

START THE FIRE

It's Always Barbecue Season - Get Stuck in!

- Kerren Packer

Since the dawn of humanity, men, women & children have experienced the benefits of cooking with fire. In essence this advancement alone has spurred on the greatest expansion of any species the world has seen. Not only did those early barbecues create new and appealing taste sensations when just the right amount of heat and smoke were introduced to what was a diet of raw meat but also allowed for it to be preserved for nomadic journeys and advancement in civilisations.

Jump forward a few million years; modern day people are again connecting with the benefits of cooking with fire. The act of firing up the barbecue in preparation for a gathering of whanau and one's tribe is entrenched in our DNA

and there is currently a swift awakening of those primal instincts.

Whether just starting out, a backyard aficionado, or a fully-fledged competition "pit-master" the one common theme is that barbecue brings people from all walks of life together. Through a passion for barbecue, I have been privileged to have met loads amazing people, from highly driven business executives to big hairy "westies" – we all enjoy creating succulent and flavoursome food the way our ancestors would have albeit with plenty of modern day gadgets and method refinery.

In this series of articles, I will lift the lid on various barbecuing techniques, methods, share news from around New Zealand's barbecue scene and take a look at some of the overseas trends. Whether it's the

classic double smash burger, a rack of pork ribs, fried-not-friend chicken, succulent pulled pork, the stubborn but rewarding beef short rib or the anointed "King of BBQ" the beef brisket, I hope to share some tips and tricks gleaned from around two decades experience cooking "low n' slow" style of barbecue.

Good friend and barbecue extraordinaire, Ken Van Mackelbergh, once commented that "barbecue is not a season, but a way of life that brings together community" and when you think about it, it has been that way since the beginning of time!

Without further ado, let's get cracking on a family favourite that is cheap, rewarding and easily in the realms of the novice barbecuerthe humble...but delicious...Barbecue Chicken Lollipop.



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BARBECUE CHICKEN LOLLIPOP.

Difficulty: Novice | Prep time: 20mins

Cook time: 60-70mins | Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 12 x plump chicken drumsticks
- ¼ cup of Maple Syrup
- Rum & Que Soft Coq meat rub
- Rum & Que Meat Juice Sauce
- Hot sauce (to taste)

METHOD:

1. Pre-heat your chosen BBQ to 175°C (350F).
2. With a sharp knife, start by making a cut all of the way around (effectively 'ring barking') at the location where the leg muscle meets the bone. Once the skin and tendons have been cut, push the superfluous skin and tendons up and over the knuckle to expose the bone.

3. Using kitchen shears remove the thin bone that runs up the length of the main bone, trim away any further exposed tendons. Pull the loose skin up over the exposed meat and around the exposed bone. Your chicken lollipop is now taking shape and should stand up unassisted, if not, square off the bottom bone.

4. On stove top, warm up the maple syrup (organic if you can get it) until runny, then apply a light coating on to the chicken skin with a marinade brush.

5. Sprinkle your favourite meat rub on to the chicken skin. Either make your own (salt, pepper & paprika is a good base) or note suggestions above in the ingredients list.

6. Before the BBQing commences, some folk like to shield the exposed bone with tinfoil to prevent discoloration and burning. This improves the overall aesthetic and so well worth the extra effort.

7. Evenly space the lollipops (keep away from direct exposure to flames) on the grill, add some cherry or apple wood chunks to the coal for smoke

8. Close the BBQ hood and cook/ smoke for 40-50mins.

9. On a stovetop gently simmer and reduce a cup or two of your favourite BBQ sauce. Add a knob of butter, hot sauce, garlic salt or anything else

you enjoy. For those fussy eaters, a more basic "plain jane" option may suit. For a vibrant red toffee apple look, experiment with red food colouring.

10. At 40mins, using a meat thermometer (handheld instant read is best) randomly spot check the internal temperature of the chicken is at least 75°C (165F) to ensure it is safe for consumption.

11. Increase the BBQs temperature (open vents or add fuel) to around 200°C, remove tinfoil, dip the chicken lollipops into the pot of BBQ sauce. Once all lollipops are sauced, place all lollipops back onto the BBQ at the same time for an even finish.

12. BBQ for a further 10mins or until internal temperature of the chicken reaches 85°C (185F). Check every few minutes to ensure the glaze is not burning.

13. When ready the BBQ chicken lollipops should have a toffee apple sheen and look, should not fall off the bone and allow for bite-through crispy skin.

There it is, serve to whanau and friends with a side of coleslaw, potato salad, a fresh garden salad and a few refreshing ales. A seriously cool way to do something a bit special with the humble chicken drumstick

– **get stuck in!** 🍷

