



GRILL ON! 6 TIPS FOR SURE-FIRE WINTER PELLET GRILLING

The first perfect grilling day used to be an important annual milestone which marked the official coming of summer, but pellet grilling and tasty, smokey, delicious food doesn't need to stop when the leaves and the temperatures drop.

With the arrival of snow also comes football games to watch and holidays to celebrate. All of which pair perfectly with hearty, comforting, slow-cooked foods. Whether you're smoking a game-day pork butt, a Thanksgiving turkey or a weekday roast for dinner, pellet grilling throughout the winter is a great way to add a little extra flavor to the longest time of the year.

So find your favorite snow boots, pull on your warmest Carhartt coat, grab a pair of leather gloves and get out your grilling tools; because we're going to show you how to keep grilling up smokey family-favorites and new hits—all the way through the winter.

1. SAFETY FIRST

A little preparation and maintenance will set you up to embrace winter pellet grilling, instead of giving up after a couple of cold, unsuccessful attempts.

To get started, you've heard of spring-cleaning a house, well fall is the time to give your pellet grill a thorough, deep cleaning. Hopefully, you already do this before storing your grill away when summer ends, but in case you don't, make sure to get your grill sparkling clean when it's still a little warm outside.

Next, once the flurries start to fly, it's tempting to confine your shovelling efforts to the driveway and walkways around

your house. Do your future-grilling-self a favor and add your grill area, and path to the grill, to your regular shoveling duties. Moving your grill closer to the house and out of the prevailing wind will make this task easier, and will reduce the time you spend out in the cold once you start grilling. Just don't move your grill too close to the house, or into the garage, no one wants a visit from the fire department or a trip to the ER at dinnertime.

Finally, with shorter days and earlier winter nights, make sure you have decent lighting in your grilling space. If you don't have outdoor lighting near your grill, an in-expensive headlamp is great because it leaves both your hands free for important grilling business. At the very least, use a bright flashlight to make sure you can see where you're going and what you're doing.

2. PACK ON THE PELLETS

In colder weather your pellet grill needs to work a little harder to maintain a consistent temperature, which is essential to the slow-cooking magic that is winter pellet grilling. Using high-quality, 100% hardwood pellets gives you more reliable temperature control because they burn at a stable rate, unlike pellets with filler materials.

50%

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Make sure to store your pellets off the ground in a dry place, soggy or moldy pellets aren't going to make any food taste delicious. IFA's food-grade 5-gallon buckets work great for storing pellets in your garage or shed.

More pellets mean more smoke, so this is a great opportunity to experiment by combining woods with a milder flavor, like alder or apple, with bolder ones, such as hickory or pecan. Get creative with your winter pellet grilling by mixing different types of wood pellets together to make your own unique blends. Long, cold afternoons are the perfect time to experiment and try something new.

Remember to keep things safe and airflow moving by cleaning out the ashes more frequently than in the summer, because more pellets also means more ash.

3. KEEP A LID ON IT

There's an old expression, "If you're lookin', you're not cookin'." This sage axiom is even more true when it's chilly outside.

Valuable heat escapes every time you open your grill, causing the temperature inside to drop. Which, in turn, means your

pellet grill will have to work harder and burn even more pellets to get back up to the correct temperature.

So set your grill, put the food on to cook, then stay inside where it's warm and trust your temperature probes to do their job. If you aren't already using a smart thermometer with Wi-Fi or Bluetooth connectivity, now might be the time to invest or to put one on your holiday gift wish-list.

It's always tempting to take a peek to see the pellet-grilling magic at work, but do yourself a favor, resist this urge and keep your lid shut!

Resist the urge to open the grill and take a peek. Heat escapes every time you open the lid. Be patient, use a meat probe, and trust the process.

4. BUNDLE UP

Keep yourself and your grill toasty warm by layering up. An insulated grill blanket helps keep your pellet grill hot, just like your favorite Carhartt jacket keeps you cozy even when it's freezing and windy outside.

Our IFA grilling experts* all agree, using an insulated grill blanket means your grill will preheat faster, have an easier time maintaining temperature stability and burn fewer pellets. Keep



things safe by making sure to use an insulated blanket designed for your grill. You will find Camp Chef and Traeger insulated blankets in a range of sizes at your local IFA Country Store.

Another pro tip for winter grilling is to cover your grill when it's not in use to keep it free of snow and ice. Nothing chills the pellet-grilling fever faster than having to shovel a lot of cold, white stuff off the grill before you can even get started. And, no, that foot of snow on top of your grill does not count as insulation.

5. PLAN FOR SUCCESS

When the temperatures drop you need to do a little more planning to ensure a great winter pellet grilling experience.

You already know to keep more wood pellets on hand, but you'll also need to plan for your meal to take longer to cook when the weather is cold and windy, and it might take your grill 50% longer to get up to temperature and 10-25% longer for your food to cook.



Even with an insulated blanket, cooking times increase on every meal. Plan ahead and give your pellet grill extra time to work its smokey magic.

No one likes having to tell a hungry family they'll have to wait another 30-40 minutes for dinner to be ready. Save yourself from this experience by giving your pellet grill extra time to work its magic. It may take a little longer, but it'll still taste amazing.

6. KEEP IT WARM

This advice isn't just for your hands and feet, once your smokey marvel is done grilling you still need to get it to the table. Using a preheated, covered cast iron skillet or dutch oven to bring your food inside will keep it deliciously hot. Pop your cast iron cookware into the grill a few minutes before your food is done to get it a little warm; be careful not to get the dish too hot or you risk overcooking the masterpiece you just spent hours perfecting.

If you don't have a go-to cast iron skillet or dutch oven, you can pick up Lodge or Camp Chef pre-seasoned cast iron skillets and duct ovens at your IFA Country Store when you load up on pellets. Because every grill-master needs dependable, durable cast iron cookware in their grilling arsenal.

Another warming option is your cooler, who's insulation not only keeps your food and drinks cold during the summer, but will also keep your favorite pellet-grilled meats warm in the winter. Simply, wrap your cooked food in aluminum foil or butcher paper, place it in the cooler and close the lid until it's time to serve. For additional insulation, stuff a towel or two around your wrapped food once it's in the cooler.

Once you've taken your delicious, smokey, steaming meal inside and to the table, you will reap the rewards of your winter pellet grilling efforts and will agree with us that a little work and planning is definitely worthwhile.

You're now ready to enjoy the tastiest winter ever with family and friends. If you need a little bit of help getting set-up, just stop by your local IFA to talk with one of our winter pellet grilling experts and find everything you need to grill up—and through—a storm.

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