

ASK THE EXPERT: General Maintenance Tips for your BBQ

Cleaning your BBQ ensures optimum performance and safety. Please take the time to read and perform the following care and maintenance TIPS.

BASIC MAINTENANCE REGIME FOR YOUR BBQ:

Perform the steps below at the start of every season when removing your BBQ from storage, and at least twice during the BBQ season (more if you use your BBQ year-round).

1. CLEANING GRILL HOUSING

- Remove the warming rack, cooking grates, flame tamers, and burners. Use a plastic scraper to loosen build-up, food residue and ashes inside the grill housing and lid. If you are using a wire or brass brush, ensure that the grill has COOLED, to avoid damage to porcelain finished parts.
- Remove the debris with a spatula or similar tool. If necessary, wash the inside of the grill housing (firebox) with a mild soap and water solution, and rinse with clean water.
- Flush out any remaining debris with a garden hose and wipe the inside of the grill housing with a clean cloth.
- If you are still unsatisfied with the appearance of the inside of the grill housing, high-temperature paint may be used to restore the look of the firebox (Armor Coat Heat Black Paint or Krylon BBQ Black Stove Paint).
- If white oxidation spots are apparent on castings, wash them with mild soap and water.
- Rinse and wipe with a cloth dipped in cooking oil to restore luster.

2. CLEANING BURNERS:

Tell-tale signs of improper maintenance and assembly include the smell of gas, yellow burner flames, barbecue temperature and performance issues, uneven grilling, flashback fire or popping noises.

- Remove your burners from the gas grill
- Brush the surface of the burner to remove surface debris.
- Clean the burner port holes using a wire or paperclip to unclog the ports. Do not use any tools that will cause damage to or enlarge the port holes.
- Using a flexible Venturi cleaning brush, clean the interior of the burner. Shake any loose debris out of the burner, through the gas inlet.
- Using a cotton swab to remove debris from the valve gas jets
- Re-install the burner. Ensure that the burner covers the valve gas jet.

3. CLEANING FLAME TAMERS

- Because your flame tamer protects the burners from direct drippings of grease, fats and salty marinades, when allowed to accumulate this build up will cause grease fires and flare ups to occur directly on top of the this part
- Remove and clean heat plates every other time you BBQ. If you are cooking for a large number of people, cleaning should occur immediately following cool down.
- Use a grill brush to brush away any buildup from your heat plates.
- Clean away all remaining debris with mild soap and warm water.
- Dry thoroughly.
- Re-install the flame tamers

4. CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE OF COOKING GRATES

Seasoning cooking grates improves cooking performance and heat retention, prevents damage and deterioration due to moisture and humidity, creates a non-stick surface for cooking, and extends the life of your cooking grates.

To season and restore your Porcelain Coated Cast Iron or Cast Iron Cooking Grates

- Remove cooking grates and brush away build up using a BBQ Grill brush
- Wash the cooking grates with a mild soap and water solution.
- Rinse thoroughly, and dry with paper towels, or shop towels.
- Important: Never soak or let soapy water sit on the grates for any length of time.
- Ensure grates are dried thoroughly.
- Coat entire grate, front and back, sides and each rod with **vegetable shortening**. DO NOT use salted fat such as margarine, butter or any non-stick cooking spray.
- Place grates in either your conventional oven for 15-20 minutes at 275-300 to complete the seasoning process. Time may vary depending on size and number of cooking grates.
- Once completed, the cooking grates must be allowed to cool down.

By seasoning your cooking grates several times in a season, the pores are permeated with oil, which will prevent water from penetrating the grates and causing early degradation of this part.

5. CLEANING AND MAINTAINING YOUR BBQ'S EXTERIOR SURFACES

ALL MATERIALS including stainless steel, and **black or silver painted parts** can become stained, soiled and corroded by dirt, pollution, deposits from inappropriate cleaners and especially grease. To protect the appearance and integrity of the surface, routine cleaning is essential. Contaminants vary greatly in their effect on appearance, corrosivity and ease of removal. It may be necessary to identify the contaminant or experiment with various cleaners in order to resolve issues including the removal of free-iron contamination.

- Do prolong the service life of your BBQs exterior parts with frequent cleaning and maintenance
- Do test all cleaners on a small inconspicuous area to ensure that it is beneficial for surfaces
- Do use a soft clean cloth, rag, or sponge when cleaning surfaces to avoid scratching finish
- Do use one of the following methods of cleaning:
 - Warm water and Mild soap solution to remove all contaminants.
 - Vinegar and water solution
 - Orange glow stainless steel cleaner
- Do remove dirt and contamination immediately to avoid permanent damage to stainless steel or painted surfaces, do to rust and corrosion
- Do thoroughly RINSE OFF ALL CLEANERS, with clean warm water and DRY COMPLETELY with a soft cloth.
- Do not use any chloride-containing detergents.
- Do not use any abrasive cleaners.
- Do not use ordinary carbon steel brushes, steel wool or scouring pads as they may leave particles embedded on the surface which can lead to rust
- Do not use bleach or cleaners containing bleach. If accidental contact occurs wash immediately with baking soda and rinse thoroughly.

6. STORING YOUR BBQ

When storing your BBQ for the winter or long periods without use, you should do the following:

- Perform cleaning and maintenance of parts as outlined above.
- Remove igniter battery to avoid corrosion
- Remove all parts such as burners, flame tamers, and cooking grates that can deteriorate as a result of moisture damage.
- If storing the BBQ indoors: the propane cylinder **MUST** be removed and stored outdoors, in a well ventilated area.
- When storing your grill in a garage, you should place a piece of cardboard underneath your grill to protect from concrete moisture damage
- If storing the BBQ outdoors: the propane cylinder valve must be turned off. Cover the barbecue. **DO NOT** under any circumstances store the propane cylinder in the garage or near any heat source. Use a grill cover to help protect your grill from the direct environment (i.e. rain, snow, animal droppings, etc.). However, please keep in mind that this does not completely protect your grill from moisture. Routine cleaning is necessary.

Related Topics:

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- ASK THE EXPERT: Care and Maintenance Information for your Centro/ Master Chef Cooking Grates
- ASK THE EXPERT: How to Perform a Leak Test on your BBQ
- ASK THE EXPERT: BBQ Safety to Understanding Flash Fires and Grease Fires
- ASK THE EXPERT: Burner Troubleshooting Information & Maintenance
- ASK THE EXPERT: Your Guide to Heat Distribution Plates/ Flame Tamers