2026 EDITION

THE GAS GRILL OWNER'S GUIDE

Buy the right grill, fix it yourself, and make it last fifteen years



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START HERE

Why most grills die young

It's rarely the brand. It's grease, water and a few ten-minute jobs nobody told you about.

Two neighbors buy the same grill on the same Memorial Day weekend. Same brand, same burners, same price. Eight years later one of them is still searing steaks on it. The other one is dragging theirs to the curb after a summer of a weak flame on one side, a grease fire that scorched the lid, and a firebox that rusted through from the inside.

Neither of them bought a bad grill. The difference came down to habits. One of them emptied the grease tray, kept the burner tubes clear of spiders, let the grill dry before covering it, and replaced a ten-dollar part when it wore out instead of living with it. The other one did none of that, and blamed the brand.

A gas grill is a simple machine: a box, some burners, a valve for each, a regulator, and a tank. Almost everything that goes wrong with one is cheap to fix, once you know what you're looking at. That's what this guide is for.

Part one helps you buy the right grill, or judge the one you already have, without falling for the numbers printed on the box. Part two is the hands-on part: gas safety, and the ten problems that cause nearly every "my grill isn't working" moment, with the fix for each. Part three is how to make a grill last: the habits, the yearly deep clean, rust and winter. Part four is a short cooking section, because a grill that works properly deserves to be used properly.

CHAPTER 2

What matters and what's marketing

The box tells you the BTUs. It doesn't tell you what will rust in year three.

BTUs: the most misleading number on the box

BTU is a measure of how much gas the burners can burn per hour, not how hot the grates get. A thin, leaky firebox can burn 60,000 BTUs and still struggle to sear, while a heavy, well-sealed one does better on 40,000. The number on the box also often adds up the side burner and the rear burner, which never heat your main grates at all.

If you want a useful figure, divide the main burners' BTUs by the primary cooking area in square inches. Somewhere around 80 to 100 BTUs per square inch is plenty for a well-built grill. Above that, you're mostly paying for gas.

> **OWNER'S TIP**
>
> When two grills look alike, ask how long each takes to reach 500°F with the lid closed. Ten to fifteen minutes is good. A grill that never gets there in cold or windy weather is losing heat through its box, and more BTUs won't fix that.

The parts that decide how long it lives

PART	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WARNING SIGN
Firebox (cookbox)	Cast aluminum or heavy cast/thick stainless. Cast aluminum doesn't rust through.	Thin painted steel; a box you can flex with one hand

CHAPTER 6

Troubleshooting: the ten common problems

What your grill is telling you, and what to do about it, from the simplest fix up.

Always start with the cheapest, quickest explanation. Most of the time it's the answer.

1. Low flame or the grill won't get hot

The single most common complaint, and usually not a broken part. The safety device inside most regulators (the excess flow device) shuts the gas down to a trickle when it senses a sudden rush, for example if the tank valve was opened quickly or opened while a burner knob was already on. The grill lights, but the flame is low and the lid never gets past 250–300°F.

RESETTING THE REGULATOR

1. Turn every burner knob off and close the tank valve.
2. Disconnect the regulator from the tank.
3. Open each burner knob to high for about a minute to release gas trapped in the line, then turn them all off again.
4. Wait a minute, then reconnect the regulator to the tank, hand-tight.
5. Open the tank valve *very slowly*, a quarter turn, wait a few seconds, then open it the rest of the way.
6. Light one burner on high. Wait a few seconds, then light the others.

APPENDIX C

Showroom scorecard

Two exact models, side by side, with real local prices. A $499 tag plus $90 delivery costs about what a $599 grill with free delivery does.

	MODEL A	MODEL B
Brand / model / fuel		
Main grate width × depth		
Main burners / BTU per sq in		
Firebox material		
Magnet test on "stainless"		
Grates (type / replacement price)		
Heat spreader part price		
Burner warranty / labor covered?		
Grease tray easy to reach?		
Fits my space and clearances?		
Price on the tag		
+ delivery and assembly		
+ tank, cover, thermometer		
+ tax = ready-to-cook total		

> **ASK THE SELLER**
>
> "Can you show me the parts diagram for this model, and what one replacement heat spreader costs delivered?" A store that can't answer is telling you something about owning it.

MY CHOICE AND THE DETAIL THAT DECIDED IT

That's the preview.

The full guide is 52 pages:
the ten common problems and their fixes,
replacing parts with typical costs,
the yearly deep clean, winter storage,
two-zone cooking and smoking on gas,
plus printable checklists and worksheets.

Get the complete guide at

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