STEPS FOR SEASONING YOUR NON-CONNECTED GRILL

* **Step 1:** Plug in your grill and turn it on using the switch on the front of the controller
* **Step 2:** Add hardwood pellets to the hopper
* **Step 3:** Prime the auger with pellets
	1. Open the lid and remove the grill grate, drip tray, and heat baffle
	2. Set the grill to **High** (or the highest temp possible) for 2 to 5 minutes until you see pellets fall into the firepot
* **Step 4:** Set the grill to **Shutdown Cycle** and turn off the grill using the power switch
* **Step 5:** Return the internal components to their correct places inside the grill
* **Step 6:** Turn the grill back on, close the lid, and set the controller to Smoke
* **Step 7:** Wait approximately 15 minutes for the fire to establish in the grill.
	1. Once the fire is established, the thick, white smoke should change thin and slightly blue.
* **Step 8:** Set the grill to **High** (or highest temp possible) for about 30 minutes.
	1. After 30 minutes, you are good either to start cooking or to continue to Step 9 to shut down the grill.
* **Step 9:** Set the grill to Shutdown Cycle. The shutdown cycle will run approximately 25 minutes.
* **Step 10:** Once the shut down cycle is complete, turn off the grill using the power switch.

Your grill seasoning is now complete and you are ready to start grilling.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR STEAK

When you're cooking a steak, you're doing two things:

Searing the surface of the steak — which you want to get up to at least 285 degrees Fahrenheit, and heating the inside of the steak which you want to keep much cooler.

To get the perfect sear, you need to get the surface of your steak up to (and a little bit past) 285 degrees Fahrenheit. This will initiate the Maillard reaction, giving your meat a pleasing color.

THE MAILLARD REACTION

The Maillard reaction is a cascade of chemical changes that happens when meat (and other foods) reach approximately 285 to 325 degrees Fahrenheit. At this temperature, certain amino acids and sugars react to create hundreds of delicious flavor compounds and pleasing aromas. The meat also begins to turn brown as a result of this reaction.

To get the Maillard reaction, you need a dry steak. Here are a few ways to banish moisture from your steak:

THE REFRIGERATOR METHOD

Take your steak out of any wrapping it came in, set it on a plate, and let it sit, uncovered, in the refrigerator for 24 hours.

The low humidity of the fridge will start evaporating the moisture, and the coolness will keep it safe. You'll want to make sure your fridge doesn't have any funky smells like last month's leftover sushi — that aroma could transfer to the meat.

THE SALT METHOD

Salt the steak at least one hour before cooking or immediately before putting it on the grill.

Never salt the meat and let it sit for less than an hour because during this time the salt is drawing out moisture. It needs extra time to absorb the moisture.

THE BLOT METHOD

Pat the steak dry with a paper towel. You'll want to do this if you used a steak marinade.

Now it’s time to grill your steak.

BEST TEMPERATURE TO GRILL STEAK

There are two ways to cook the perfect steak, the direct-heat method (fastest) and the reverse-seared method (easiest).

DIRECT-HEAT METHOD

To grill over direct heat, set the grill to 450 °F, close the lid, and allow it to preheat for 15 minutes.

Place the steak on the grill grate and cook for approximately 3.5 minutes per side until the steak's internal temperature is 135 °F degrees (medium-rare).

REVERSE-SEAR METHOD

For the reverse-sear method, set your grill to 225 degrees °F, close the lid, and preheat for 15 minutes.

Put the steaks on for 60 minutes or until they reach an internal temperature of 110 °F.

Take the steaks off the grill, then set the grill's temperature to 450 °F. Allow it to preheat with the lid closed for about 10 minutes, and put the steaks back on the grill.

They'll sizzle and brown, getting that terrific Maillard reaction aroma and color. Cook for approximately 4 minutes per side to allow the sear to form and get the steak's internal temperature to 135 °F (medium-rare).

See all of Traeger's steak recipes for more ideas on how to cook a steak on a pellet grill.

HOW TO REST YOUR STEAK

Once your steak is done, you need to let it rest on a plate or cutting board at room temperature. Let it rest for half of its cooking time, up to 10 minutes. The rest will help the steak retain its juices and give it an amazing flavor.

HOW TO MEASURE STEAK DONENESS BY TOUCH

You may have read about the "poke test" for determining whether a steak is done. The idea is that you find a place on your body that corresponds to a steak doneness level. You press that place — sometimes a part of the face, sometimes a fingertip, sometimes the meaty part of your hand below your thumb — note the "springiness," then touch the steak to see if it has the corresponding "springiness."

Chefs who cook many steaks a day, usually of similar cuts on the same equipment indoors, can get pretty good at using simple touch tests to see if steaks are done.

But as an outdoor griller, you've got other factors to consider, including the outside temperature, the cut of the steak, whether you marinated it or not, how soft your hands are — so unless you cook the exact cuts of meat, prepared the same way, at the exact temperature, many, many times, the poke test will let you down.

That’s why recommend using a digital thermometer so you can nail the perfect doneness every time.

HOW TO COOK STEAK ON A PELLET GRILL

When you cook steak on a pellet grill, you have the best of both worlds.

You can grill a steak in a hurry using the direct heat method. Or, you can use the oven capabilities of the pellet grill to do the increasingly-popular reverse sear method. With this method, your steak will get a nice dose of wood smoke while it cooks.

Direct-heat method - Set the grill to 450 °F, preheat for 15 minutes. Cook for approximately 3.5 minutes per side until the steak's internal temperature is 135 °F (medium-rare).

Reverse-sear method - Set your grill to 225 degrees °F, preheat for 15 minutes — cook the steaks for 60 minutes or until an internal temperature of 110 °F. Take the steaks off the grill, set the grill's temperature to 450 °F, preheat for 10 minutes. Cook for approximately 4 minutes per side until the steak’s internal temperature is 135 °F (medium-rare).

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HOW TO COOK A STEAK IN AN STOVE/OVEN

If you're cooking a steak indoors, the best method is the reverse sear. The reverse sear is when you cook the steak rather slowly in the oven, then finish by searing it on the stovetop. The benefit of this method is that you're less likely to overcook the steak, and you have more control over the sear.

Preheat your oven to 225 degrees Fahrenheit, and put the steaks in the oven on a baking sheet. Cook them until the internal temperature is 110 degrees Fahrenheit which will take about an hour.

Just before you take the steaks out, drizzle oil in your heaviest skillet and set it over high heat. Take the steaks out, and put them in the pan. Sear them on both sides (which should take about one minute per side) and finish by searing the edges.

HOW TO COOK STEAK ON A GAS GRILL

If you're using a gas/propane grill, the instructions are essentially the same. Set the grill to a high temperature (400 to 500 degrees Fahrenheit), and follow the timing guidelines above.

You'll need to work a little harder to replicate the kiss of wood smoke flavor delivered by Traeger wood pellets, though. Wood chips, in either a foil pack or smoking box, are the best method.

However, your chips can't sit directly over a flame, or they'll flare. So using wood chips may mean you don't have as much cooking surface for your steak, or that you can't get your grill quite as hot.

HOW TO COOK STEAK ON A CHARCOAL GRILL

Grilling steak over charcoal can be tricky. It's difficult to know the exact temperature of the cooking surface, and that temperature can vary depending on the type of charcoal you used and how evenly you spread the charcoal.

Briquette charcoal can give you temperatures of around 500 degrees Fahrenheit. Lump charcoal may be able to generate higher temperatures. You can check for a high temperature on your charcoal grill using the hand test. Hold your hand at grate level, and if you can only keep it there for 2 to 3 seconds before it gets too hot, you have a 400 to 500 degrees Fahrenheit surface to grill.

If you've got that heat, you can grill using the timing instructions above. But beware — your charcoal grill may have hot or cool spots that can affect the cooking time. You'll have to keep a close watch and you won't be able to set it and forget it like you can with a Traeger.

For wood smoke flavor, you can use wood chips. Typically, you add wood chips directly to charcoals, but this can affect the heat you're generating.

If you add dry wood chips, they could flare up and burn your steak. If you add soaked wood chips, they will cool down the charcoal. A foil pack added before cooking is probably your best bet.

HOW TO COOK STEAK IN A SOUS VIDE

Your sous vide (aka water bath) will get your steak exactly to your desired doneness temperature. However, it takes a lot longer than cooking on a grill — probably about an hour.

Also, that important Maillard reaction above can't happen in a sous vide as the temperature of the water isn't high enough. Experienced sous vide cooks recommend searing the steak first, then beginning the sous vide process.

SUMMARY

The best way to measure the doneness of your steak is to check the internal temperature.

Rare is 120-130 °F internally.

Medium-rare is130-135 °F internally.

Medium is 135-145 °F internally.

Medium-well is 145-155 °F internally.

Well-done is 155-165 °F internally.