

Extension

Seasonal Eating Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent

Beat the Heat with Dressed Up Meat
August 2013

When it's hot outside and you need dinner on the table, the last thing you want to do is turn on the oven for 3 hours to make a roast and heat up the kitchen. Summer is a great time for cold dishes and grilling outside. But plain grilled meats can get boring after a while. With all of the fresh fruits and vegetables available this time of the year, a great solution is to dress up those grilled meats with salsas, chutneys and relishes.

These chunky condiments add a fresh burst of flavor and excitement. Think corn relish over a perfectly grilled steak to take it to the next level. A tomato salsa over a grilled chicken breast or peach chutney over brined and grilled pork chops. The great part is that most of these require very little cooking, mostly just chopping and stirring, so they are great for hot days.



Corn kernels, peppers, onions, peaches, tomatoes, cucumbers, plums, pears, mangoes and even diced zucchini and yellow squash can combine with spices, vinegars, citrus juices, garlic, ginger root and other flavorings to create unique condiments for meats.

Start by seasoning your meat with a rub or marinade. Then pick the vegetables or fruits that complement the flavor of the meat. Fruits work really well with pork, cucumbers are great with fish or seafood, corn and squashes work well with beef, and chicken goes with just about anything especially tomatoes, but use your imagination. Add some spices and balance with sweet, vinegary and salty ingredients. Let sit a few minutes while you grill the meat and then spoon over the top on your plate. Here are a few combos to get you started:

Corn Salsa: In microwave, cook 2 ears of corn just until starchiness is gone, about 2 minutes on high. Cut kernels from ear and combine with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped green onion, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced black olives, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup diced green bell pepper, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup diced red bell pepper, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup diced tomato, 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground coriander, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon garlic powder, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons fresh lemon juice, 1 teaspoon minced jalapeno pepper and 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Serve over beef, chicken or pork.

Fruit Salsa: In a large bowl combine 3 cups chopped mixed fruits (nectarines, peaches, mangoes, pineapple, plums, etc.), 1 finely chopped jalapeno, 1 minced clove of garlic, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped red onion, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped cilantro, 1 tablespoon lime zest, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup freshly squeezed lime juice and 1 teaspoon sugar. Serve over chicken or fish.

Green Tomato Chow-Chow: In a large bowl combine 3 cups chopped fresh cabbage, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped onion, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped green tomato, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped green bell pepper, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped red bell pepper and 1 tablespoon

pickling salt. Cover and chill 2-8 hours. Transfer mixture to a Dutch oven and add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white vinegar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water, $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon mustard seeds, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon celery seeds, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground turmeric and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon red pepper flakes. Bring to a boil and reduce to simmer for 3 minutes. Cool to room temperature, add 1 finely chopped jalapeno and chill 1-8 hours. Serve over grilled chicken, barbecue sandwiches or steak tacos.

Pictured is a grilled chicken breast seasoned with salt, pepper and dried thyme and then topped with the Peach Chutney recipe below. It would also be great with shrimp or pork. The sweet and sour contrast of the brown sugar and vinegar melds together with the fruit, onion and ginger as it cooks on the stovetop for a few minutes and gets syrupy. The cilantro and lime juice add a fresh zip that makes this a company worthy dish yet week-night easy.

Peach Chutney: In a saucepan, combine 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups peeled and chopped peaches, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup finely chopped red onion, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup packed brown sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup rice vinegar, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons of finely chopped ginger root and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon kosher salt. Bring to a boil, turn down slightly and cook for about 5 minutes. Take off the heat and cool to room temperature. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped cilantro and 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice. Serve over chicken, shrimp or pork.

For more ideas on using seasonal produce, visit the Bedford County Extension website (<https://utextension.tennessee.edu/bedford>) and click on Seasonal Eating.