

Fabulous Food



Grilling With Almond Wood: Flavorful And Sustainable

(NAPSA)—When it comes to grilling food, where there's smoke, there's flavor—usually a very specific flavor depending on the type of wood that's being burned.

That's the word from a number of restaurants, many of which have been stepping up their game by introducing beef lovers to the various flavor profiles offered by different types of wood.

Many chefs are known to have different preferences when it comes to which particular wood to feature when preparing steaks, burgers, kebabs, ribs and more. While some might choose to use mesquite or maple, others prefer pecan, peach or cherry. Each type of wood imparts a slightly different taste or nuance, along with a signature smoky, authentic character that strikes right at the heart of what makes for a memorable meal.

One steak house chain uses aged almond wood in all 10 of its restaurant locations where it grills all its steaks, chops, ribs and seafood over an open fire.

Said David Glennon of Tahoe Joe's Famous Steakhouse, "It's not unusual for us to have guests ask us, 'What's Tahoe Joe's secret ingredient?' because they're trying to figure out that one special taste they can't quite figure out. That's the almond wood."

The company's decision to use almond was only partly influenced by flavor. "Certainly, beef and almond have a real love affair going on," Glennon acknowledged. "Meats sear to a beautiful crust over the high heat of almond wood, and almond's sweet smokiness just blends perfectly into that tender juiciness all beef lovers appreciate."

While flavor alone would have been enough of a reason to choose almond, it is also a matter of sustainability that made almond the signature wood of the restaurant chain.



To get the most flavorful steaks, some chefs might choose to use mesquite or maple wood when grilling; others prefer pecan, peach, cherry or almond wood.

California is one of the largest worldwide producers of almond trees, which must be carefully pruned and maintained to yield the highest possible crop output. This leaves a wealth of leftover almond wood trimmings available year-round that can be used without harming the trees.

"Enlightened Hospitality is at the core of our customer experience," Glennon added. "To us, that not only means treating every guest as you would a friend in your own home, but also ensuring that we create memories with our scratch-made menu, and that begins with the smoky sweet flavor that only almond wood imparts."

When you're doing the grilling, consider these three tips:

1. Test the heat. Hold your palm about three inches from the grill for five seconds. If you can't, it's too hot. If you can for much longer than that, it's not hot enough.

2. Sauce smart. Don't add sauce during the first two-thirds of cooking time or it may burn.

3. Let it rest. As tempting as it may be, don't eat the meat right away. Let it sit for a few minutes so the juices can permeate through.

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