



NEWS RELEASE

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18TH ANNUAL WEBER GRILLWATCH™: 50 Percent of American Grillers Now Own a Charcoal Grill

PALATINE, Ill., May 1, 2007—While gas continues to be the most popular type of outdoor grill owned (67 percent), one-half of all grill owners now have a charcoal grill, according to the 18th Annual Weber GrillWatch™ Survey. Smoker ownership, too, is on the rise at 17 percent, up from 12 percent the previous year.

The objective, third-party survey—conducted by Greenfield Online to ensure statistical integrity—is the nation's most comprehensive study on what, where, when, why, and how Americans cook outdoors. All survey respondents were over age 21 and own a gas, charcoal, or electric barbecue grill or smoker. Respondents were balanced demographically to represent households across the U.S.

When it comes to the type of grill that Americans *use most often*, grillers reach for the charcoal 36 percent of the time. Gas grills with LP tanks are again tops at 54 percent. Natural gas grills are used 4 percent of the time, while electric grills and smokers are feeling the heat 3 percent of the time.

Charcoal enthusiasts tend to be among the younger set. People under the age of 35 (43 percent) and between 35 and 54 (37 percent) are significantly more likely to use a charcoal grill most often compared to those who are age 55 or older (28 percent). Location plays a factor as well. Those in the South Central region of the U.S. are more likely to say they use a charcoal grill most often (51 percent) as compared to those living elsewhere in the U.S. (3 percent in the West and South Atlantic, 35 percent in the North Central, and 24 percent in the North East).

I Want More Than Enough!

Just like multi-car households, one just isn't enough when it comes to a grill. Twenty-nine percent of America's grilling population own multiple grills. Smoker owners tend to be the most fanatical with 73 percent reporting they own multiple grills, including 22 percent who say they own three or more.

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Color Takes the Spotlight

Recent survey results show that consumers are ready to add a splash of color to the backyard. When asked about choice of color for their next barbecue purchase, 37 percent say they want something other than black or stainless, with red mentioned the most often (10 percent) followed by blue (8 percent). Thirty-three percent desire black, and the same percentage would like stainless.

The Gift of the Grill

Overall, nearly one-quarter of grill owners (22 percent) say they have purchased an outdoor barbecue for someone as a gift. People who own smokers (37 percent) are significantly more likely than gas (23 percent) or charcoal owners (25 percent) to have bought a grill as a gift. Women are significantly more likely than men to say they have purchased an outdoor barbecue for someone as a gift (24 percent compared to 19 percent).

Of those who purchased a grill as a gift for someone, birthdays were the top occasion cited (38 percent) followed by Father's Day (21 percent) and Christmas (18 percent). Grills are also popular housewarming gifts (17 percent) and for anniversaries (11 percent).

Grill Usage

Charcoal grill usage is up among people who own both a charcoal and a gas grill. Consumers who own both are using the charcoal grill more frequently than in previous years—26 percent, up from 19 percent the year before.

While full-size, stationary cart model grills are still used most often (79 percent), 20 percent of GrillWatch respondents say they use their portable models most often (up from 18 percent the previous year).

Overall, Americans continue to say they are grilling more than one year ago. While 54 percent say they're grilling as frequently as one year ago, 29 percent say they are grilling more often. Only 15 percent are grilling less often than a year ago. Younger grill owners under age 35 are significantly more likely to be grilling more now than a year earlier (41 percent) than those between age 35 and 54 (29 percent) or age 55 or older (20 percent).

Holiday Grilling

Americans continue to fire up the grill on just about every holiday. The Fourth of July once again tops the list of celebrations at 81 percent, followed by Labor Day and birthdays (both at 68 percent), Memorial Day (60 percent), and Father's Day (50 percent).

Why and What Americans Are Grilling

Americans increasingly prefer to grill outdoors rather than cook inside—78 percent say they prefer to grill outdoors compared to 22 percent who prefer to cook inside. This is compared to 76 percent and 24 percent, respectively, for the previous year. Men are more likely (82 percent) to say they prefer to cook outdoors than women (75 percent).

By a wide margin, the most important reason Americans grill is for the “flavor of the food” (54 percent). People who use charcoal grills most often are more likely to say it's for the flavor of the food (60 percent) compared to people who use gas grills most often (52 percent). “Fun” is cited next by 11 percent of Weber GrillWatch respondents. Women (11 percent) are more likely than men (5 percent) to say they grill because there are no pots and pans to clean up afterwards.

The percentage of grill owners who grill the entire meal on a regular basis increased again this year to 23 percent from 18 percent last year, and from just 8 percent in the 2005 Survey. The percentage of people who grill appetizers also increased from 14 percent last year to 17 percent. People under 35 years of age are most apt to grill the entire meal (33 percent) compared to those between age 35 and 54 (23 percent) and those age 55 or older (14 percent).

When asked to pick the top foods they *grill most often*, the order of Americans' top four picks hasn't changed over the last year with hamburgers at number one (64 percent), followed by steak (46 percent), chicken pieces (40 percent), and hot dogs (34 percent). Respondents' fifth and sixth most often grilled foods are ribs (14 percent), and bratwurst (13 percent).

Again this year, Americans say their all-time *most favorite food to grill* is steak (34 percent), followed by poultry (13 percent), hamburgers (12 percent), ribs (7 percent), and pork (5 percent).

Using Sauces and Rubs

Nearly one-half of Americans (48 percent) say they have made their own barbecue sauce with women (51 percent) more likely to have done it than men (44 percent). In addition, charcoal owners (53 percent) are more likely than gas owners (47 percent) to have whipped up a homemade barbecue sauce. However, smoker owners are most apt to take the time to make their own sauce (71 percent).

Grill owners' barbecue sauces are as unique as the grillers themselves. Americans love a variety of ingredients in their barbecue sauces. Garlic (54 percent) is the top ingredient, followed closely by brown sugar (51 percent). Americans also like to use honey (45 percent), pepper (42 percent), onion (42 percent), and ketchup (40 percent). Women are significantly more likely than men to list brown sugar, honey, and ketchup as ingredients, whereas men are significantly more likely than women to list beer, Tabasco sauce, bourbon and fresh chili peppers.

Nearly two-thirds of Americans (62 percent) say they have used dry rubs on meats when grilling. This number increases to 80 percent for those who own a smoker.

Learning to Grill

The majority of American grill owners (61 percent) say they are self-taught grillers. However, 28 percent of grill owners say Dad taught them. People who use charcoal most often are more likely to say they learned the art from Dad (33 percent) compared to people who use gas most often (26 percent). Those under age 35 are significantly more likely to say they learned from someone else (51 percent) compared to those age 55 or older (30 percent). Overall, "spouse" was cited at 13 percent, followed by "Mom" (8 percent) and "a friend" (6 percent).

Weber-Stephen Products Co., headquartered in Palatine, Ill., is the premier manufacturer of charcoal and gas grills, grilling accessories and other outdoor room products. In 1952, founder George Stephen sparked a backyard revolution with his invention of the Weber® kettle. More than 50 years later, the family-owned company remains the industry leader with its Weber®, Weber® Q™, and Ducane® brands. As a leading exporter of grills, Weber brand products are sold worldwide at select home centers, hardware stores, department stores, patio stores, and other retail outlets. Weber has the strongest consumer outreach program in the industry with its Weber Grill-LineSM (1-800-GRILL-OUT®)* and a content-rich website with grilling tips, techniques, and original Weber recipes at www.weber.com®.

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* The Weber Grill-Line and Weber Customer Service are closed on Christmas day.