

AT HOME

SYDNEY LONEY



GET ALL THE FLAVOUR OF A SMOKER LIKE THIS USING THE GRILL YOU ALREADY HAVE

smoke signals

Turn out flavourful brisket, ribs and more by transforming your barbecue into a **smoker**. (It's easier than you think!)

GRILLING IS ABOUT cooking hot and fast. Smoking, however, requires time and patience: it's done low (around 180 to 235°F) and slow. "The key is to contain the heat and smoke, and control the airflow and fire so you can maintain a low temperature," says Ted Reader, a Toronto-based chef and author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Smoking*.

With 65 grills and smokers in his backyard, Reader knows what he's talking about. He says you can make a smoker out of anything from a clay pot to a filing cabinet, but the easiest approach is to use your barbecue.

To turn your charcoal or gas grill into a smoker, keep the fire or flame small and off to one side, and put your meat on the other side. For the key ingredient—smoke!—place pre-soaked

wood chunks or chips directly on the coals, or make an aluminum-foil packet and fill with wood chips, then poke holes in the foil to let the smoke escape and place the packet on your grill above the heat. Reader recommends using hickory or oak for a more intense flavour, or maple or apple wood for a sweeter taste. You can also set a pan of water over the live burner of a gas grill to keep the air moist and help the meat absorb the smoke.

Smoking can take several hours, and you need to constantly check both the grill and internal meat temperatures. But Reader says it's worth the wait. "Grilled meats can be one-dimensional, whereas smoking adds complexity and flavour," he explains. ■



PRO PICKS

IF YOU'RE LOOKING TO BUY A DEDICATED SMOKER, HERE ARE SOME OF THE BEST ON THE MARKET



Vertical water smokers

are ideal for beginners as they're relatively small, efficient and inexpensive, although they don't offer as much temperature control.

STARTING PRICE Around \$120

TRY Weber Smokey Mountain Cooker, Napoleon Apollo 3-in-1



Kamado smokers

are sleek, charcoal-fuelled ceramic domes that hold heat well, so you can smoke all year long—and they last forever.

STARTING PRICE Around \$350

TRY Big Green Egg, or Kamado Joe or Primo Ceramic cookers



Pellet smokers

are electric, versatile and easy to use: a digital controller automatically feeds pellets of compressed hardwood sawdust to the fire, while a thermostat regulates pellet delivery to maintain the right temperature.

STARTING PRICE Around \$500

TRY Yoder Smokers, Traeger pellet grills

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