



## Grilling with Fresh, Healthy Foods

Summertime means grilling. Grilling is cooking made easy **and** healthy! Grilled foods require little additional fat for cooking and they require minimal seasoning. Here are some tips for healthy, great-tasting grilled foods.

Choose low fat meats, such as skinless chicken breasts, pork tenderloin, fish, and shrimp. Marinades are a great way to enhance flavors, tenderize meats, and keep foods from drying out when grilling. They can be made with vinegar, fruit juices, soy sauce, or wine. Be brave and try something new!

Soak dried herbs, fresh citrus peel, and wood chips in water for ten minutes. Then add to the coals. Add more every fifteen minutes or so for a pleasant smoke flavor.

Wrap fish in foil packets to retain natural flavors, keep it from falling apart, and to protect it from fire and smoke.

Thread fresh vegetables like bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, eggplant, squash, or onions on skewers and grill for a tasty side dish. Before grilling, spray with a vegetable oil spray (away from the fire) and grill quickly until tender.

Grilled fruits make a great dessert...try bananas, pineapples, mangoes, or peaches. The fruit should be halved (pits removed) and placed on the grill, pulp-side down.

Always practice food safety principles when grilling to avoid food borne illnesses. If you choose to eat outdoors, be sure the patio or picnic table is cleaned thoroughly with hot, soapy water. Even if it appears clean, proceed with caution as it provides a wonderful breeding ground for bacteria. It is critical that all food contact surfaces are as clean and sanitary as possible.

Once the table is clean, don't forget about your hands. Take time to thoroughly scrub in between fingers and under fingernails.

The Northeast Iowa Food & Farm (NIFF) Coalition and the Food & Fitness Initiative are working together to create community environments that support access to fresh, locally grown, healthy, affordable food and safe environments for physical activity and play. More information about these programs can be found at [www.niffcoalition.org](http://www.niffcoalition.org).