

Grill Buying Guide

Natural gas grills have none of the hassles associated with charcoal, and unlike propane, they hook directly to your home's natural gas supply, so they will never run out of fuel. PSNC Energy's natural gas experts will help guide you through the selection process. We've put together some simple questions to help you select that perfect grill, and get it installed, so you can start planning your next cookout.

Step 1

How much do I want to spend?

Prices for gas grills range from \$100 all the way up to \$10,000+, and rule number one when purchasing a gas grill is: *You get what you pay for.* Low-end grills use cheap materials and will probably only last a season or two, while high-end grills are made with high-quality materials and can last 20 years or longer. As a result, a "cheap" grill may end up costing you a lot more in the long run. A high-end, mid-range grill will cost between \$1,000 and \$2,000.

Step 2

What should my grill be made of?

Gas grills are made of all types of materials. The most popular are cast aluminum, sheet metal and stainless steel. If you want your grill to last more than a season or two, the only real choices are stainless steel and cast aluminum.

Stainless Steel

Keep in mind, all stainless steel is not created equal, and many grills that claim to be stainless steel only have a few low-quality stainless steel parts. To find out which parts are actually high quality, 304 grade stainless steel, take a magnet with you. A magnet will not stick to high-quality stainless steel.

Cast Aluminum

Cast aluminum is very tough and retains heat extremely well. Grill bodies made out of cast aluminum will typically outlast any other grill, especially when constantly exposed to the elements.

Step 3

What size grill do I need?

Consider the things you want to cook on your grill and how many people you usually cook for. Do you frequently cook for large crowds? Do you want to be able to cook a 20-pound turkey? Or do you usually cook just a few burgers or pieces of chicken? Make sure the grill you buy is big enough to accommodate all you want to cook.

But also make sure it's not too big. A grill will look much smaller in a big store than it will on your deck or patio. You don't want to bring your nice new grill home only to realize it won't fit on your deck.

Step 4

What type of burner system do I want?

Material

First and foremost, you want the burner system to be made out of high-grade stainless steel. Any other material will not hold up well and should be avoided (unless you are looking at infrared cooking systems).

Shape

There are many different burner shapes including bowties, H-shaped, E-shaped and tubes. They will all do a nice job of cooking as long as they are spaced to provide even heat across the entire cooking surface, can be independently controlled with at least two-control knobs, and are in proportion to the grill (some low-end manufacturers will put a tiny burner in a big grill).

Flame Tamers (sometimes call Flavorizers)

The job of the flame taming system is to vaporize, or funnel away, juices and other drippings that fall from what you're cooking before they can catch fire and cause flare-ups. And just like burner shapes, there are many different methods used to tame flare-ups, including V-shaped stainless steel bars and ceramic grids. The most important thing to look for is that the flame tamer is directly over the burner, and that the burner is completely covered.

Cooking Grates

The best cooking grates are made of very durable materials like individually welded stainless steel, porcelain-enameled steel or cast iron. The grates should be heavy and solid. All of these materials will work well as long as you clean them properly and take care of them. Keep in mind porcelain-enameled grates will rust if they get chipped.

Step 5

What's a Btu, and how many do I need?

The British Thermal Unit, or Btu, rates how much heat a grill's burners create, which is not necessarily an indication of how well the grill will cook. Larger grills naturally have a higher Btu because their burners are bigger, but a large grill that does not hold or distribute its heat evenly will not be able to cook as well as a smaller grill that does both of those things well. So don't just rely on Btu when selecting your perfect grill.

Step 6

What features do I want?

Grills are getting more and more features every season, from LED lighted panels to MP3 player speakers. Here are some of the most popular features you may want to consider:

- Side Burners
- Infrared Searing Burner
- Back Burner
- Rotisseries
- Multiple Level Cooking Surfaces
- Smoker Box
- Temperature Gauges with Meat Probes

Step 7

How do I want my grill mounted?

Some grills come already attached to a standard cart, but others allow you to mount them in many different configurations.

Grill Carts

Grill carts, the most popular form of mounting, have wheels that allow you to easily move the grill from one location to another. Make sure the cart you select is solidly constructed and easy to move. For the best longevity, look for stainless steel carts with welded joints instead of screws or rivets. If the cart has doors, make sure they open and close easily and are evenly aligned.

In-Ground Post

Use this if you want to permanently install your grill on your deck or patio, if you don't want a full-blown outdoor kitchen.

Outdoor Kitchen

From simple set-ups to very elaborate ones, outdoor kitchens are gaining in popularity. You'll need to find a good contractor to help you construct your dream kitchen, but a natural gas grill is definitely something you'll want to include!

Step 8

What type of warranty should I look for?

High-end grill manufacturers often offer warranties of 10 years or longer on their grill's main components. Many even offer lifetime warranties on some parts, so make sure you ask your sales rep what's covered and for how long. Warranties are a good way to distinguish higher-end grills from lower-end grills because higher-end grills will have much better warranties.

Step 9

What do I look for when selecting an installer?

If you've never had a gas grill before, you will need an installer to install the gas line and/or the "quick-connect" hose you will use to hook up your gas grill. Here are some questions you should ask a potential installer to make sure you get one you can trust.

Are they Licensed, Bonded and Insured?

Installers should be licensed, bonded and insured to ensure they know what they are doing and have coverage to protect you and your home if something is damaged during the installation or someone gets injured.

Do they follow all building codes and pull the required permits?

When installing the gas line for your grill, if your installer does not follow building codes or fails to pull the proper permits, he is putting you and your family at risk.

How long have they been in the business?

You want your installer to have a long and positive track record for installing gas lines for grills in your area. Ask for references and only use an installer from a company you trust. You want to make sure the installer you use will be around for many years to come so they can provide maintenance and repair for your grill if you need it.

PSNC Energy offers installation of gas grills

Buy your next gas grill and have your gas line installed by the natural gas experts at PSNC Energy. With PSNC Energy, you can rest assured that your grill will be installed by a licensed, bonded and insured professional who follows all building codes and pulls the required permits. From start to finish, we'll make sure you get the perfect gas grill your home and that it is installed safely.

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