

Twice-Grilled Meatloaf – Comfort du Jour

One of my favorite things about summer is backyard grilling. The food is always great, of course, but there's also something sweetly nostalgic about the experience—the aroma of searing meat, the feel and taste of the cold beer in hand, the far-off sound of a neighbor's lawn mower, trees swaying in gentle breezes, mosquitoes nipping at my ankles—oh, wait, let's scratch that last one (so to speak).

I want to keep knocking down the boundaries of grilling to see what other comfort foods can be twisted up, and today, I'm looking at meatloaf. I'm a big fan of this classic, and I followed the lead of Chef Larry Donahue, who carved a path for a grilled (not once, but twice) meatloaf, which he shared on Weber's website—you can check that out with the link below. I made a few adjustments for our taste, and for the fact that we were using a gas grill.

<https://www.weber.com/US/en/blog/grilling-inspiration/grilled-meatloaf-for-dinner/weber-30545.html>

I had a lot of concerns about attempting meatloaf on the grill, but all my worries and “what-ifs” were put to bed with this easy recipe. The meatloaf had a terrific moist texture, the grilled-in glaze flavor was out of this world, and the whole thing was on the table in the same amount of time as if I'd baked it in the oven. It was delicious, didn't heat up the house, and you can bet I'll do it again—next time with a flavor twist!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium onion, diced (about the size of a tennis ball)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 12 saltine crackers, crumbled
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 1 lb. lean ground beef (90/10)
- 1/2 lb. seasoned pork sausage
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 tsp. dried thyme
- 1 Tbsp. dried parsley flakes (or 1/3 cup fresh chopped, if you have it)
- Kosher salt and black pepper

FOR THE GLAZE

- 1/2 cup organic ketchup
- 3 Tbsp. packed brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- several shakes hot sauce (to taste)

NOTE

You'll need a rectangular foil pan to use as a drip pan. These foil pans are inexpensive and usually available next to foil and plastic wraps in any supermarket.

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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat a small skillet over medium heat. Swirl in olive oil and sauté onions until softened. Add garlic and sauté several more minutes until the onions are tender and translucent. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to a large bowl.
2. In a food processor, combine the cracker crumbs and milk, and process into a paste.
3. Add the ground meats to the processor bowl and pulse until combined. This goes against my usual rule of “don’t overwork the meat,” and it reminds me of the process I used a few months ago with the gyros-at-home recipe. Processing helps make the meat a cohesive mass and this will help it hold its shape on the grill. Transfer the meat mixture to the bowl, along with all remaining meatloaf ingredients and mix with your hands until it’s evenly blended.
4. Shape meat mixture into a rectangular loaf shape, about 9 by 5 inches. Mixture should be tight and compact so it will keep its shape. The meatloaf may be covered and refrigerated at this point if you wish to work ahead. Otherwise, proceed to step 5.
5. If you’re using a gas grill, pre-heat it to 400° F. For charcoal grill, prepare the grill with briquettes on one side only for indirect cooking, and heat it to 400° F.
6. If using a gas grill, turn off the burners under the meatloaf side, but keep them going on the other side. If you have a suitable heat-safe rack, use it inside the foil pan. Otherwise, place the loaf on a pile of scattered sliced onion rings inside the foil pan to aid in draining the grease. For a charcoal grill, place the foil drip pan below the top grill grate, next to the coals. Lay the meatloaf on a double thickness of heavy aluminum foil above the foil pan, and press your finger on the aluminum foil in several places between grates to create “drip channels” for excess grease.
7. Grill with cover closed for about 45 minutes.
8. Combine the glaze ingredients in a saucepan and cook over medium heat until sugar is dissolved and mixture is slightly thickened.
9. Check meatloaf at 45 minutes. If it has formed a crust (oh, how beautiful is that??), brush a layer of glaze over the loaf and cook 10 more minutes. Repeat glazing two more times, then remove meatloaf from the grill and let it rest a few minutes on a cutting board.
10. Here comes the fun part. You noticed the name of this recipe is “twice-grilled,” right? Cut the meatloaf into thick slices and put them *back on the grill*, this time directly over the heat until they develop grill marks. Move them to the indirect side, glaze them again, and cook until the glaze is to your liking.

If you’re looking for an easy, low effort side dish to pair with this meatloaf, get back to my blog and do a quick search for **Easy-Cheesy Grilled Scalloped Potatoes**. Add a salad or some grilled zucchini, and dinner is served!