

Barbecue: What's new is old

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Syndicated Columnist

Since the beginning of time and the cycle of evolution, everything "new" turns out to be "old hat," and so it is with the present barbecue craze of cooking with wood instead of charcoal.

Cooking with wood is as old as civilization. Neanderthal man did it, the Indians did it, our forebears did it, the pioneers did it, and we're back to discovering how wholesome and tasty meat, fish and vegetables can be when barbecued and/or roasted with wood.

What can be more inviting than a succulent, juicy steak barbecued over hickory wood, southern style? It's best used for steaks, chicken, wild game and even fresh tuna and halibut steaks.

Alder is a fragrant wood, with a more delicious aroma than hickory. Indian tribes in the Northwest used alder to smoke their salmon, oysters and other fish. Alder enhances the natural flavor of foods -- pork chops, ham, chicken, Cornish hens -- without being overpowering.

Oak is versatile, with a mellow outdoor aroma reminiscent of campfires and summer fun. Thick steaks, chops, fish and ducklings are enhanced with oak wood's "heady" flavor.

Of all the "cooking" woods, historic mesquite is most steeped in Americana. Its most avid fans

had to be the chuck wagon cooks, who used the wood's sweet, smoky aroma to enhance the flavor of practically everything they cooked. Because of the intense heat it produces, mesquite chips and chunks can be used to flavor a variety of foods well, from pork to chicken to vegetables.

Spice is nice, but so are woods and the flavors they bring to barbecuing.

Remember, wood chips or chunks can be the sole source of cooking fuel, or they can act in combination with charcoal. Add four to six wet chunks to the red-hot, ash-covered charcoal; the same imparts an extra-strong smoky flavor to the barbecuing food.

For the best results, soak four to six wood chips or one cup of wood chips in water for about two hours before cooking time; then place them on the hot coals. When the chunks start smoking, begin cooking. The more chips or chunks you use, the more powerful the flavor.

For direct cooking, the heat source and the product you are cooking on grill or rack should be in horizontal positions; with indirect cooking, the product is protected by foil or roasting bags from the direct heat.

Using the wood of your choice, here are some delicious recipes for your next barbecue or cookout.

GRILLED CHICKEN PITAS

- 3 whole chicken breasts, halved, skinned and boned
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1/8 teaspoon each salt, freshly ground pepper and crushed red pepper
- 3 tablespoons low-calorie mayonnaise
- 1/2 teaspoon salt-free dried herb mixture
- 3 (1-ounce) whole-wheat pita breads, halved
- 2 tomatoes, sliced
- 1 1/2 cups leaf lettuce, washed and dried

Use direct cooking method. Brush chicken breasts with lime juice; sprinkle with salt, pepper and crushed red pepper. Rub into surface and let sit 5 minutes.

Mix together mayonnaise and dried herbs; set aside. Place chicken on grill and cook 8 minutes; turn and continue cooking 5 to 7 minutes or until cooked through.

Remove from grill; slice chicken breasts into thin slices.

Slit pitas and spread mayonnaise mixture on the inside. Fill each half with an equal amount of lettuce, tomato and sliced chicken. Serve.

GRILLED SALMON

- 6 1-inch-thick salmon steaks
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The delightful taste of hickory-smoked turkey, mesquite-grilled steak (pictured above), vegetables cooked with alder or oak -- that taste is the latest barbecue innovation, designed to please family and guests at holiday gatherings throughout the summer. Why not start the fun with a barbecue party on the Fourth of July?

Business Profile

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About once a month Make Ah Wish, the house band, performs on a Sunday night. And about one more time during the month an outside band is brought in to provide live music on another Sunday night. The club is open from 4 p.m. until 2 a.m.

Cooper opened the popular night spot in December 1985. "I'm fighting to get in the black," he said about the financial state of the business. "Once you get in business you find it isn't as easy as you thought. You've got to accept the agony of defeat." But he believes it will be a complete success if he sticks with it long enough.

Cooper wants Silvers as the base for other ventures he is planning. Eventually, he hopes to discover and promote local talent. The talent and gong shows are steps in that direction.

"I would like to give them some incentive to keep doing what they are doing," he said of the people he debuts in his club.

And it appears to be working. Each Thursday night an average of 10 contestants sign up to perform. Each one receives a prize ranging from straw hats and albums to tee shirts emblazoned with "I Got Gonged At Silvers" to a \$50 cash prize for the winner.

Most participants are singers or dancers but from time to time a comedian will try out new material on the Thursday night crowds. "All acts are welcome," Cooper said.

Judges for the contests are usually audience members but occasionally local radio personalities sit in.

Last week, Cooper added cookouts every night the club is open, except Sundays, to Silvers' activities. Menus feature fish, spare ribs, chicken or hot dogs and hamburgers. For \$3 club members get all the food and draft beer they want, Cooper said.

In July he plans to start mailing a monthly news flyer to inform members of the cookouts, contests and bands scheduled for each month. And he can include information about the Lady Bombers, a women's softball team sponsored by Silvers. The Bombers will compete in a world championship tournament in South Carolina next month, Cooper said.

Cooper has had experience owning other local businesses. Before opening Silvers, he owned a restaurant, Kings Quick Snack which was on Glenn Avenue, a grocery store and a specialty advertising business that sold items like ball point pens,

calendars, and ball caps inscribed with company names and logos. And he has worked in food service and bartending for over 20 years, he said.

And there have been interesting chapters in his life outside the business world. Cooper was one of only four black students enrolled in white schools in North Carolina in the late 1950's.

Two of the others were his sister and another girl who enrolled at Easton Elementary School when he did. The fourth was a girl at Reynolds High.

"In 1958 I remember going to school under police protection," he said.

When he would start out in the morning to walk the three blocks to school, a patrol car would be parked at the curb in front of his house. As he moved up the street, the police car moved with him. "It made national news," he said.

He had a few fights with other kids but there were no major incidents of violence. He made friends and played sports the three years he attended Easton.

But he was always "side stepped" for parts in school plays or holiday pageants. And he was never invited to the homes of any of his white classmates. An atmosphere of prejudice existed around him, he said. One teacher

even insisted that he read *Little Black Sambo* which was still on the shelves of public school libraries at the time.

He attended both a traditionally white and a traditionally black high school. He graduated from Parkland High -- then an almost all white institution.

The teachers at the black schools seemed more dedicated and demanded discipline, he said. "I can't remember anybody from the time I was in school -- eighth grade to my sophomore year -- who couldn't read," he said. "Now you hear about it all the time. That was where the dedication of the teachers came in."

After high school, Cooper worked at various jobs. But the lure of being his own boss was too strong. He learned many things in his various companies that help him run Silvers. "You've got to learn how to take a fall," he said of accepting the slow times to reach success in business.

He is currently holding a membership drive for the Silvers and may start opening every night, he said. If Thursday night's crowd is any indication, he should have a packed house.

As soon as the Gong Show ended, the dance floor filled with club members and their guests. Charles Leak, a member Make Ah Wish who mc'ed the Gong Show, sang "Do You Like Good Music" and accompanied himself on the keyboards.

Music played by the DJ is usually soul. Thursday he was spinning hits like "I've Got the Feeling It's Over" by Gregory Abbot and "I Like to Rock a Lot" by Aretha Franklin. Whatever is at the top of the charts is the most often requested, Cooper said.

The Silvers crowd seemed to really enjoy themselves Thursday

night. Men dressed in everything from business suits to blue jeans guided their dance partners onto the floor. Women were also in a variety of clothing from jeans to silk look pants ensembles to dresses.

But no matter the attire, most people looked relaxed and comfortable. "We have a down to earth atmosphere," Cooper said.

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Movie Review

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continues to improve. He's no longer as wooden as he was in his first movies.

The action is quite good once it gets going. Unhappily, it takes an hour of exposition before the Predator first strikes. We are forced to sit through a ridiculous plot before we see the first blood.

And bloody it is once the blood starts flowing. A warning for the squeamish: The deaths in this movie are particularly grotesque.

"Predator" may not have the intelligent script or the outstanding acting of "Aliens," but it does have its tension. As a result, "Predator" fails to live up to

Schwarzenegger's aspirations.

But compared to the teenager/slasher movies soon to appear, it does well. Those who want something better will have to wait for a sequel to "Aliens."

"Predator" is rated R and is playing at the Hanes Mall and Reynolda cinemas.

Stanley

From Page B7

ing debut at age 5, singing James Brown's "Poppa's Got

From age 9 to 17 he sang in church where he said he learn-

ed how to "feel" a song. In high school were he met his future producer Bell, Stanley performed with Atom, a rock-edged soul band, and periodically with the Crown

Heights Affair.

It was during "The Rain" session date with Jones that Stanley, was hired to sing background by Bell.

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