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Take Your Barbecue on the Road
11 Million Americans Can't Be Wrong about Tailgating

Despite the raging debate over when and where it all began – at the 1869 Princeton/Rutgers game or at the Yale Bowl in 1904 – the tradition of tailgating before and after football games, races, and concerts has grown to be part of Americana.

In fact, a recent consumer survey conducted by the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association indicates that nearly 11 million grill owners tailgate at least once each year. A majority arrives at the stadium or track three to four hours prior to the start of the event. An impressive eight out of ten prepare their communal feast using a grill or smoker!

This all-important “eating as entertainment” aspect of tailgating has grown considerably, thanks in part to the growing number of high-performance portable grills and specialty smokers that can be packed for the parking lot. No longer “your grandfather’s” flimsy brazier or basic hibachi, these super stylin’ gas and charcoal portables are made from the same high-quality materials and features as their backyard counterparts.

When shopping for your tailgate grill or smoker, consider the number of people to be fed, the types of foods to be prepared, the amount and type of space available for set-up, and importantly, how much space is available in your vehicle.

These road-ready stainless steel and enamel-finish grills are available in a number of configurations. Some fold up for transportation, and then stand up at a convenient height for grilling. Also look for grills with multiple burners, griddles, adjustable heat settings, push-button lighting, fold-down or removable legs.

(more)

For a propane grill, bring a 20-pound tank and an adapter to avoid running out of fuel with a one-pound canister. Remember to have the tank filled before you go, or visit a propane exchange location to swap an empty one for a full one. There are now more than 50,000 cylinder exchange locations across the country, so it should be easy to find one in your neighborhood.

For charcoal grilling, try light-the-bag charcoal that has just the right amount for one cookout. Or for smoking, combine charcoal and wood chunks to get great wood-smoke flavor.

And what are the most popular foods for parking lot chefs to put on the grill? Not surprisingly, 81 percent opt for the traditional hamburgers, hot dogs and sausage; but 38 percent roast chicken, 29 percent serve smoke-kissed ribs, and 24 percent are turning out sizzling steaks.

But what about those fans who can't make it to the event? A new class of revelers – known as “virtual tailgaters” – set up tailgate parties in their backyard. Many will rent a theater-sized TV and invite lots of friends to watch the big game, the big race, or the big concert. It's safe and secure, and best of all, there are no traffic and parking headaches for party participants. And, because 85 percent of American families own barbecue grills, they're already set for food preparation.

Regardless of where the tailgate party is held, a gathering of friends around a grill for a gaming event or a concert is a recipe for success! For more information about portable grills, visit www.hpba.org.

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About the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA)

The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA), 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.

