

CIRCULAR 535

# *Delicious* KENTUCKY BARBECUED CHICKEN

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**College of Agriculture and Home Economics  
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# Delicious Kentucky Barbecued Chicken

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A chicken barbecue is one of the most satisfying methods of entertaining. This is true for either a backyard family picnic or for a large gathering of church people, a service club, an employees' outing or a picnic of a farm organization. "Two's company" at a barbecue, but your crowd could run into the thousands.

Barbecuing chicken is easy if you follow a few simple but very important rules. Being prepared in advance is necessary for complete success with a barbecue.

## EQUIPMENT

### Pit

The first requirement of a successful barbecue is a barbecue grill or pit. This pit may be four bricks turned on end with a rack borrowed from the kitchen oven on it, or it may be an elaborate electrical pit with a motorized spit that revolves the birds over the heat while they cook. These are the two extremes.

For quantity cooking the most popular pit is one made from either concrete or cinder blocks set up without mortar (Fig. 1). When the pit is set up three blocks high, little back bending will be required during the barbecuing process. One point to be taken into consideration is that cinder blocks may be borrowed and later returned since heat does not injure them while concrete blocks may be damaged and thus be unreturnable.

Coming into popularity are portable pits made of sheet iron side walls, sandwiched with asbestos and staked upright so as to bear the weight of the grill and chicken. Sheet iron alone usually becomes too hot for the comfort of the cooks. A small trailer, pickup truck, or even a station wagon can carry enough of this equipment to barbecue for a crowd of several thousand.

The best and most economical pits for small- to medium-sized crowds are made from 55-gallon drums split lengthwise (Fig. 2). A pit is made from each half drum. A piece of one-half inch pipe about 6 inches long is welded to each corner of the pit. The legs are made of one-inch pipe about 3 feet long. These

slide over the smaller pieces of pipe, making the grill easily portable. In fact, if a shower comes along while you are barbecuing, pick up the pit and carry it into the garage or onto the porch (Fig. 3). This drum pit will cook 20 to 25 half-chickens at one time depending on their size.

### Grill

The grill or top to the barbecue pit can be made of a number of different materials. Welded wire of 1- by 2-inch mesh may be used very successfully if one-half-inch iron rods or pieces of pipe are laid across the pit to support the weight of the chicken. Rods may be welded onto pieces of 1- by 2-inch welded wire 24 inches by 35 inches, thus making handles by which an entire grill of chicken can be turned at one time if an extra grill is available to put over the chicken.

Cage wire makes a very good grill. It is rigid enough to support a load of chicken without additional bracing.



Fig. 1.— Concrete or cinder-block pits are most often used for large barbecues. Note the use of a pressure-tank sprayer for basting the chicken.



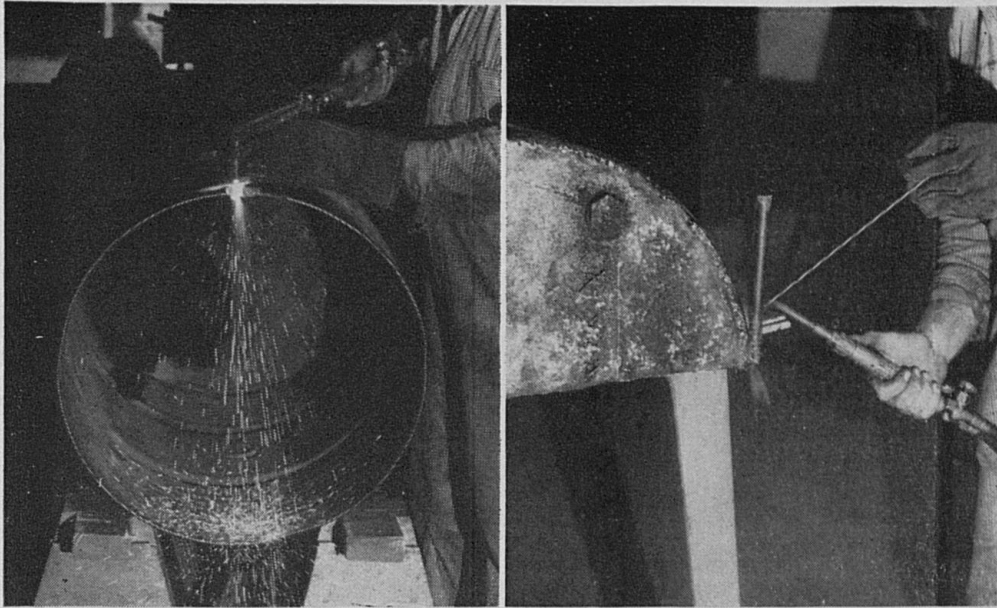


Fig. 2.— How to make a barbecue pit from a steel drum. (left) First, remove the head of the drum with a chisel; then split the drum with an acetylene torch. (right) Weld half of the head of the drum back into place, and then weld to each corner a piece of half-inch pipe 6 inches long.



Fig. 3.— (left) You can easily carry a steel-drum barbecue pit in the trunk of most cars. (right) If a rain comes up while you are barbecuing, carry the pit into a garage or onto a porch.

There are grill tops being made commercially to use with the 55-gallon drum pits. Some of these are nickelplated so as to withstand the action of the salt and vinegar in the barbecue sauce. One-half-inch mesh hardware cloth is used for grill tops by many people. Oven racks are probably the simplest and handiest for barbecuing in small quantities.

### PREPARING THE FIRE

Charcoal is the ideal fuel for barbecuing chicken (Fig. 4). The regular size of the briquets makes it easy to start and regulate



Fig. 4.— Charcoal briquets provide ideal fuel for a chicken barbecue. (above, left) Ten pounds of briquets are sufficient for cooking a grillful of chicken. (above, right) You can safely use kerosene for starting the fire, provided there are no live coals in the pit. (left) You can start the briquets burning easier if you pile them in one end of the pit until they are ignited; then scatter them over the bottom of the pit until they are only one briquet deep.

the temperature of your fire. The use of one pint of kerosene to 10 pounds of briquets is the easiest method of kindling the fire. *Every precaution should be taken when using kerosene to start your fire.* The fire should be lighted 20 to 30 minutes before you expect to start barbecuing your chicken. This allows time for the briquets to catch on fire and for the oil and fumes to burn off.

The success of your barbecuing depends on the way the chicken cooks. Approximately one pound of briquets will cook an average sized chicken in almost any kind of pit. However, if sheet iron or concrete block pits are put up on very wet ground, as much as 2 pounds of briquets per chicken may be necessary. If you use too many briquets, causing the fire to get too hot, the chicken will be burned on the outside and uncooked next to the bone. Water sprinkled into the barbecue pit will lower the temperature and will not hurt the chicken. If too few briquets are started, more can be added at any time, but they should never be more than one layer deep.



## PREPARING THE CHICKEN

Oven-ready broilers, of 2- to 3-pound weights, are ideal for barbecuing, although birds weighing up to 5 pounds may be used. One-half of an average-sized chicken should be provided per person. Larger chickens should be quartered rather than halved to facilitate their cooking, and also as an aid in serving (Fig. 5).

The chickens should be split in half with the backbone and breastbone removed. The backbone, breastbone, neck, gizzard, heart and liver do not barbecue satisfactorily, but should be salvaged to use later for fried giblets and soups. Some cooks remove the wing tips prior to barbecuing so that they will not get caught in the grill.

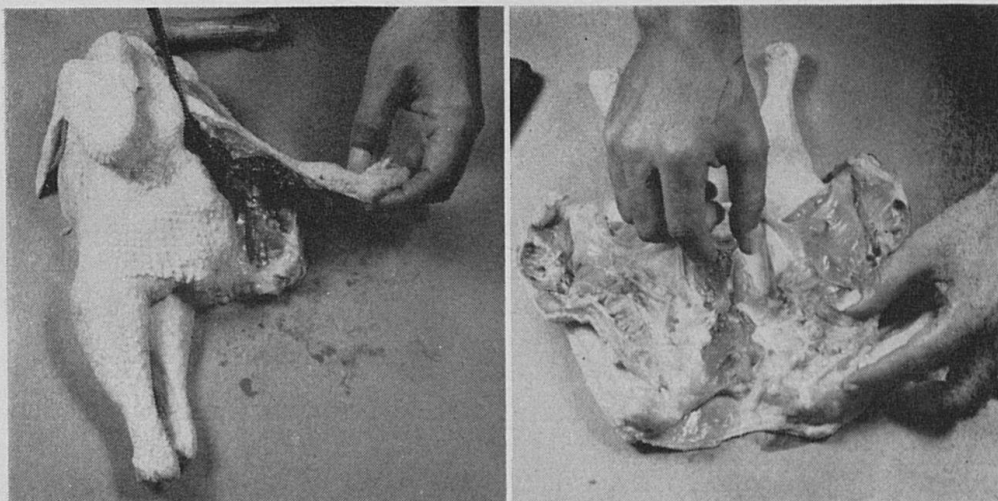
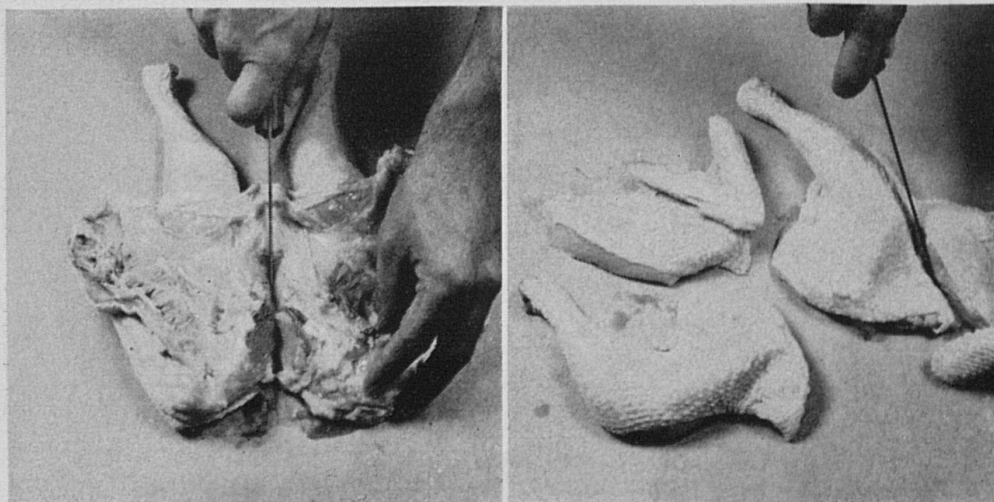


Fig. 5.—How to prepare chicken for barbecuing. (above, left) Remove the backbone and neck. Use them for other purposes.

(above, right) Remove the keelbone before cutting the chicken in half.

(below, left) Cut the chicken into halves.

(below, right) Large chickens may be quartered for ease in barbecuing.



## SAUCES

Contributing to the success of the chicken barbecue is the sauce used for basting the meat. Those used in different parts of the country vary widely. The kind of sauce used gives the barbecued chicken its "personality."

The broilers may be marinated in the sauce for some time before cooking. Most people prefer to baste them during cooking with a paint brush or dish mop dipped in the sauce. This should be done just before the birds are turned, or approximately every 5 to 10 minutes.

The following sauces are given in quantities for barbecuing 4 or 5 chickens. All should be brought to a rolling boil to mix, then should be allowed to stand overnight to blend flavors. All should be kept hot during basting.

### Kentucky Barbecue Sauce

2½ c water	¼ c vinegar	1 t powdered mustard
1 T sugar	2½ t salt	2 t chili powder
2½ t black pepper	2 T Worcestershire	½ t Tabasco sauce
2 T butter	sauce	1 bud garlic
	¼ onion	

This is a semi-hot sauce that has wide popularity in Kentucky. It may be made hotter by using additional quantities of either red pepper or Tabasco sauce.

### New England Sauce

1 c water	½ pound butter
1 pint vinegar	2 T salt

This sauce lends itself to large barbecues, since these ingredients can be sprayed on the cut-up chicken with pressure sprayers.

### West Virginia Sauce

1 garlic bud	⅔ c salad oil	1 c lemon juice
2 t salt	3 T grated onion	1 t celery salt
1 t black pepper	1 t thyme	

### All-Purpose Barbecue Sauce

1½ t salt	1 t pepper	1½ t paprika
4 t sugar	½ t garlic salt	1 t Worcestershire
⅔ c catsup	⅔ c tomato juice	1⅓ c water
½ c vinegar or lemon juice	¼ c butter, margarine or salad oil	2 small onions chopped fine



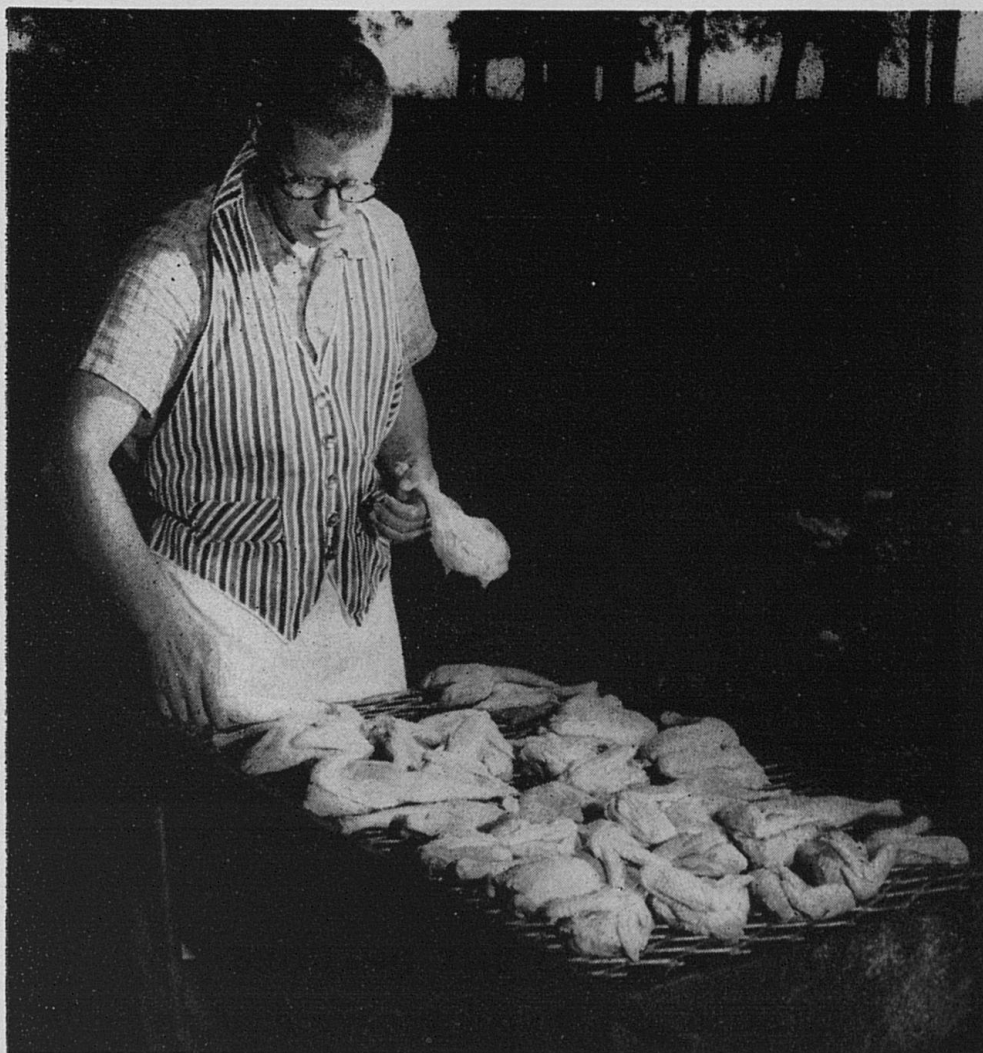


Fig. 6.— Place the chicken on the grill, skin side up.

### **BROILING THE CHICKEN**

After your fire has burned down to a bed of coals, you are ready to put your chicken on. Place the quartered or halved chicken on the grill, skin side up (Fig. 6). This seals the cut side so that the natural juices will not escape. It also serves as a guide for turning.

Baste the birds repeatedly during the entire barbecuing period, particularly during the last 30 minutes. They should be basted at least every time they are turned, which is every 5 to 10 minutes.

To save time and work, a “sandwich” can be made of two grills, which will enable two men to turn large amounts of chicken very quickly.



Fig. 7.— Baste the chicken with the barbecue sauce at least every time the pieces are turned, which will be every 5 to 10 minutes.

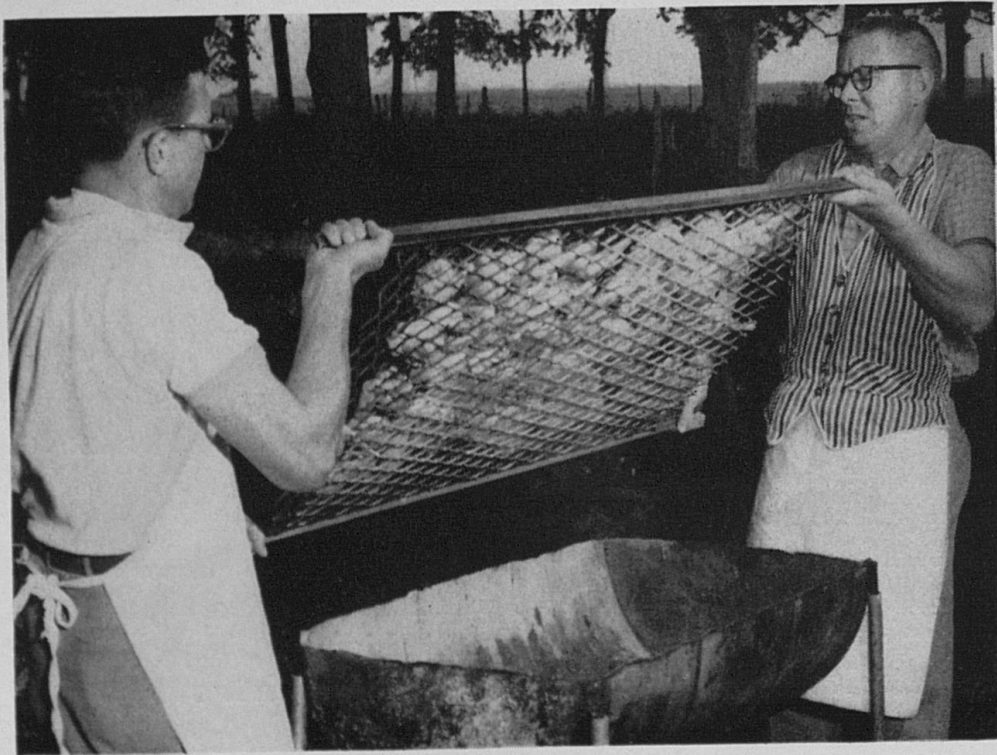


Fig. 8.— You can turn an entire grill of chicken at one time if you use two grills to enclose the chicken.



If the pieces of chicken are to be turned individually, long-handled tongs or forceps are ideal (Fig. 9). Some people use asbestos gloves and turn the pieces by hand. Never pierce the cooking chicken with a fork because this will let the juices escape and the chicken dry out.

Chicken should be cooked until well done. This usually takes from 1¼ to 2 hours, depending on the size of the chickens and how hot the fire is. When the birds are done the drumstick will twist out of the thigh joint readily and the wing joint will open easily. Any sign of red meat in the joint means that the chicken should be cooked longer.

Keep the chicken hot until it is served.

### MENUS FOR CHICKEN BARBECUES

Keeping the menu simple accents the chicken barbecue. Many menus are planned so that no knives, forks, or spoons are needed. The use of paper plates will also cut down on dish washing. Hard rolls are easy to serve and are universally enjoyed.

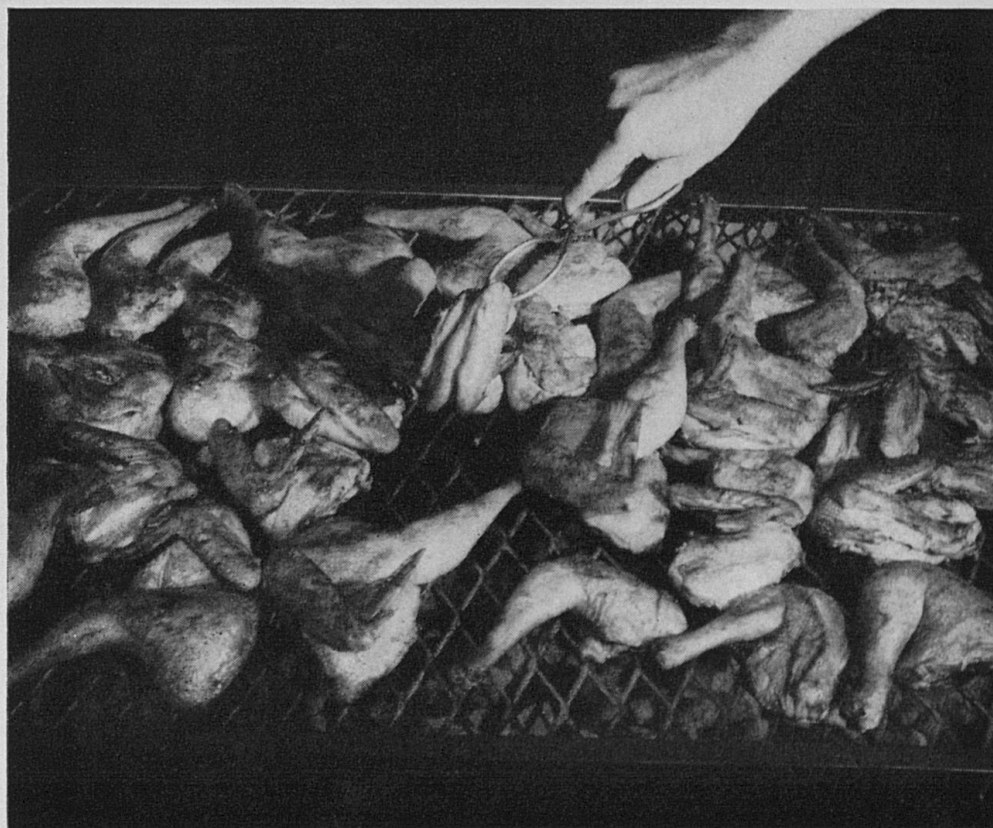


Fig. 9.— Use forceps or small tongs instead of a fork for turning the pieces individually. Fork tines will puncture the chicken and allow the juices to escape.

French, white, rye, Vienna, or other breads are easily prepared by slicing, buttering, wrapping in aluminum foil and heating in the oven or over the cooler part of the grill. Some southern barbecues serve the popular "hush puppies."

Only potato chips or potato sticks, along with pickles, olives, celery, carrot sticks, or green onions are necessary in the vegetable line for a barbecue.

Bottled soft drinks, milk in half-pint cartons, iced tea chilled in milk cans or the like, or hot coffee are favorite beverages country-wide.

Ice cream cups, ice cream sandwiches, individual pies, or cakes can be handled easily for dessert. Many guests would rather have another piece of barbecued chicken than a dessert.

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