



Best Backyard BBQ Ever: How to Make It Happen

Nothing says summer more invitingly than steaks sizzling on the grill. Whether it's a small family gathering or a fabulous shindig, when you start up the grill, you have an instant party. How can you make sure your culinary creations are a hit? It doesn't take study at the Cordon Bleu, but it does take a bit of know-how. The first rule is to stay safe. That includes washing everything, never reusing the plate you designate for raw meats, and keeping water handy in case of flare-ups. It also means no rare hamburgers. The Official Scott Robert's Website offers additional tips that are certain to make your party pop. Here are 10 of his best.

1. If you're using briquettes, light them about 30 minutes before starting to grill. This gives them time to heat and avoids the taste of starter fluid.
2. When using charcoal, line the inside of your grill with aluminum foil for faster cleanup.
3. Choose marbled meats for tenderness.
4. Make chicken skin crispy by rubbing it with oil or butter before cooking.
5. Don't pierce meat during cooking lest the juices escape.
6. Coat salted veggies with butter, wrap tightly in aluminum foil, and "throw it on the grill."
7. Add salt to meats *after* cooking to avoid drying them out.
8. Use a stiff wire brush or a piece of crumpled foil to keep your grill grate clean.
9. When using a marinade, marinate overnight or at least an hour before grilling.
10. Experiment with different marinades to find a flavor you love.

Are You a First Time Buyer?

Get My Free Guide!

Buying your first home is a big step and one that is likely to impact your financial future for years to come.

Make it easier by requesting my free guide. Just call and I'll send it right out to you.

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Prepping Your Home for Sale: Get the Most Bang for Your Buck

Every seller wants to maximize his or her profit. Partnering with a real estate agent is a great start. Homeowners can further increase their bottom line with a few simple steps. To get the most out of your house, complete the following before you list.

Hire your own home inspector. If a buyer's inspector finds issues with your home, you can expect your profit to shrink. Stay one step ahead by hiring your own home inspector to unearth any potential issues.

Invest in repairs. In addition to addressing any trouble the home inspection reveals, it's a good idea to have cosmetic issues addressed. Prospective buyers notice things like cracked tile, chipped baseboards, or a squeaky floorboard, and this will be reflected in their offer.

Upgrade where it counts. You don't have to renovate your whole house to turn a healthier profit. Make small, impactful swaps, such as switching out lighting, cabinet hardware, or shower heads for cleaner, more contemporary options.

Add a few new accessories. Fresh flowers and potted plants go a long way in making a room feel inviting. For a cozier living room, drape a cable-knit blanket over the couch. String Edison bulb lights over a patio and put an Adirondack chair on the front porch. These small touches add major warmth.

Treat it like a model home. To sell your house quickly and for the most money, treat it like a house you've been hired to stage. Put personal effects into storage, declutter, remove artwork that could be seen as too loud, and make sure the house is absolutely spotless.

Reduce Waste with These Food Storage Hacks

One of the best ways to manage your grocery budget is to store your food properly.

Start with the fridge. Not all parts of your refrigerator are created equal. Ignore the built-in egg storage in some refrigerator doors. Keep eggs in their cartons. Those doors are warm and won't keep the eggs. Additionally, dairy products are best stored on top shelves where the temperature is most consistent. Meat stores best on the bottom. Keep in mind that meat should only stay in the refrigerator for four days, fish for two. Vegetables and fruits should be kept in separate crispers. Some fruit, including apples and pears, can cause vegetables to spoil.

Counters are also important for storing food. Bananas, melons, and citrus fruits should be stored here. Tomatoes, potatoes, and winter squash are also best kept on the counter, along with garlic, onions, and shallots. As a bonus, these colorful foods can double as decorations and add beauty to your kitchen. Bread should also be stored on the counter, but only for two days. Wrap it in foil or place it in a Ziploc bag.



Thanks for All Your Referrals!

I succeed when people like you refer me to your friends, neighbors and loved ones. It's the best kind of feedback I can receive.

So thanks for continuing to pass this newsletter on to people you care about.

After two days, move it to the refrigerator.

In your pantry, airtight containers are key. They keep your pantry clean and make dry goods last longer. Spices should be kept here to protect them from heat, light, and humidity.

Finally, remember that your freezer is good for more than meat storage. Stock and wine can be frozen in ice cube trays and muffin tins. Once frozen, place the cubes in freezer bags. Thaw to use at your convenience!



Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighborhood selling for?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I'll be able to help. Just give me a call for a no-fuss, professional evaluation.

I won't try to push you into listing with me or waste your time. I'll just give you the honest facts about your home and its value. And maybe I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Just give me a call at 978-478-8656 to arrange an appointment.



Worth Reading

Scientists Accidentally Create Mutant Enzyme That Eats Plastic Bottles

*By Damian Carrington
The Guardian*

The future of recycling could be in enzymes. In 2016, scientists in Japan accidentally found an enzyme that could break down plastic at garbage dumps. Now, an international team of researchers is working to develop an enzyme that can break down plastic water bottles — in only a few days. Currently, many end up in the ocean for years, harming marine life and damaging drinking water. More: <https://tinyurl.com/enzyme11>

9 Quick Ways to Refresh a Room

*By Susannah Hutchinson
Houzz.com*

Are you discouraged because all the home renovation projects you had planned for this summer aren't going to happen? Discover a few quick ways you can freshen up your house in no time. One main tip: reuse what you already have. Rearrange furniture. Place a rug from the living room in the kitchen. Start small. Paint a door. Put up a strip of wallpaper. Pick new knickknacks. You may decide you don't need a massive renovation after all. More: <https://tinyurl.com/9refreshers>

List Measurable Accomplishments on Your Resume, Not Just Responsibilities

*By Alicia Adamczyk
Lifehacker.com*

Don't just brag on your resume. Brag properly. Provide details about your accomplishments instead of simply listing skills. Include how many contracts you landed, give the names of clients you worked for, and describe the teams you managed. Have additional examples ready when the interviewer asks you for more details. More: <https://tinyurl.com/resumetip1>

What You Need to Know Before Becoming a Landlord

Thinking of becoming a landlord? While this can be financially and personally rewarding, you must do your homework before you take the leap.

To help you learn the ropes and avoid any costly missteps, here are some handy tips of the trade.

It cannot be overstated how important it is for landlords to do their pre-closing homework.

During the home inspection, remember to take a thorough look at the property to see what will need to be repaired or replaced.

For example, you might want to change the toilets to low-flow models. You'll also probably want to invest in essential upgrades to three common areas: water, door locks, and

flooring. Don't make the rookie mistake of underestimating the costs of fixing and maintaining the property, both before and after a tenant has moved in.

Most landlords account for insurance and taxes, but it's easy to miss expenses like garbage, gardening, and regular maintenance.

According to *Money*, you should set aside at least 35 to 45% of your annual rental income to cover these costs. (And when you're calculating this income, it's a good rule of thumb to account for only 10 or 11 monthly payments per year.)

When it comes to finding a tenant, don't be too relaxed. Interview prospective tenants on the phone first to find out if they meet your requirements. Then, it's important to check your potential tenants' credit and speak to their references. Confirm the source and amount of their

income. It should be at least 2.5 times the annual rent. You should also learn what's legal in your town. For example, can you ban pets?

Once you've found a great tenant, act fast to get the lease signed. From there, never forget that you're running a business and your tenant is a customer. Treat your customer right, and success is more likely to come your way.



Consumer Recalls: What You Need to Know

How do you know if the products you buy are safe? Paint can be toxic. Sprays may be carcinogenic. A badly designed crib can be fatal. Paranoia aside, consumers regularly hear about massive recalls — for cars, toys, kitchen appliances, and more. It can be difficult to keep up with the latest warnings. What can consumers do to protect themselves? In *MIC*, Christy Rakoczy offers several suggestions:

- Register new purchases immediately, so the company has your contact information should a recall occur.
- Search the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) by product name to find information on recalls of appliances, clothes, electronics, furniture, children's products, sports equipment, outdoor gear, and household items.
- Check the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for information on vehicles and transportation products.
- The [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) and the [Food and Drug Administration](#) provide recall information on food products.
- Check the FDA for information about medications and personal care products.

Make Big Use of Small Outdoor Spaces

Yes, it is possible to throw big-effect parties in small spaces. A lot depends on how wisely you use furniture. If you don't have a lot of room for guests *and* tables and chairs, buy small furniture and arrange it along the outside of your space. This way, guests can easily get to food and drinks while mingling with others.

Additionally, choose furniture that is easy to move or can have multiple functions. Some people use small counter islands for

tables. They're sturdy and come with storage space. Floor cushions can work as large chairs. You can easily add more or less and store them when they're not being used.

Folding chairs may also be helpful. Remember, parties are about building relationships, so your priority is to provide a good structure for connecting people.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

When is the best time to sell my home?

Sellers logically want to put their homes on the market when they will sell quickly and for the best price. To achieve this, they must find the busiest home-selling season — for their market. In most areas, this season is spring. For many regions, this time of year offers warmer weather and more daylight for shopping. It's also prime time for families to buy if their goal is to get settled in before the next school year begins. Launching in spring, the busy season typically peaks in June, then tapers off as fall arrives.

However, some areas are less affected by weather changes or may be affected by other factors. The timing and demand for houses may be more or less pronounced at different times of year, depending on the location. This is where real estate agent expertise comes in handy. Your agent is intimately familiar with the local market and can best advise you when your market is hot.

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Sudoku instructions: Complete the 9 × 9 grid so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3 × 3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

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Warm Lentil Salad

Try something new! Makes 4 servings

- 1 cup French green lentils
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 ½ cups water
- ¼ cup + 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 cup thinly sliced onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar or sherry
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 2 large carrots, shredded
- 1 cup diced tomato
- 1 tablespoon chopped mint
- 4 ounces fresh goat cheese, crumbled

Rinse lentils. Combine lentils, bay leaf, and water in a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, uncovered, until tender. Remove bay leaf and drain lentils. While lentils are cooking, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring often, until tender, about 10 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant. Remove from heat. In a large bowl, whisk together vinegar, mustard, salt, and pepper. Whisk in remaining olive oil. Add lentils, onion mixture, carrots, tomato, mint, and goat cheese, and toss to combine. Serve warm.

The Coco, Early Report is brought to you free by:



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