food, using lower temperatures for chicken pieces and thick cuts of meat. Try grilling delicate foods like seafood and fish fillets on a cedar plank.
2. Before cooking vegetables over an open flame, pre-soak them in cold water for half an hour to keep them from drying out. If you're cooking vegetables with a thick skin, cut-off the ends to allow water to enter. Placing your veggies on the outer edges of the grill will also prevent them from overcooking.
3. Before lighting the grill, apply non-stick spray on the grates to cut down the clean-up time afterward. For charcoal grills, line the bowl with aluminum foil and – after the coals cool in 48 hours – simply discard the foil with the coals and the ash.
4. When using a gas grill, be sure to regularly check how much propane remains in your tank. There are several accessories on the market that can easily monitor your propane level without lifting the propane tank. Better yet, keep a full, spare propane tank handy so you never run out of fuel.
5. After you've taken the last piece of food off your gas grill, place aluminum foil over the grate and turn the gas up to high for one minute, and then turn it off. The foil focuses the heat on the grate, burning everything to a fine ash. After the grate has cooled down, crumple up the foil and use it to brush the ash off.

For more outdoor cooking tips, resources and recipes, please visit www.hpba.org/nbm and www.bbq.about.com.

###

About Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA)

The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association based in Arlington, VA, is the North American industry association for manufacturers, retailers, distributors, representatives, service firms and allied associates for all types of hearth, barbecue and patio appliances, fuels and accessories. The association provides professional member services and industry support in education, statistics, government relations, marketing, advertising and consumer education. There are more than 2,600 members in the HPBA.

About Derrick Riches, About.com Guide to Barbecues & Grilling

Derrick Riches has served as About's guide to Barbecues and Grilling for well over a decade and in which time he has traveled far and wide to taste and talk backyard cooking. Derrick's interest in barbecue goes beyond simply cooking. He's an expert on the history of the open flame and a collector of fire makers and outdoor cooking equipment. He's cooked on everything from a \$10,000 gas grill to a hole in the ground. He has also written for several publications on everything from custom barbecue design to party planning. He also consults to the grill industry and teaches outdoor cooking classes.