

## On the Grill

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Next on the list of needed tools is a good external grill **thermometer**. Your grill comes with a thermometer, but since you leave it outside all of the time, it could rust or get damaged and may need to be replaced.

If your thermometer is showing wear or if you suspect the temperature reading may be off, you may want to verify its accuracy. Insert the probe into a pot of boiling water. If it is working correctly, it should register 212 degrees Fahrenheit (or 100 degrees Celsius), and, if not, make an adjustment to calibrate. On the underside of most grill thermometers, there is a small nut that allows you to make adjustments to calibrate the unit. If you need to check the temperature of many other objects, you may want to consider purchasing an infrared unit, which comes in handy to double check the thermometer as well. If you cannot calibrate the unit, replace it. Replacement thermometers are easy to find online (smokeware.com is a good source), but not something that is readily found at your favorite supermarket.

Further, an **instant read digital probe-style thermometer** is a must to be certain that your meat is cooked to the desired temperature. Be sure to choose an *instant read* thermometer, which will report the temperature in a couple of seconds. While analog probe thermometers are inexpensive and *will* work, they can get too hot to handle without gloves or a pad, and your grill may cool down as you keep the lid open for an extended period to read the temperature.

It is important to note that you cannot tell when chicken is safe by looking at the color of the juices or the doneness of the skin. Chicken can often be undercooked in the thighs as you try to make sure the breast does not overcook. Also, the difference between a medium-rare and well-done steak is pretty narrow, and the difference between moist, tender fish and dry, chalky fish is even less. Two similarly sized cuts of pork chops sitting side-by-side can cook at different rates. The breast and thigh of a turkey are almost always at different temperatures. Cooking multiple burgers? They're all slightly different temperatures because your grill has hot spots. That salmon filet has a thick end and a thin end. The only way to deliver properly cooked meat to the table and protect against food borne illness is to take its temperature with a rapid read thermometer.

Several local stores carry digital thermometers; one good brand is Taylor. The most popular model sells for about \$30 and has a timer, alarm and a probe that you can leave in the meat. This sort is suitable if you are going to leave the food in place (a Boston butt comes to mind) and not need to flip it over frequently, as when you are cooking a steak.

Henry Soo of SlapYoDaddyBBQ.com (and a frequent champion on the barbecue circuit) calls the Therman Mk4, the "Lamborghini of instant read thermometers." These high-end thermometers come in a variety of colors, can be customized to reflect your favorite sports team and are available on Mr. Soo's website.

As mentioned above, some digital thermometers have a timer. It is important that you have a timing device of some sort to keep you from losing track of time. Time and temperature serve as indicators for good quality control. Practice will help you come up with some general rules for your grill, as they all cook differently. The nicest thing about digital probe thermometers is that they help to remove the guesswork in your grilling and improve your mastery over fire.

I enjoy reading recipes, and my pet peeve on some is the missing element of suggested cook times and the corresponding cooking temperature. I have a small digital timer with a magnet and a flip out stand, but it also fits in my pocket. My watch also allows me to set a timer, as do many phones. Find one you like, and use it. Keep a check on the temperature of your meat, and your food will turn out well.

The USDA website at usda.gov gives recommendations for proper temperature ranges for different foods. In addition, YouTube and other internet sites are good sources of guidelines and information. The Big Green Egg website at biggreenegg.com, and websites of many other grill manufacturers, offer excellent recipes for a variety of items from biscuits to steaks that you can cook/bake on your grill. Bon appétit.

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

## Have You Heard . . . ?

**Carteret Literacy Council offers training.** Become a volunteer tutor after attending a four-day class to learn how to teach reading, writing, math, English as a second language (ESL), citizenship skills and life skills. Classes will be held from noon to 3 p.m. on September 20, 22, 27, 29, and those who wish to become tutors must attend all classes. To register, call Karen Lasko at the Carteret Literacy Council at 808-2020 between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday-Friday.

**United Way benefits Carteret County.** United Way of Coastal Carolina announces funding to 18 local health and human service programs across 15 agencies serving individuals in Carteret, Craven, Jones and Pamlico counties. This funding is made possible by the generosity of individuals who designated their donation to United Way's Community Fund during the 2015 campaign.

United Way mobilizes resources to benefit local programs aligned around education, income and health. Currently, 48% of the total allocations funds programs that provide health care, counseling and victim services (health programs). The remaining 52% funds programs providing life skills and promoting learning beyond the classroom (education and income). For the 2016-17 funding year, the United Way of Coastal Carolina will provide \$50,000 to fund the following programs located in Carteret County: Boys & Girls Club (Project Learn in Beaufort and Morehead City), Broad Street Clinic (Diabetic Testing for Health program), Carteret County Domestic Violence (Crisis Intervention & Shelter program) and Coastal Pregnancy Care Center (LIFEguard program).

The United Way of Coastal Carolina had its beginnings in the Coastal Carolina area in 1957. On Tuesday, September 27, United Way of Coastal Carolina will kick off its 60th anniversary campaign. Visit [unitedwaycoastalinc.org](http://unitedwaycoastalinc.org) for a complete list of program funding.

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**Jackie Jaloszynski, Au.D**  
Doctor of Audiology