

FAILURENAIRE



Failurenaire: How to Master a Charcoal Grill Checklist

“Because propane is for HOA dads. Real legends cook with fire and failure.”



Why Charcoal?

Because nothing — *NOTHING* — beats that **smoky flavor**, primal vibe, and the thrill of taming fire with a cold drink in one hand and tongs in the other.

But let's be honest: most people using a charcoal grill for the first time end up with raw chicken, overcooked burgers, and mild emotional trauma. Not you.

This checklist turns you from a **grill jabroni** into the **BBQ alpha** of your friend group. Apron optional. Swagger required.



Step-by-Step Charcoal Grill Mastery Checklist

1. 🧱 Pick the Right Grill

Not all grills are created equal — some are clout, some are performance.

Checklist:

- Use a **kettle-style charcoal grill** (Weber = OG choice)
- Make sure it has **adjustable vents** (bottom and top)
- Get a grill with a **removable ash catcher**
- Optional upgrades:

- Grill grate with hinge (for easy charcoal refills)
 - Thermometer built into lid (not required but handy)
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2. 🍷 Use Real Charcoal Like a Grown Man

Briquettes? Fine. **Lump hardwood charcoal? Chef's kiss.**

Checklist:

- Start with **lump charcoal** for cleaner flavor & hotter temps
 - Avoid instant-light or chemical-soaked options — they ruin the taste
 - Store your charcoal in a **dry, sealed bin** (moist charcoal is a vibe killer)
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3. 🔥 Light It Up Like a Boss

No lighter fluid. We're not animals.

Checklist:

- Get a **chimney starter** (non-negotiable)
 - Crumple up 2 pieces of newspaper under the chimney
 - Fill chimney with charcoal
 - Light the paper — the coals will ignite from underneath
 - Wait 15–20 mins until coals are **white-hot with red glow underneath**
 - Pour evenly for direct heat — or stack for indirect zones (next step)
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4. 🌡️ Create 2-Zone Heat (The Secret Weapon)

One side for searing, one side for cooking. You're not flipping burgers in a furnace.

Checklist:

- Spread coals on **one half** of the grill = high heat zone
 - Leave the other half empty = low/indirect heat zone
 - Use direct side to sear (steaks, burgers)
 - Use indirect side to finish or rest (chicken, thick cuts)
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5. 🧼 Prep Your Grates Like a Pro

Dirty grates are for rookies. Prepped grates = sear marks of glory.

Checklist:

- Heat the grill for 5 minutes with lid closed
 - Scrub grates with a grill brush or onion on a fork (yes, it works)
 - Oil the grates using tongs + paper towel + high smoke point oil (canola, avocado)
 - Keeps food from sticking and adds surface flavor
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6. 🍖 Master the Meat (Don't Wing It on Chicken)

Each meat has rules. Know them. Respect them. Dominate them.

Checklist:

🍔 Burgers

- Use **80/20 ground beef**
- Make patties 1/2" thick with thumb dent in the middle

- Sear 2–3 mins per side over direct heat
- Move to indirect for another 1–2 mins if needed
- NEVER press with the spatula — you’re squeezing out flavor like a clown

Chicken Thighs/Wings

- Marinate 4–12 hours
- Cook over **indirect heat** (too easy to burn over direct)
- Flip every 5–7 mins
- Total time: ~25–30 mins
- Use meat thermometer — pull at **165°F**

Steaks (Ribeye, Strip)

- Season heavy with salt/pepper (or dry rub) 30 mins before
 - Sear 2–3 mins per side **over direct**
 - Move to indirect and close lid to finish
 - Use instant-read thermometer:
 - 125°F = rare
 - 135°F = medium-rare
 - 145°F = medium
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7. 🌬️ Control the Heat With Vents

Your grill has lungs. You better know how to make it breathe.

Checklist:

- Bottom vent = controls oxygen (more air = hotter fire)
 - Top vent = controls smoke & heat escape
 - Open both to get hot
 - Close slightly to lower temp or hold steady
 - NEVER close both while cooking — that chokes the fire
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8. 🪵 Add Wood for Flavor (Optional but Elite)

Want that "pitmaster" taste? Smoke 'em if you got 'em.

Checklist:

- Soak wood chunks or chips for 30 mins (optional)
 - Toss on the coals before cooking
 - Use hickory, mesquite, applewood depending on meat:
 - Chicken = applewood
 - Pork = cherry/hickory
 - Beef = mesquite/hard oak
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9. 🚫 Don't Overcrowd the Grill or the Vibes

Give your meat space. This ain't a frat party.

Checklist:

- Leave at least **1" between items** on the grill
 - Keep lid closed to maintain temp
 - Use the vents and zones instead of panicking and flipping constantly
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10. 🧠 Clean the Grill Like a Grown Jabroni

Grill cleanup is foreplay for your next BBQ.

Checklist:

- After grilling, scrape the grates while they're still hot
 - Dump ashes once they've cooled (use a metal bucket)
 - Wipe down outside if you want your grill to last
 - Oil the grates lightly before putting the lid on
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🧠 Final Failurenaire Pro Tips

- **Don't start drinking until the coals are lit.** Trust me.
- **Always keep a spray bottle** in case of flare-ups
- **Meat thermometers are not optional** — they're cheat codes
- **Grill with confidence, not chaos**
- **And remember:** If you overcook the meat, **you are the meat.**