

It's that time of the year when we manly men bring out our old leather jackets hoping to look cool like 80's MacGyver. Except it never gets that cold, making us realise the leather was best left attached to the cow.

But, it is just barely cold enough to do that other winter thing for manly men: barbeque. We wait all year to do this because somewhere in an old movie starring Robert Redford or Aamir Khan, it appeared very romantic. Crackling fires, sultry guitar twangs and the love

interest crooning softly complete the picture.

In reality though, crackling fires are accompanied by the spastic fizz of electrocuted mosquitoes and a wife somewhere shouting "I've set a towel on fire." All you men and women reading this can take comfort following my tips. I have made all the mistakes to be made without dying even once. Or worse, without burning the meat.

(The wife insists I add "it is always a miracle.")

First you make a brief plan

This is the step people waste most of their time on. I have a friend who planned for the last seven years about throwing a barbeque party. The only thing to plan is to settle the invites. Four out of six people will not do any of the work even after making strong promises. Two of those people will turn up only after the food has been cooked, licked and chewed. The trick is to find more of the first two: those will help you cook, share the blame and be worthy of the post cookout selfie.

Then you gather materials, quickly

You can buy a metal miniature box-like thing in New Market for grilling. It is cheap at under BDT 1,000 and you can conveniently store old screws and nails in it till next year. Or you could borrow a few bricks from the under-construction apartment nearby and build your own trough.

What you need to get right is the coal which is also easy to find. All bazaars are fully stocked with jacked up prices of coal to be sold by the kg.

Get a square foot of chicken wire netting from a hardware store for about BDT 60 to lay on top of the trough and you're set. What's important is how you do the cookup. I'm an expert on this as I've once watched the children's edition of Masterchef where Gordon Ramsey completely refrained from his usual shouting like a deranged vice principal.

Prepare the meat

The trick to getting all the meat to taste right is to marinate properly for additional flavour and softening. For the noobs, it means soak the meat in something nice like lemon or vinegar and not moisturiser. I tried marinating for days. I also marinated for a few hours. It all turns out the same. What you do not do is marinate with sauce. That will burn quickly while cooking leaving you an acrid taste.

Lighting the fire

We manly men love to watch the world

burn. Which is why we opt quickly for lighter fluid or kerosene. You pour it on the coal and light a fire resulting in tiny explosions that reach all the way to a towel hanging overhead. As you squint your eyes and ignore the burning eyebrows, you feel like a manly Bruce Willis just having blown some bad guys into oblivion. The right way is to start the fire a little but then leave out the fluid altogether. If you add more fluid while cooking, you end up with a metallic taste of lighter fluid/kerosene on your meat after cooking. And trust me, those things do not taste pleasant. Chalk up that experience to a lighter fluid cap I tried removing with my teeth while holding the can one-handed. Manly men don't always use both hands.

The right way to get a good fire going is to crumple up newspaper balls underneath the coal and set it on fire. It takes a while but helps create that smoky yet delicious flavour you would pay an additional BDT 1,500 for in a restaurant. Also, I work for a newspaper. Supply is unlimited.

Cooking

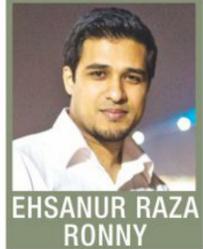
Let the coals burn for a while till they are covered in a grey ash. Then it gives off the perfect simmering heat allowing you to cook the meat slowly and completely. You don't want a blazing coal fire no matter how cool it looks. That creates soot. While charcoal is good for cleaning teeth, it never tastes good. Pro tip: add the sauce near the very end or else it will burn.

Keep antacids ready

That is how a good barbeque party should end, with plenty of antacids to calm your raging stomach. It is that one time of the year you can pretend to be a manly man of yesteryear. It will feel almost as if you caught an animal in the wild and saved your herd from starvation. But easy on the daydreaming as towels always end up catching on fire.

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ALMOST USEFUL LIFE HACKS



HOW TO BBQ WITHOUT GRILLING AND KILLING YOURSELF



CARTOON: E R RONNY

মাদার নতুন নাম

কালার গার্ড

কাপড়ের রঙকে রাখে নতুনের মতো বাক্বাকে

মাল্টি বুস্টার

কাপড়ের যে কোন দাগ-ময়লাকে নিমিষেই দূর করে

সবচেয়ে ফাস্ট, সবচেয়ে কার্যকরী ..