



VIC CLEVENER

Chimney Cartel
victor0568@gmail.com

But it lasts for about 6 months it seems. As I sit here to write this article, it's the first of October and Christmas has already been around for a couple weeks. Wal-Mart has turned their whole gardening section into a Santa's workshop annex. Lowe's transports me to a Winter Wonderland as soon as I walk in the door and all I needed was a screwdriver. Every year Christmas seems earlier and earlier, which is often the lament filling social media. But in the midst of our collective moaning, we set those new Christmas decorations on the checkout conveyor belt right alongside our bags of Halloween candy.

The Quadruple Holiday Run



However, as we head into the quadruple holiday season (Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas New Year's) it's ripe for you to get your backyard grilling skills perfected. We have ample opportunities to fire up the grill regardless of where we live and try something new or ramp up an old favorite.

Halloween

I know by the time you read this the ghouls will have collected all their treats and played all their tricks but for next season, who says tailgating only has to be at a game? One of our Halloween traditions is having a block party while the little ghosts are floating through the neighborhood. The adults are gathered around a cauldron

of candy, coolers full of beverages and buckets of fresh oysters. You know what to do with the candy and beverages but for the oysters, throw them on a hot charcoal grill for about 5 minutes. Once shucked, flavor them however you want (crushed bacon, melted parmesan and a couple drops of hot sauce is my favorite) to experience a not so scary delicious meal.

Thanksgiving

If your mom is anything like mine, then you've had turkey roasted in an oven, perhaps even in a brown paper grocery bag (it's a thing, trust me). Maybe you were part of the craze a few years back when everyone was deep frying them (hopefully you weren't one



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of those who did one frozen). But have you ever smoked a turkey for Thanksgiving? Slice some apples, oranges and grab some fresh herbs (rosemary and thyme). Put the apples in the turkey along with the herbs (wrap in cheesecloth so you can remove easier) and squeeze the oranges over the turkey to allow the citrus to coat it then place the oranges in the cavity. Place turkey in a pan, put it in the smoker at 225 degrees with apple and cherry wood kissing it. Once your gobbler has reached an internal temp of 165, pull it, serve it and enjoy all the Thanksgiving praise you'll receive.

Christmas

Growing up one thing I remember about family Christmases were all the desserts everyone brought to enjoy and enjoy them we did but none were done on the grill. I have a couple I do for the holidays, all done outside. One is my pineapple upside down cake which everyone has grandma's recipe but do it in the cast iron on the grill. Another favorite is my apple rose tarts which are super easy but time consuming. Roll out pastry dough, lightly coat with apple butter then slice into a 1 ½ inch strips. Slice apples into

fourths then slice to an 1/8-inch thickness and lay the apple slices where half sticks out above the dough (add Carmel if you wish), fold the bottom half of the dough over so apples are sticking out the top, then from one end roll them up. They will look like a little rose as you place them into a muffin pan and cook for about 40 minutes at 350 degrees.

New Years

Well this is the time of football, craziness and all things new, including your grill. No, not a new grill (unless you got one for Christmas) but new recipes to WOW your New Year's football guests. For me it's dips, cheese fries and seafood to set my New Year's Football Festivity apart from the others. You're already firing it up for burgers and hotdogs anyway so you might as well do some shrimp with bacon wrapped scallops there as well.

As we wind down the year, I just want to say thanks for reading my articles and hope your Holidays bring you some awesome outdoor cooking opportunities in your own backyard.

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