Grilling and smoking season is fast approaching. Who doesn’t enjoy a delicious grilled steak or hamburger? Or maybe some tenderly smoked ribs or brisket. But, if you’re limiting yourself to grilling only meats, you’re missing out on a kaleidoscope of summer flavors.

“A lot of people don’t know what they can do on a grill or a smoker. So I tell my customers that anything they can do in an oven, they can also do with a smoker, and the flavor is tremendous,” says Randy Pickett, grilling and smoking expert at the Salt Lake City IFA Country Store.

Pickett says, a unique item he loves to smoke are frozen dinner rolls. “It’s not hard at all. I just butter up a dutch oven or cast iron skillet and put the Bake and Serve rolls in and let them rise. Then, I follow the cooking instructions on the package. I don’t put the lid on the dutch oven, and the rolls bake just like a regular oven. I get a unique smoke flavoring that’s just tremendous.”

Grilling and smoking vegetables is becoming very popular, especially asparagus tips, carrots, zucchini, and potatoes. Just put the vegetables on a piece of tin foil after coating them with olive oil and seasoning. After 15 minutes at 300 degrees, you’ve got a great-tasting side dish.
For a much different treat, try smoking cherry tomatoes, peaches, or even hard cheese, such as Monterey Jack, Cheddar or Gruyere. Recipes for items like these are available on websites from smoker manufacturers’, such as Traeger and Camp Chef. The smoke flavor will add a unique touch that your family will definitely enjoy.

Pickett says, one of the biggest misconceptions is that people don’t understand how easy smoking really is. “If they don’t have a smoker, I find most people are a little intimidated. They don’t have to be. Using a smoker is so easy. It’s really like cooking with a crock pot. It’s slow cooking. You just prepare it, and then leave it alone for a couple of hours. What could be more simple?”

And for those who don’t own a smoker, that doesn’t mean you can’t enjoy a good smoky flavor. Smoking is achieved over low, indirect heat. If you have a gas grill, wood chips are the answer. Just ignite one of the burners of your grill and close the lid. Let the grill heat up to your desired temperature (remember, this is a slow cooking process, so keep the temperature lower than if you are just grilling), and then add the wood chips (Soak the chips for about 30 minutes and then drain before using). Otherwise, they’ll burn rather than smolder and smoke. And finally, put whatever you’re smoking on your grill.

If you’re interested in becoming an expert smoker or griller, talk to a specialist at IFA Country Stores. We can help you choose the right Traeger or Camp Chef smoker, a wide variety of 100% hardwood pellets, wood chips, seasonings and an assortment of grilling utensils.

Information for this article was provided by Randy Pickett,
Salt Lake City IFA Country Store.