

Nino's Guide to Grilling!

When the newly assembled Barbecue Grills at the home improvement stores are lined up out front like a "starting grid" at the Indianapolis 500, and the line for 5 gallon propane tank refills is longer than a "returns" line after a busy holiday, you know it's grilling time once again in Michigan. But before you fire up the grill, be sure to review **Nino's Guide to Grilling** which includes valuable professional advice, useful tips and other grilling essentials to help make this season's outdoor culinary adventure the best ever. Enjoy the thrill of the grill!

Why Grilled Foods Taste So Good....

It's obvious that grilled foods look and taste different than those prepared by many other cooking methods. And you hear a lot of debate over just how much of that flavor actually comes from the source of fuel, whether charcoal, wood or gas. The general consensus is... **not much**. If that is true, then just what gives grilled foods their delicious flavor and appetizing color? Most people talk about the caramelization of sugars and the searing of meats and fats. But in reality, the actual process is called the Maillard Reaction, named after the French scientist who discovered it. In the simplest terms, the process is actually a chemical reaction, resulting from an amino acid and a reducing sugar reacting to the heat of the grill. The type of amino acid, determines the final flavor. What grilling does, beyond this reaction, is introduce smoke produced from the juices or fats dripping directly on the heat source, to additionally perfume and flavor the product. This additional flavor, is something that pan searing, broiling and roasting just can't duplicate.

Grilling or Barbecuing... What's the Difference?? Barbecuing

Barbecuing refers to a **slow cooking process using indirect, low-heat** generated by smoldering logs or wood chips that in turn "**smoke-cook**" the food. Because foods tenderize when cooked slowly over low temperatures, (particularly when basted), some of the meats best suited for barbecuing are in fact the less expensive, less tender meats like ribs & briskets. The fuel and heat source are usually separated from the cooking chamber, but the cooking chamber maintains enough heat to properly cook the foods slowly, **over a long period of time**. The cooking chamber fills with smoke, giving the food its characteristic smoked flavor, which varies depending on the type of wood that is used for the fuel. The final barbecued products are tender, soft, and generally lack a crisp charred crust. The best temperatures for barbecuing are between **200°F and 300°F**. If the temperature rises above 300°F, it is then considered grilling.

Grilling

Grilling refers to foods that are **cooked quickly and directly over high heat**. This extreme heat sears the surface of meat, sealing in the natural juices and creating a flavorful crust. **A crust is a key difference**. In general, the foods best suited to grilling are those which are tender and **cook relatively quickly** since the heat required for grilling is so intense. In general, temperatures **above 300°F** are typically used for grilling although grilling temperatures can typically reach **500°F** or more.



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Cleaning and Seasoning of the Grill

If you're embarking on the first grill of the season, it's important that you inspect the basic mechanical components of the grill. Most critical among them the gas ports (holes), the regulator and hoses (attached to the propane canister) and finally the gas valves. Inspect the hoses for excessive wear or cuts and burn marks in the hoses and replace if necessary. Clogged holes in the gas ports can be unclogged with a paper clip or a pin and sticky gas valves can usually be unstuck with WD 40 spray. Lastly, be sure once checked and cleaned, all parts fit together well and are tight.

Clean the grill grates with a wire brush and hose off. If the grates are particularly crusted, one option is to keep them in place on the grill, turn the grill on high, place the lid on the grill and heat for 30 to 45 minutes or until the crusted portion of the grill turns to white ash. Turn off the grill, allow the grill to cool down completely and wire brush each side of the grates. Once the grates are brushed by either fashion, wash thoroughly, pat dry and replace. The last step before turning on the grill, is to spray the top grilling surface with a non-stick vegetable spray.

Some Basic Rules of the Road

Grilling is not an exact science. As a result, the challenges of managing the heat of the grill and attention and respect your food deserves, leaves little time for managing other tasks which should be done in advance. Thus, one of the most essential things that contribute to successful grilling is pre-planning. In the Chef's world, "**Mise en Place**" or "everything in its place" is one of the most crucial steps to take to ensure you have the materials, the equipment and then finally the time, to apply the most critical element "THE KNOWLEDGE", to give yourself the best chance for grilling success. To simplify this point, always be sure to review your "Mise"...and work smarter, not harder.

Basic Grilling "Mise en Place"

- Check all fuel levels (Charcoal, Wood, Gas, Lighter Fluids) to be sure you have enough.
- Be sure all cooking utensils are clean and at the ready including service platters and carving knives. It's also a good idea to have a few clean towels for hand wiping and heavy grilling gloves to protect your hands.
- Marinate, season & apply all rubs to your grilled foods in advance and have other sauces and seasonings to be used DURING the grilling process at the ready and next to the grilling area.
- Have all salads and other side dishes finished before you begin grilling so that you can devote your full attention to the grill and executing its timing.
- Finally, have the food to be grilled covered and ready to go when the grill is at the right temperature.

The Integrity of the Food

A few words here about food safety, sanitation and proper food handling because it's so easy to forget you're working with potentially hazardous materials when you have a beer in one hand, a T-Bone steak in the other and an apron on that say's " Kiss the Cook". The safe handling, preparation and serving of food is serious business. **Here are a few of the basics:**

1. Keep all surfaces that raw foods touch clean and sanitized. If you use your bare hands to touch raw foods, be sure to wash and sanitize your hands well with antibacterial soap. Otherwise, inexpensive latex gloves are a good investment.
2. Do not cross contaminate foods like raw chicken and beef or pork. Use separate cutting surfaces. And be sure NOT to use cooking utensils that handled RAW meats, to serve cooked meats unless they have been thoroughly sanitized first.
3. Keep all proteins (meats, dairy products and the like) under 40°F at all times until just before cooking.
4. Cooked meats and other protein based foods out at room temperature and whose temperatures are between 40°F and 140°F are in the perfect "Danger Zone" for potential food borne illnesses to develop. Don't leave the foods sitting out for more than 2 hours, and even less if the temperature is above 90°F. Any previously cold or hot foods that have been out for 2 hours or more should be discarded to be safe.

Grilling Doneness and Internal Temperature Guide

An insta-read thermometer is the most reliable and accurate way to test the doneness of meats. Inserted into the grilled meat's core, refer to the chart below which offers you a general guide to knowing when your grilled meat is done to your liking. Remember to allow for approximately 5 to 10 degrees of additional carry over cooking and appropriate resting time before enjoying the fruits of your labor. See below.

Degrees of Doneness	Internal Temperature For Beef and Lamb	Internal Temperature For Pork & Poultry
Rare	125° F to 130°F	Not Recommended
Medium Rare	140° F to 145°F	Not Recommended
Medium	150° F to 160°F	160° F to 165°F Pork Only
Medium Well	165° F to 170°F	170° F to 175°F
Well	170° F to 190°F	180° F to 195°F

Savor the Flavor

One of the most dangerous grilling utensils is not the knife but the fork. It's a shame they're included in the most basic barbecue and grilling "kits" because they do more harm than good to grilled meats. The tendency when you have one of these "weapons" in your hand is to stab and turn, stab and turn, which does a number of remarkably bad things...all at once. First, it opens up the flood gates for the juices to drain out of the meats which hold its flavor and moisture. The second, is that it never allows the food to rest long enough to evenly cook and develop a seared, caramelized crust. The next most dangerous tool in the griller's arsenal is the spatula. This second device, is used by the amateur to extract the remaining flavor and moisture that may still be left by the stab and turn method, via the pressing method. These two utensils and methods offer little if any hope for a tender, moist and delicious meal. The best advice is to invest in one or two pairs of tongs (preferably 12 inches) with a comfortable grip and a traditionally scalloped tip to secure your grilled foods while carefully lifting and turning them (without a puncturing) when the time is right to do so.

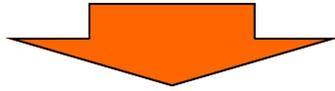
What's Carry Over Cooking?

Carry over cooking is the phenomenon of heat momentum. Whether cooked in a microwave, roasting in a conventional oven, or on the grill in the backyard, food will continue to cook after it is removed from its heating source. The cooking that takes place after the food is removed from its heat source is called "carry-over cooking". Steaks should be removed from the grill (undercooked by 5 to 10 degrees depending on the meat's size and density), and allowed to rest 5 to 10 minutes. Expect the internal temperature to rise as much as 5 to 10 degrees during this carry over/ resting period, which should be done uncovered. Eight ounce to one pound steaks should rest (uncovered) about 5 minutes. Add about 2 minutes for each additional pound if it is a larger piece of meat. If it is a cool day, tent the steaks lightly to allow for steam to escape while keeping the steaks warm.

Resting Time or "Let it be."

During the resting (or bench time), another important step in the grilling process occurs. Resting the steak also allows time for the "re-hydration" of the meat. While over the grill, the meat's juices have been driven, by heat, to the interior of the steak. Resting, allows those juices to be re-absorbed by the meat, resulting in a uniformly juicy and moist portion from edge to edge. Use the time guide above to estimate your steak's carry over cooking & "resting time".

Ready to Cook? Start Here...



Safety First You must respect fire, or anything hot for that matter. All too often, an unattended fire can unexpectedly be overturned, flare up or create other unexpected havoc. Stay near the grill. When grilling, check the wind's direction and position the grill so that you are not directly down wind from the heat and smoke. Don't wear loose, flowing cloths that may catch fire. Use oven mitts and long tongs and utensils to protect your hands from the heat and never lean over the grill while igniting it.

Where There's Smoke, There's Fire. And whether you're grilling or barbecuing, starting a fire and maintaining the correct temperature for your cooking purposes can mean the difference between your food being ordinary and truly memorable. In this area, of the few choices there are to make heat, (wood, charcoal and gas), there's no doubt that the most popular choice is gas, with charcoal running a close second and wood, well... wood is for fireplaces.

Gas is a relatively simple fuel to use. Almost too easy... Too often, would be grillers and barbecue wannabees wait until the last minute to fire up the grill, then turn the burners up to Mach 5 and without much of any pre-heat period or grill preparation, throw the meat right on the grill. Yes, the meat will certainly cook but I will suggest that cooked meat has "degrees" of quality. Here are a few tips for the Gas Grill chef.

1. Be sure you have sufficient gas grill briquettes. The dripping of fat and juices on these briquettes create smoke and add an additional delicious flavor to your food. If the fat and drippings never touch these small rocks, you'll miss out on this "charcoal" esque flavor.
2. Clean and season the grilling grates. Before turning on the gas, be sure to wire brush each grate well, wipe clean with a damp cloth or paper towel and then spray with a non-stick vegetable spray.
3. Pre-heat the grill on medium high heat for at least 20 minutes before adding any food. This pre-heating is essential to heat the grill's cavity and cooking grate and ensure even cooking and better browning of your foods.

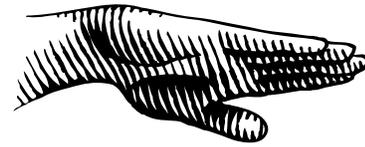
Charcoal definitely has its fans. Among them Henry Ford who invented charcoal briquettes as a useful by-product of the left over wood used in the manufacturing of Henry's Model T automobile frames. But care must be taken to ignite the briquettes properly. Never use gasoline or kerosene. To properly start a charcoal fire, be sure there is adequate ventilation within the bottom area of the grill where the charcoal briquettes are laying. Oxygen is an essential component of a fire and ensures a supply of the fuel necessary to keep the coals burning properly. Too much of a breeze or lack thereof, can dramatically effect the chance of maintaining an evenly heated charcoal fire. To build the fire, build from the bottom up. Begin on the bottom with crumpled newspapers, small kindling or treated fire-starting sticks, then add your charcoal briquettes layering evenly over the top. If you choose to use lighter fluid, add and allow to soak into the charcoal briquettes for 5 to 10 minutes before you light the fire. Once lit, let the fire burn for 15 to 20 minutes without disturbing it. Then, if necessary, carefully reposition the coals to evenly distribute the heat.

Cooking Flare Ups If flames flare up while grilling, it's usually due to excessive fat and drippings which hit the hot coals or heat source and spontaneously combust. To put out this type of fire, carefully remove the cooking product to another "cooler" spot on the grill and the flames will usually subside. If the flames persist, a charcoal fire can be quenched with a light spray of water. Otherwise, remove the food from the grill and smother the flames by closing the lid of the grill or placing a large pan over the grill to deprive the flames of oxygen. If this does not put out the fire, baking SODA can be sprinkled over the offending flames. Doing this on charcoal however, is somewhat a last resort as this method will permanently extinguish the coals. It is always recommended to have a small fire extinguisher at the ready in the event it's needed.

Just how hot IS my grill??

One of the original and perhaps most reliable methods of testing a grill's temperature is to place your hand 4 inches (1 hands width) off of the grill and count how many seconds it takes before your hand is too hot to remain over the grill.

2-3	Seconds = High	or	450-650F
4-5	Seconds = Med/High	or	375-425F
6-8	Seconds = Medium	or	325-350F
9-10	Seconds = Med/Low	or	275-300F
11-14	Seconds = Low	or	225-250F



one thousand one...one thousand two...



Another important rule to remember is that a charcoal grill "typically" loses about 100 F of heat for each 30 minutes it burns. Gas grills of course, remain relatively constant.

The Purchase and Preparation of Your Meats and Steaks For the Grill

When purchasing your steaks and meats from Nino's, remember that a thin layer of EXTERNAL fat on steaks and on those larger roast type cuts that you may be grilling, is a GOOD thing as it helps the meat to preserve its juiciness. In addition, the salinity (saltiness in the fat), adds a great deal of flavor to the meat. (Chef's call this fat layer "BARDING".) Be cautious however, leaving too much of a fat layer on the meat also creates unwanted flame flare ups on the grill. These flare ups create two problems. First, the temperature of the grill becomes hotter and you can risk burning your food as it becomes suspended above the inferno, second, the dripping fat which creates this fire gives off an undesirable black residue which has both an undesirable look and taste. In the end, leave a small amount of fat on the meat if possible and then trim whatever excessive external fat that may remain on the meat after you're done cooking. Another "good fat" is the one that is internal. This fat, called "MARBELING", is also important for flavor and tenderness. Look for steaks to have small specks of white fat, evenly distributed throughout the meat. This fat melts into the meat while grilling and contributes to the final tenderness and flavor of your meat. Meats with little marbling will be drier, tougher and less flavorful.

Seasonings (the Do's and Don'ts)

Ok, so you've now purchased the perfect meats for your meal. But there's one last thing to think about before you fire up the grill. It's time to consider just how you're going to season your meats to add that extra touch of taste and color. And, there are many choices. Each have their own unique and distinctive methods, flavors and results. Perhaps the most valuable piece of advice is Seasoning Rule #1.

Seasoning Rule # 1 Avoid using dry salt on any meat before grilling. Salt dries out the meat on the grill and makes it tougher. Always add your salt to your meats after cooking.

Seasoning Rule # 2 Less is more. You pay good money for quality meat and its natural flavor. Don't overdue the seasonings, especially if they contain salt. And when it comes to placing the steak on the grill, don't overdue the oil or vegetable spray you use to prevent sticking. Oil fires create soot and a petroleum flavor residue on your foods... and that's pretty nasty.

Seasoning Rule # 3 Fresh is better than stale & new is better than old. Dry rubs and seasonings do indeed have a shelf life, not a half-life. The fresher the spice, the more flavor you're going to taste. If you have an old bottle or tin of spice and it's more than 1 year old it's probably outlived its usefulness. If you can, replace it. If you can't, a simple trick to restore some of its potency is to rub the dry herbs and spices between your hands. The oils of your hands will wake up the flavor oils in the dry seasonings and give you a whole lot better flavor.

Marinades, Rubs and Seasonings

Your basic seasoning options fall into 3 basic categories. They are:

Marinades are seasoned liquid mixtures that add flavor and in some cases tenderize. A tenderizing marinade must contain an acidic ingredient such as lemon juice, yogurt, wine or vinegar, or a natural tenderizing enzyme found in fresh papaya, ginger, pineapple and figs. Before grilling, it's recommended that you gently brush off any excessive amount of marinade from the food, carefully spray the grill area to be used with a non-stick vegetable spray, also lightly spray the marinated meat, then place on the grill. Additional marinade can then be applied as the food is at least half way cooked through.

Dry Rubs are a blend of seasonings, such as fresh or dried herbs and spices, applied to the surface of uncooked beef steaks, roasts or ground beef patties for flavor. Paste-type rubs often contain some oil, crushed garlic or mustard. Before applying a rub, it's always best to pat the exterior of the meat with a paper towel to allow the rub to stick to the meat without immediately dissolving into a marinade like soup.

Brining Used almost exclusively for poultry, brining is the method of soaking the meat in a solution of water, salt, sugar and spices. Is usually recommended for fresh turkey breasts and larger chicken breasts you may wish to grill and slice. The technique of brining is tantamount to placing a dry sponge in a bucket of water before leaving the sponge out in the hot sun. Brining for 4 to 8 hours before cooking increases the moisture content and adds additional flavor of the meat.

A Simple Poultry Brining Solution

1 Gallon
1 Cup
1/2 Cup
AS DESIRED

Water
Kosher Salt
Brown Sugar
Other Ingredients that Appeal to you...like
Spices, Herbs, Citrus Fruits, Teriyaki Sauce etc.

Adding That "Wood Smoked" Flavor to Your Grilled Foods

Smoking Pouch Smoke can add a distinctive flavor to grilled foods and is essential in barbecuing. The most effective method to create smoke on the grill is to soak small wood chunks or chips in water, then adding them to the hot coals. An effective way to accomplish this on a gas grill is to place a couple of handfuls of soaked and drained wood chips on a large square of heavy duty aluminum foil. Wrap the foil around the wood chips and fold over the ends to make a pouch. Poke a number of holes in the foil pouch to allow the smoke to escape and place the package over the gas flames somewhere near the center of the grill. Once the flames heat the wood to a char, the smoke will appear from the pouch and begin to do its magic. Close the cover of the grill to capture the most smoke.

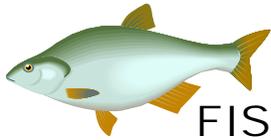
Planked Grilling Early cooks utilized wood plank cooking over open flames to capture the essence of wood as a seasoning in fish and other meats. Today this cooking technique has become one of the hottest methods of gourmet cooking. The incredible smoky flavors of wood such as Western Red Cedar, Hickory, or Mesquite and even Oak from old wine barrels are infused into your foods as you grill or bake.

Whatever type of wood that you use for cooking your fish or meat, it will be one of the best tasting and juiciest dishes you will have ever prepared. Meats retain juices because the wood planks allow the meat to cook more evenly than traditional methods such as steel or glass. The mass of the plank absorbs the heat and acts like a baking stone that works as a heat conductor.

There are two methods of plank cooking; grilling (roasting) and oven (baking). Both methods offer the delicious flavor of infused cedar. Backyard get-togethers have become so trendy in recent years, that grill planks have become a very popular method of cooking. With proper soaking and handling, most Grilling Planks are designed for multiple uses. We sell Cedar Planks at Nino's and they come with directions.

Liquid Smoke Yes, it smells like smoke, it tastes like smoke, and in few recipes it's the perfect ingredient to add a touch of smoke. But you're going to grill!...You've got a fire. And soaked wood chips are rather cheap. In our opinion, get real. Quality meats deserve real fire and smoke. In other words, why drive all the way to the Grand Canyon just to stand in the parking lot and gaze at a picture of it on a post card?

Just How Hot Should the Grill be to Cook ?



FISH

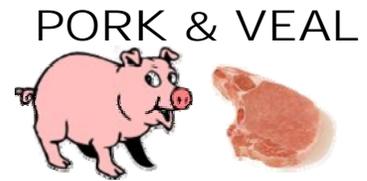
(Fillets & Steaks)

Medium High to High
375° F to 500° F



POULTRY

Medium Low to Medium
300° F to 350° F



PORK & VEAL

Medium
325° F to 350° F



SHELLFISH

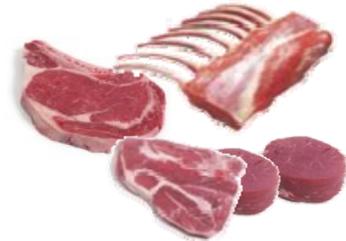
(Lobster) Medium
325° F to 375° F
(Shrimp) High
to 375° F to 500° F

VEGGIES



Medium to Medium High
325° F to 425° F

BEEF & LAMB



Medium to Medium High
325° F to 425° F
Thicker & Bone-In Meats
At Lower Temp End

Some Specific Grilling Tips



Fish should be lightly seasoned & sprayed with vegetable oil before placing on the grill. Do not move the fish until it has firmed & colored or it will tend to stick. (Unlike meats, when a fish fillet is fully cooked, a small incision in the thickest part of the fillet will flake apart, the flesh will no longer be translucent but fully opaque and the fillet will be firm.)



Chicken if raw, should be cooked on Medium Low on the grill. A quick trick is to roast the chicken until just done, chill, then grill it on Medium High while you baste on your sauce.



Pork ribs are more often Barbecued slowly than grilled. Chops, and pork tenderloins are your best candidates for grilling. Don't over cook pork. It's lean and can dry out easily.



Lobsters (Whole) are better boiled than grilled, however lobster tails do well on the grill if you cover them while grilling. Shrimp should be 16/20 count or larger and skewered.



Vegetables should be lightly tossed in oil and seasonings before placing on the grill. To prevent the vegetables from falling through the grates, cut in slices or in 2 inch pieces.



Beef steaks are best suited to dry rubs. Apply in moderation to a "dry" steak and allow to rest for 30 to 45 minutes before grilling. For nice grill marks, pre-heat grill to high, place the steaks on the grill, mark on both sides well (in a sense, this is akin to **searing** and will aid in creating a crust which will help to seal in the juices), then reduce heat to a medium temperature to finish cooking the steak to your liking. **Lamb** Chops or Racks can be treated just like beef, (seared or otherwise), but care should be given not to overcook Lamb Chops or Racks as the portions of meat are smaller and cook more quickly.

THE GRILLING OF KEBABS

KEBAB

(kebab in Turkish, kabab in India/Pakistan, also spelled kebob, kabob) means "grilled meat" in Turkish. Kebab is usually made of lamb and beef, although chicken and fish can be used for some styles. Pork is never used by Muslims because of religious belief but is commonly used by non-Muslim sellers.

There are many varieties of kebab and the term means different things in different countries. The term kebab without specifying the kind refers to döner kebab in Europe and to shish kebab in the United States while in Hebrew the term refers to a specific kind of sausage also locally known as Romanian Kabab.

DÖNER \ KEBAB

Döner kebab, literally "rotating meat", is a sliced lamb or chicken loaf slowly roasted on a vertical rotating spit. It is similar to gyros, shawarma and Taco al pastor. Döner kebab is popularly best known served in pita bread with salad but is also served on a dish with a salad and bread or French fries on the side or used on Turkish pizzas called pide or "kebabpizza".

Take-out döner kebab or shawarma restaurants are common in some parts of Europe. Döner Kebab is said to be the best-selling fast food in Germany and comes close in the popularity stake-outs in France, Denmark and Australia. Take-out gyros is quite popular in the United States where it is usually beef and lamb, shawarma is available in ethnic neighborhoods but döner kebab is unknown.

Some Kebab connoisseurs will also point out that it contains every food group for a healthy meal and lifestyle. It has bread (cereals group), cabbage and lettuce (vegetables group), tomatoes (fruit group), creamy herb sauce (dairy group), oil (fat group) not to mention the döner meat (meat group), although one might note some imbalance in the relative ratios (notably, the fat, meat and vegetable groups.)

SHISH KEBAB

Shish kebab (şiş kebab in Turkish) is a wooden or metal stick (a skewer) with small cubes of any kind of meat, fowl or fish with or without vegetables that is roasted on a grill. Vegetables typically used include eggplant, tomato, bell pepper, onion and mushrooms. A similar Greek food is called Souvlaki or Kalamaki.

GRILLING TIPS

The meat for the Kebabs is often marinated before grilling. If your Kebabs are not purchased "pre-marinated" and you wish to add the flavoring of a marinade, simply baste your choice of marinade on all sides of the Kebabs and let stand for a minimum of 2 to 3 hours to allow the flavor to penetrate the meat. If you are assembling your own kebabs, you may consider marinating the cubed meat separately from the vegetables before skewering. Also, if you are using wooden skewers, be sure to soak them in water for a minimum of 2 to 3 hours to help protect them from burning on the grill.

Kebabs should be grilled. Set your grill temperature to Medium. Too hot a temperature will quickly char both the meat and your vegetables before cooking them properly.

To grill, remove the kebabs from the refrigerator and gently brush off any excessive amount of marinade. Carefully spray the grill area to be used with a non-stick vegetable spray and wipe clean with a dry cloth, also spray the kebabs. Place the kebabs on the grill and turn $\frac{1}{4}$ turn each 3 to 5 minutes of grilling time to insure the kebabs grill evenly.

ADDITIONS & SIDES

Kebabs are often served on or accompanied with seasoned rice. Another popular accompaniment is Lavosh or Pita Bread which is used as a wrap for the meat and vegetables. Popular sauces and condiments include yogurt, lettuce, tomatoes, sour cream, tabouleh, hummus and baba gannouj.

