

**SPICEOLOGY**

# CHAR

**AKA THAT PRECARIOUS AND THIN DARK LINE BETWEEN A FLAVOR ENHANCER AND JUST DOWNRIGHT BURNT.**

Everything tastes better when grilled. And while there's a more complicated equation to why that is - the deliciously elusive phenomenon known as **CHAR** deserves its fair share of credit.

But there are moments that happen on the stovetop and grill that simply come down to everything simultaneously going right and you having a preternatural understanding of the connection between **TIME, HEAT AND FLAVOR.**

That's how the depth of flavor and **MAGIC** of char comes to life - and damn if it's not a hard thing to master fire. It's about patience, knowledge, technique, and a helluva lot of trial and error.

## THE SCIENCE OF CHAR

EXPLAINED BY A BURGER PATTY

*\* As spoken in an evocative / gravelly / raspy voice. \**

*So there I was, all perfectly shaped, just hanging with my guys when I'm suddenly manhandled and BAM on a metal rack with the fires of hell beneath me. I'm stressed. I start sweating. And man, it feels like I'm there forever. All the oxygen is gone.*



*After a while, my non-carbon atoms can't take it, are losing it and just start to break down. I bid them bon voyage and in their wake a dark carbon rises. Char. I have char.*



*But among this fiery chaos, I decide to let go. The char clung, I changed and I never felt more... ready. More delicious. That sounds weird to say, but ready. Without the fire, I it was a wild ride on the grate. Now I'm a burger with real char. So, in the end, it was worth it.*

### ON THE NEXT EPISODE...

**CLINGY TOPPING & RELATIONSHIP BOUNDARIES**  
as Explained by a Burger Patty.  
*Too dark? Too existential? Too bad - char isn't for the faint of heart - and who doesn't love a little anthropomorphism?*

## THIS IS YOUR BRAIN (AND BODY) ON CHAR

QUICK SENSORY STIMULI BREAKDOWN:



**MOUTH PERCEPTION** Immediate, if not fleeting, tastes of caramelization, smoke, wood, and earth.

**NOSE NOTES** Campfire earthiness just before the brink of burning.

**BRAIN COMMUNIQUE** Woahhhhh this slightly earthy-bitter taste just totally and juxtaposingly enhanced the flavor of this food.

## REAL TALK: CHAR & CARCINOGENS

With great flavor comes great responsibility. And the truth of the matter is - **burnt food isn't great for you.**

According to Columbia University Irving Medical Center: "When cooking over high heat, especially an open flame, you are exposed to two main carcinogens: **heterocyclic aromatic amines (HCAs)** and **polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)**. Studies show HCAs and PAHs cause changes in DNA that may increase the risk of cancer." Yep, we went there. Womp womp.

**Alas, it's not all doom and gloom.** Eating a charred steak has a far lower risk than say smoking cigarettes, but limiting the amount of charring on meats can help reduce the risk of developing cancer over years of consumption.

In the great words of Oscar Wilde: **"Everything in moderation, including moderation."**

**\*Note: we're not doctors. Please consult a health professional to confirm any information regarding char and consuming carcinogens. - Your Friendly Neighborhood Spice Company.**

“ A caramelized, paper-thin char layer gives you this smoke and wood flavor in the mouth, then suddenly disappears. Then the beauty of the flesh of the fruit or meat appears.

- Chef Francis Mallmann, Chef's Table

## CHAR CHECKLIST

Don't quite feel like a blackening boss or char champ yet? We tapped a few fellow chefs to relay tips of the trade to help you master the char:

**LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION**  
Practice your char on a stovetop because it's a more stable environment and you can better manage heat and oxygen; a cast iron skillet is a fantastic surface for getting that high heat you need to char. (Over-the-fire char is harder to perfect, but if you go that route, make sure your coals are fully red with no black sections.)

**HOLD THE OIL**  
Try to keep your cooking surface dry because it can reach a higher temp without smoking or burning a cooking oil. (You can use a little oil, but it will quickly bond and cook along with the food rather than smoking with the skillet or grill surface.)

**FIGHT THE URGE TO MOVE**  
Leave the food alone and let it do its thing, have time to release natural moisture and stay in one place without rotating, shaking or moving it so that char has time to form.

**THE OLE' SWEAT N' FLIP**  
Like we mentioned, natural moisture will start to release and those same juices help it release easily from the cooking surface. If it's sticking - it's not ready.

**HONE YOUR EAGLE EYE**  
Your beautiful char can change to burn in the blink of an eye. Watch your food with a fiercely fastidious focus - it takes practice, but you'll eventually start to recognize the signs of when the char is done.

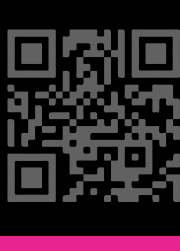
## CHAR ON THE MENU

Our Spiceologist chefs are slinging' some char-centric dish concept inspiration for your menu.

- BREAKFAST**  
Spiceology Black & Bleu Burnt Onion Flakey Biscuits and Gravy
- LUNCH**  
Spiceology Blackberry Balsamic Caprese Charred Sandwich
- APPETIZER**  
Charred Romaine Salad with Spiceology Pink Peppercorn Lemon Thyme Vinaigrette
- DINNER**  
Spiceology Cowboy Crust Tomahawks with Pimento Cheese Sauce
- SIDE**  
Spiceology Tandoori Glory Burnt Carrots with Lime Yogurt Sauce
- DESSERT**  
Spiceology Unsalted Caramel Charred Custard
- COCKTAIL**  
Spiceology Grapefruit Habanero Charred Cocktail

## BRING ON THE CHAR WITH THESE BLENDS

Not all ingredients are created equal and there are some standout stars to make that char:



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