

# GREAT GRILLING

## Tailgating Parties: A Delicious Way To Enjoy Sporting Events

(NAPSA)—As outdoor grilling continues to become more popular among Americans, tailgating, too, is following that upward trend. A just-released study by research firm Synovate, Inc. reveals that more than 36 million Americans participated in a tailgate party in the last 12 months, and almost 51 million plan on tailgating during the current football season.

The study also shows that 70 percent of tailgaters say that firing up a grill is their favorite activity. Yet, many feel their grilling skills need improving. If you're planning on throwing a party in your team's parking lot this season, here are some quick tips from Weber to help ensure tailgate grilling success:

**Stating the Obvious.** You must preheat the grill before you cook on it. Shut the lid, let it go for 10 minutes, and you're good to grill.

**Down, Boy.** While some grilling gurus may tell you to grill with the lid up, you really should grill with the lid down. Grilling with the lid down will reduce the chances of flare-ups and cook your food faster and more evenly. While grilling, resist the urge to open the lid to check on your brats or chicken every couple of minutes. Every time you lift the lid, heat escapes, increasing cooking time.

**Don't Flip Out.** You're practicing the art of grilling, not a circus act. Unless the recipe calls for it, flip your food just once.

**Easy on the Squeeze.** Resist the urge to use your spatula to press down on foods such as burgers. You'll only succeed in squeezing out all of the flavor, not making it cook faster.

**Moisturize.** A light coating of



**Portable grills are a key part of keeping the tailgate party burning.**

oil will help brown your food evenly and keep it from sticking to the cooking grate. Always brush or spray oil on your food, not the cooking grate, to avoid flare-ups.

**Forgo the Fork.** You've probably seen people poking their meat with a barbecue fork—maybe you've done it, too. If so, stop it! It causes juices and flavor to escape and dries out your food.

**Adjust to Your Environment.** Grilling times listed in recipes are usually approximates. Allow more time on cold or windy days or at higher altitudes.

**Procrastination Can Be a Good Thing.** When using a marinade, sauce, or glaze with a high sugar content or other ingredients that burn easily, brush on food only during the last 10 to 15 minutes of grilling.

**Is My Game Food Ready Yet?** An instant-read thermometer is your best defense against overcooked foods. Never leave the thermometer in the food while cooking; insert it when you've timed the food to come off the grill.

**Clean Up Your Act.** Don't forget to regularly brush off your cooking grate and clean out the

drip pan under the grill.

**Practice Safe Sizzle.** Keep your grill at least two feet from any combustible materials, especially from your car. Also, never use a grill that wobbles, leans, or is any way unstable. After tailgating, be sure to turn your grill off and let it completely cool down before you pack it up.

**Keep Food Safe.** Practice food safety just like you would at home: If you can't wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water while in the parking lot, use antibacterial wipes before handling food and again after handling raw meat, poultry, or fish. Use different tongs or spatulas to remove cooked food from the grill than those you use to handle raw food. And, never, ever place cooked foods on the same platter you've used for your uncooked food.

Finally, create a tailgating checklist in advance to make for easy pre-game packing: In addition to antibacterial wipes, grill drip pans and vegetable or olive oil, don't forget napkins, sturdy paper or plastic plates, plastic cups and eating utensils, tongs, spatulas, grill mitts, an apron, ice, condiments and seasonings, plastic food containers (pack separate ones for raw food and for leftovers), trash bags, water and folding chairs. And, because most tailgaters use charcoal over gas grills, don't forget enough charcoal to keep the fire burning.

If you follow these easy guidelines, you should be a hit at the stadium—and will be ready for a little friendly tailgate grilling competition among fellow partiers.