



Va- WOODMPF!

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Barbecuing  
How I **101**  
nearly  
burnt  
the forest  
down!

# Barbecuing Tips

It was setting toward late afternoon and the shadows were lengthening as we car-camped alongside a logging road near Lichtenstein, Germany. I was the chef for dinner and could almost taste the spare ribs we had planned for that evening. I had a brand-new fold-up barbecue that I had bought for our camping trips and was ready to get started.

the siphon tube into the tank. This would require skill and delicate timing, as the taste of gasoline tends to ruin the palate before dinner. However, in no time flat, I had filled a small glass bottle my wife had given me. I walked triumphantly to the barbecue, proud that my resourcefulness had once again saved the day.

I liberally dribbled the gas onto the pile of briquettes. Did I say "lib-

blaze subsided enough for me to get near my barbecue, I saw the red paint was bubbling and peeling off. I guess I'd exceeded the manufacturer's specifications for cooking temperatures.

Needless to say, that was the last time I used gasoline to start a barbecue. Fortunately, I didn't burn down the forest, but I did learn that gasoline is not a suitable substitute for charcoal lighter fluid. However, I'm neither the first nor the last person to try this. A friend of mine once tried using gasoline to get his smoker started. When he tossed a match onto the gas-soaked coals, the resulting explosion almost sent the lid into orbit!

The good news is that you don't have to make the same mistakes we did. Here are some tips to help you keep from barbecuing more than your dinner. ▶

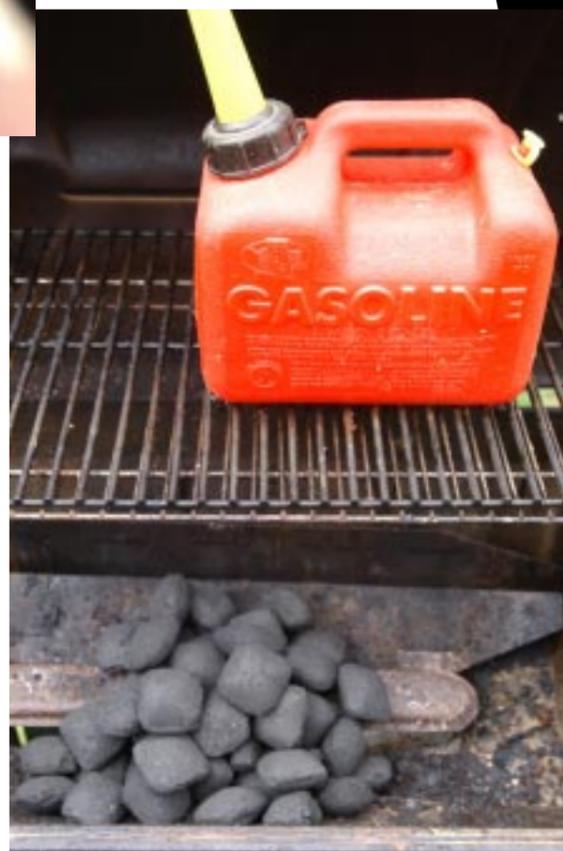
I had the barbecue. I had the matches. I had the briquettes. But I forgot to bring the lighter fluid! No problem. Being a resourceful Army troop, I could "improvise." So I asked myself, "How can I get these briquettes going? What other flammable liquid do I have available?"

My eyes fell on the gas cap of our German-made Taunus station wagon and the answer came like a bolt out of the blue—"Hmm...there's plenty of flammable liquid in the gas tank!" And lucky me, I just happened to have a section of rubber hose in the car.

Not one to waste time, I unscrewed the gas cap and slipped

erally?" I was now late getting started with my cooking and the logic of it all seemed simple enough. If more gas makes the car run faster, maybe more gas will make the briquettes burn faster. Still, being somewhat cautious, I waited a couple of minutes before striking a wooden match and tossing it onto the barbecue.

"VA-WOOMPF!" — the explosion and fireball were breathtaking! The column of fire erupting from my grill reminded me of an F-15 taking off in full afterburner! I looked up and saw the flames dancing dangerously close to some tree limbs above. When the



## Traditional Briquette Grills:

- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for your grill.
- Place the grill in an open area outdoors. Keep it away from buildings, shrubbery, and dry vegetation — 10 feet is a good measure. Also, make sure it's not in the way of pedestrian traffic.
- Do not use a grill on top of or underneath any surface that will burn, such as a porch or carport. The wooden deck attached to your house is NOT a good place to barbecue.
- Never move a lighted grill indoors, regardless of the weather or your appetite for thick, juicy hamburgers. Opening a window or garage door or using a fan might not reduce carbon monoxide to safe levels.
- Do not build a charcoal fire in an indoor fireplace. The briquettes do not produce a fire hot enough to draw the combustion products up the chimney. As a result, poisonous carbon monoxide can remain in the room.
- Use starter fluids designed for your grill. Place the can and matches away from the grill. NEVER use gasoline to light a grill.
- Never leave a lighted grill unattended.
- Keep children and pets away from a hot grill.
- If the coals start to wane or are slow to catch, fan them or use dry kindling or rolled-up newspaper to give them a boost. Adding liquid fuel could result in a flash fire.

## Gas Grills:

- Have your igniter ready when you turn on the grill so the gas doesn't build up and possibly cause a flash burn or explosion.
- If the burner doesn't ignite quickly, shut off the valves, leave the lid open and allow the grill to air out for several minutes before you try to light it again. This will avoid a buildup of explosive gases.
- Store the gas cylinder outside and be sure the gas is turned off at the tank to prevent accidental ignitions. Check the connections frequently for leaks using a soap-and-water mixture. Escaping gas will appear as bubbles. If you see any, tighten the connections or call a professional to repair the grill.
- Clean the metal venturi tubes annually.
- Have the tank filled by a qualified dealer — over-filling can be dangerous.