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The Next **Great
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Food
City**

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The New Grilling Essentials

SEVEN GRILLING
EXPERTS SHARE THEIR TIPS
ON TAMING THE FLAME

Oh happy, smoky, bring-out-the-giant-tongs, never-leave-our-backyards day: Grilling season is here again. And though we love all the familiar rituals and simple pleasures of cooking outside, we're always open to learning a few new good tricks. Like how to grill a better burger—by keeping the meat itself off the grates. Or how a bit of gentle charcoal heat (and a bunch of compound butters and homemade chile sauce) can bring a seafood tower to new heights.

"Grilling is convivial," notes Edi Frauneder of New York's Edi & the Wolf. "There's something about this act of coming together over an open flame that just says *vacation*." Frauneder throws together a casually brilliant, crowd-pleasing open-faced assemblage of pickled peaches and plums with burrata and arugula on top of homemade flatbread. It's a reminder that cooking with fire isn't just about big cuts of meat (though we've got ideas for that too) or who's got the bigger flames. Frauneder's dish is subtle, smoky, sweet, and tart. And like the rest of these inspired takes on summer grilling, it's exactly what we want to be cooking and eating right now.

Photographs by **MICHAEL TUREK**

A GIANT FENNEL-CHILE-RUBBED STEAK

One essential rub on an extra-large cut yields a restaurant-worthy meal for a crowd

"It's my only rub, and my favorite rub," says Andrea Reusing, James Beard Award-winning chef of Lantern restaurant in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, of her mildly hot fennel seed rub. It works on just about anything: chicken, mackerel, wild salmon, vegetables, steaks, whatever. "People who don't think they like licorice still like it, because the flavor plays off the peppers in a really nice way," she says. The subtle anise flavor will come through in the oven or on the stovetop, but cooking it over an open flame creates an irresistible crust.

SERVES 2

COOK TIME: 1 HOUR, 15 MINUTES

- 1 2-2 1/2-lb. T-bone steak, 2 1/2-3" thick
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1/4 cup fennel-chile rub (see recipe below)

1 Season steak generously with salt; let sit at room temperature for 2 hours.

2 Build a medium-heat fire in a charcoal grill, or heat a gas grill to medium. (Alternatively, heat a cast-iron grill pan over medium.) Brush steak with oil and coat with the fennel-chile rub; grill, turning as needed, until cooked to desired doneness, about 45 minutes for medium-rare, or until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the steak reads 125°. Let steak rest 15 minutes before carving. Sprinkle with salt and serve.

Fennel-Chile Rub

MAKES 1 CUP

Toast 1/4 cup whole fennel seeds and 1/4 cup whole black peppercorns in a medium skillet over medium-high until seeds begin to pop, 1-2 minutes; let cool slightly. Working in batches, transfer to a spice grinder and pulse until coarsely ground. Mix with 1/2 cup crushed red chile flakes in a bowl and then transfer to an airtight container. Store in the refrigerator for up to 3 months.

The Beauty of Grilling Large Cuts of Meat

"People associate steakhouses with steaks that are rare-ish inside and have a super-burnished crust on the outside," says Reusing. The easiest way to get that pro texture at home is to go big. Use a bone-in cut that's a few inches thick. You'll pay a pretty penny for big cuts, but they're more forgiving than skinny steaks, which go from raw to overcooked in a flash. A large cut can handle the heat and easily serve a crowd with varying tastes—some parts will be more well-done, others more rare. Plus, says Reusing, "You can get a really serious, crunchy dark crust on the outside, simply because you're cooking it longer."





The 2008 Mayacamas
Mt. Veeder Merlot (\$38;
sherry-lehmann.com), from Napa,
or the 2012 Arnot Roberts Syrah
(\$40; winetransit.com), from
California's North Coast, are
both slightly gamey and work
well with the rub's heat.