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## Make Your Summer Barbeque Sizzle

*April 2017*

The summer months are home to the top five days for backyard barbeques in the U.S.: Independence Day, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day and Mother's Day (source: the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association). With family and friends gathering to celebrate, try a new and healthy twist on some backyard barbeque essentials.

### ***Spice it Up!***

While everyone loves a classic hot dog or a juicy hamburger, the preservatives and calories found in these seasonal staples and their condiment companions don't properly fuel you for an active summer gathering. Instead, consider healthier alternatives like grilled chicken or a lean cut of meat. These choices will be anything but boring when paired with fresh, homemade marinades, dry rubs, dressings, or salsas.

The Vitamix [A2500 Ascent™ Series Blender](#) with Self-Detect™ containers makes it easy to create marinades to spice up your favorite grilled goodies or use as a tasty topper. The 8-ounce containers are the perfect size to

create and store small batches. For an unexpected fruity flavor paired with your

main course, try a light, [tropical avocado salsa](#), delicious with grilled chicken. For more of that classic barbeque flavor, try an [apricot-ancho barbecue glaze](#), great for skewers of your seafood or on baby back ribs.

### ***Dishing on Sides***

Meats may be the star of the show, but no backyard barbeque is complete without side dishes. From slaws and salads to fresh fruits and veggies, making your own side dishes from scratch allows for the creativity and control of what goes into your dishes.

Switch up your coleslaw by shredding crisp, tart apples, such as Granny Smith, in your Vitamix and toss with grated carrots, poppyseeds, white vinegar and raisins. For a tasty alternative to traditional potato salad, try blending boiled new potatoes with smoky bacon, Dijon mustard and mayonnaise.

The grill isn't just for meat—fruits and veggies take on an entirely new flavor profile when lightly grilled. Prepare a vegetable



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platter with an array of homemade dressings for dipping, or top with a [parmesan balsamic vinaigrette](#). For a sweet treat without the guilt, grill fruits, such as pineapple, peaches, plums and nectarines for a caramelized crust—and add a scoop of ice cream to make a decadent dessert!

### ***Summertime Sipping***

The creativity doesn't end with your food—spice up your drink menu by experimenting with craft cocktails. Make your own simple syrups with fresh herbs, fruits, spices or veggie infusions, taking your cocktails to the next level.

Blending a combination of summer berries or tropical fruits creates an all-natural syrup to make for a refreshing pairing for a cocktail. Muddling or grilling fruits can enhance their flavor profiles—try blending

grilled peaches, straining the mixture, and adding it to a drink.

Unique drink options can extend beyond fresh fruits—vegetables can make for an unexpected option. While the sweetness of the beet shines when paired with the depth of a bourbon, fresh cucumber pairs great with a minty mojito. Let your creative juices flow, and you'll be sure to wow your guests with the best backyard barbeque of the summer!