

HIBACHI TABO COOKING

The pleasure of cooking great produce



Featuring



Fifteen Degrees by Design

Fifteen Degrees by Design

info@fdbd.com

www.hibachigrill.com.au



Hibachi Tabo



@hibachitabo

@fifteendegreesbydesign

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WHY COOK WITH A HIBACHI?

My wife and I fell in love with the Hibachi on our first trip to Japan. We were looking for a restaurant, just wandering around, and our standing joke was “the lower the curtain, the better the restaurant”. We pushed aside this curtain and down two flights of stairs we went. This restaurant was pumping. No one spoke English and there were no menus in English. We were sat at a counter and red hot charcoal was poured into the grill and we were given a plate of quartered cabbage. Not really knowing what to do, we had oils and seasoning so we applied them, and a very memorable evening unfolded. We have never had grilled cabbage before and have loved it ever since. Through the evening we just pointed at food as it went past and a few minutes later it was presented for us to cook.

Being a designer, I decided it was far better to spend a lot of money designing and building my own grill rather than buying one for significantly less off the shelf.

I got a bit carried away and have ended up designing a Hibachi that will be able to be passed down for generations - really turbocharging the original design and raising the bar on the way it can be used and cleaned. It has turned out to be far more efficient at burning charcoal than other brands on the market: hence the name **Hibachi Tabo**, which loosely translates to Turbo-charged Charcoal Grill. With the addition of the hood and extension, it has been made into a really versatile griller/oven/smoker/steamer/cooktop that can even bake bread.

Ceramic bricks line the inside and the grill is encased in 2mm commercial kitchen grade stainless steel with adjustable vents at the ends. The feet and handles are all made from local timber which allows it to be handled without gloves - an unusual feature. It can also be used on a regular table. The handles and feet are predominantly made from sustainably forested Spotted Gum, which is more robust under these conditions. Other timbers are also available.



After we cooked a few meals on the Hibachi, we realised we had a product worth selling. We had just started manufacturing our Firepit900 and felt this would add very well to the growing product range.

There are so many ways to cook with the Hibachi and we are constantly exploring them.

The joy of cooking on the Hibachi is the unique flavour you get using Binchotan Charcoal, which has no smoke or odour when burning. There are many types of Binchotan Charcoal, varying in price, but the most important aspect is the fact that it is a pure form of heat that



allows the natural sugars and flavours of the produce to be revealed without being "coloured" by the smoke.

We keep Binchotan Charcoal in stock in Noosa and Sydney and can ship Australia-wide.

Design Features of the Hibachi Tabo

1. The handles, feet and vent slider along with the grill handles are all made from the same timber. The timbers now being used are Spotted Gum, natural or stained black. Silky Oak is also available. If you require a specific timber to match your décor, please ask as I am sure we can accommodate you. The timber provides a very cool look against the stainless steel and allows the entire cooking process to be managed without the need for gloves.

2. Each Hibachi Tabo is numbered and signed on the reverse of the laser-cut timber label. On recent Hibachis we have been putting in an air gap of 1mm behind the label as we have found oil from the grill (and the heat) started slightly browning the timber. The details of your purchase are kept on file, down to the exact dimensions and type of timber used.

3. The grill is mounted about 3 mm above the surface of the frame. Our original grills were cast iron but we now use a stainless steel grill I designed, which is much smarter and more practical. The stainless is slightly harder to clean but the difference is minimal. The grills are glass-bead blasted which improves its cleanability and aesthetic.



The 3mm rise allows the fire-starter to be placed onto the grill without damaging the stainless body. It also allows a small frypan or pot (and soon-to-come, a wok) to be placed on the grill. The Solid Techniques small Noni Frypan is what I use.



BINCHOTAN CHARCOAL

Also known as White Charcoal, Binchotan Charcoal is a type of Activated Charcoal that has been made for over 300 years by charcoal makers in the Kishu province of Wakayama in Japan. Perfecting a technique that produced charcoal of extraordinary purity, they used the extra-hard Ubame Oak that grew in the forested hills of Kishu, carefully and sustainably choosing branch clippings, stacking them inside large kilns built into the mountains and then burning them at low temperatures over several weeks to control the oxygen flow. Lastly, they increased the temperature inside the kiln to above 1000 degrees and monitored the colour of the smoke. Once it was clear, all impurities had been burnt away.



Binchotan Charcoal is almost 100% carbon. Called White Charcoal due to the white ash residue, the name 'Binchotan' comes from a famous charcoal artisan, Binchoya Chozaemon. The secret Binchotan process eventually became known in other parts of Japan but Kishu Binchotan remains the finest, densest and purest form, still handmade through a process passed down through generations.

The result is the cleanest heat on which to grill. Binchotan Charcoal is now manufactured under license in Thailand and we supply and ship Australia wide.

Heat

The quality of the charcoal will influence the temperature of the grill and Binchotan produces an extremely high heat. The benefit of the Hibachi Tabo is that it uses less charcoal to burn longer and hotter. In commercial situations this could mean a reduction of up to 30% in the amount of charcoal used and, when some restaurants can go through many tens of kilos a night, it adds up.

FIRING UP THE HIBACHI

You require a chimney or fire starter. These are readily available from your local BBQ store or Bunnings or just ask and I will include it with the order. You will also need some chemical-free firelighters. Again Bunnings or your local BBQ store will have them. Don't be tempted to start the charcoal with gas as it really defeats the purpose of using Binchotan Charcoal. The gas is a petrochemical and the charcoal is essentially pure carbon.



Once you have discovered charcoal of this quality, and the flavours that are revealed, it's hard to go back to a gas BBQ.

I use only four firelighters, which are lit one at a time using a match to start the first and then tongs to hold the remainder over the flame. Place them around the mesh on the base. The charcoal is typically 150mm long and ranges from 20-40mm in diameter. The number of pieces you use will determine the temperature, the cooking area and the longevity of the heat. When you are starting, out fill the chimney and you can always take some out if it's running too hot. This should give you at least two hours of cooking time. Only fill to about three-quarters if it is just for two people.

With the addition of the oven/smoker, the heating of the bricks is important as it will retain the heat for some hours. If more heat is required, just add a piece to the already burning charcoal and it will fire up quickly. Don't put more than one or two pieces on at a time as it may generate more heat than you need.

PREPARING THE GRILL

Stainless Steel Grill: Give the grill a clean with hot soapy water, then coat it with oil on both sides.

Cast Iron Grill: It is really important to prepare the grill. Give the cast iron grill a good clean with hot soapy water, then coat with oil on both sides.

After you have the charcoal in the Hibachi, place the grill cooking surface-down for at least 15 minutes and then turn over and do the other side for ten minutes. Take the grill off, let it cool give it another wash. This will clean off any manufacturing products and it will be ready to cook with.



CLEANING THE HIBACHI

Throughout the cooking process it's a really good idea to keep the stainless surfaces clean of oil and other cooking detritus as they will bake-on when left to cool. Do this with a heavy, damp cloth. The Hibachi gets very hot so take care not to burn yourself.

We supply a really good brush for cleaning the grill between courses, particularly when marinades are used, and another bristled brush for cleaning the grill over the sink. If you buy a brush from a BBQ supplier, make sure its stainless steel.

We also supply a scourer for the stainless steel. I recommend a grey scourer rather than the green you would normally buy. The grey scourers are available from paint stores. Green is the roughest, then purple, grey, then white.

For the grill surface I use a stainless steel wool which cleans it quickly, particularly if it's still warm. I do have to admit that I don't do much cleaning until the following day as, at the end of 5-10 courses with wine, dealing with hot stuff is better left till the next day.

When introducing people to the Hibachi I always keep the offering simple. It is important that people realise this is not a fondue. Don't put the grill in the middle of the table for everyone to have a go. Set the Hibachi up at one end, put it on a tray to keep the table clean, and be the hero. Unless you are cooking just for two it's better to present one course at a time. I don't mind handing the tongs over to someone else after a while but having one cook is the best way to go.



There are so many different countries that use charcoal grills so experiment with all the different and wonderful cuisines. Vegetables are simply wonderful on the Hibachi. The street vendors of Vietnam and Malaysia offer satay sticks of meat, some with a few pieces of vegetables or a combination of meats, but my favourite influence remains Japanese.

The charcoal has now been fired up red hot and has been poured into the ceramic bricks and the grill fitted on top so it is time to start cooking.

Handy Hint: Open a nice crisp white wine or a chilled bottle of sake.



VEGETABLES



The courses can be as many as you can eat and in any order but I always start with a cabbage, in the traditional Japanese way.

Cabbage



A great choice is Wombok cabbage, also known as Chinese Cabbage, although Sugarloaf also works really well. Both are longer than a regular cabbage. Cut it in half then into thirds, making sure you keep the core intact as it will hold together better on the grill. The core is also very sweet when cooked and is often the nicest part. A brush of olive oil, a sprinkle of salt and pepper and onto the grill. Turn it a few times and serve. The number of people who have never tasted grilled cabbage is surprising but this is a good point-scorer to start with. You can also oven roast cabbage - worth a try.

Asparagus

Break the ends off, a light brush of oil and seasoning and grill for a short period of time turning only once. Asparagus grills quickly and is better served nice and crisp.



Zucchini

Try to buy the smaller zucchini as they fit onto the grill better. Trim the ends and cut them lengthwise about one centimeter thick. Lightly brush on some oil and season. Turn a few times. The grill leaves nice marking and presents really well. Don't overcook them as they should be slightly firm, with a light crunch. They are done just as they are turning translucent.



Eggplant (Aubergine)



A lot of people get hung up about eggplant and salt them to get the bitterness out. This is really unnecessary. Just cut the ends off and then cut across the fruit in centimeter medallions. Lightly oil, season and onto the grill. Just check to see how the grill marks are going and turn over when they look good.

They will need a second cooking per side so turn them 90 degrees so you get some nice cross marking. Serve.

Mushrooms

Medium sized field mushrooms are ideal. A little crushed garlic, a light brush of oil, season and on they go. They don't need to be turned as the oil will spill into the charcoal and cause a bit of smoke. Mushrooms are also great marinated, if you want to experiment with flavours.



Mushrooms with Thyme and Goats Cheese

The photo is of medium sized mushrooms, a dab of butter, thyme, salt and then, towards the finish, a little amount of goat's cheese. Do not turn.

Capsicum

I like to buy the three colours as they present really well and you will discover the different flavours. Take the centre out, clean the white from the inside and cut into six pieces lengthwise. Capsicum is so sweet that the barest of oil and seasoning is all that's needed. Often there is no need to even turn them over but grilling the edges helps. Serve



You should probably check but another bottle of wine might be a good idea now.

Spring Onions



Regardless of size they all work well. Trim the bulk of the roots off but there is no need to cut them off completely. Peel the first layer of skin off as that tends to be tough. Cut the leaves off as they tend to be woody. Lightly oil and season and onto the grill. Cooking time will depend on the thickness but they should be soft yet firm.

Baby Sweet Corn

These are so sweet and tasty. Australian baby sweet corn, while hard to find, are worth it. They only need a little oil and pop them onto grill until they start to soften.



Carrots



These heritage carrots were just so flavoursome. Cut them in half lengthwise, lightly oil and season, then grill carefully as they will take a bit longer.

The limits on cooking vegetables are endless. Try some other options:

Cauliflower

Try cutting a steak of cauliflower, about 12-15mm thick. Brush some olive oil and season. Grill and serve.

Radishes

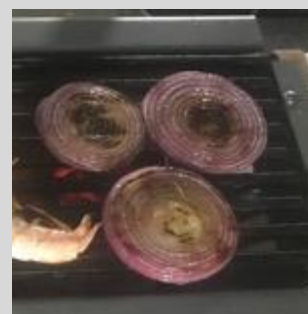
Cut large radishes into thirds and straight onto the grill.

Leeks

Cut off the root and the tougher leaves. Cut down the middle, brush with oil and season. Cook them a bit slower by keeping them to the ends of the grill. Add oil to the cut surface. Turn regularly and serve when tender.

Onions

Cut into 1cm rounds, oil, and handle carefully so they don't fall apart. Add a bit of oil from time to time. They are so sweet.



Haloumi

Haloumi is divine on the Hibachi. Seared on the hotplate or grilled, with a light sprinkle of Murray River salt.



MEATS

Chicken

There is a Michelin 3-star restaurant in Tokyo called Birdland that only serves one cut of chicken, prepared one way. The chicken is cut in a special way, skewered in a special way, grilled until slightly golden brown then sprayed with sake (no doubt a special sake) which further caramelizes the meat before serving. Simplicity taken to another level.



Don't forget:

1. Soak the bamboo skewers before use as that will reduce the likelihood of the skewers burning
2. Have a wet cloth to keep the stainless sides clean as it's easier now than after it has baked on.



3. The bricks and stainless steel are by this stage very hot so take care not to burn yourself. That is another reason to keep the Hibachi at one end of the table with one person in charge.

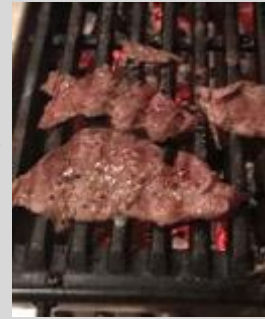
4. *Open another bottle of wine.*

(Thanks Cam for the photo of the satay)



Fillet Steak

Cut thinly with a very sharp knife, oil, salt and grill briefly. It will melt in the mouth. You can also apply a bit of mirin to add another flavour.



Wagyu Fillets



We did a cooking demonstration out the front of Eumundi Meats and the butchers tried different things. The first were these 1cm thick Wagyu fillets. They took 15 seconds a side, taken off and rested for a few minutes, a sprinkle of Murray River salt, either a squeeze of lemon or a dab of quality horseradish.

Lamb Neck Fillet

Again we did these in 1cm fillets, again for about 20 seconds a side and rest for five minutes. A sprinkle of Murray River salt, a bit of basil pesto and serve.



Lamb Ribs

Ribs are best pre-cooked before grilling. Throw them in a tray, cover with foil and into the oven for two hours at 100°C. Leave for another hour or two then brown them on the grill when you are ready to serve.

Lamb Chops

You can't go wrong with lamb chops. Lightly oil and salt, turn a few times but don't overcook.





Seafood

Scallops

We have a teppanyaki stainless steel platter that is available to purchase, and scallops seared on that are fantastic. There are so many ways to serve scallops but simple is best. Seared with a smidge of butter, a bit of salt and a squeeze of lemon.

Prawns

Always best with green prawns. Garlic butter and salt. Don't overcook, which means you really need to know where you are in the heat cycle of the Hibachi. They won't take more than a minute to two minutes a side.



Octopus

Once again, simple is best. Grill the lemon for a great effect. Quickly sear the octopus then add a squeeze of the charred lemon.





This is a collection of dishes from a passionate, Brisbane cook. All were prepared on the Hibachi and recipes will be coming.

1. DESERTS

This is just one example but try some thinly-cut pineapple: grill and serve with lemon sorbet. Excellent.



MEALS WITH MARINATES AND SAUCES

Miso Marinated Chicken

Mix together:

- 1 tablespoon of salt-reduced soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon of sugar
- 2 tablespoons of Miso
- 1 1/2 tablespoons of Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon of sesame oil
- A good splash of olive oil.

(makes enough for four thighs)

Cut the thighs into lengths and cover with marinade. Leave covered in the fridge for a few hours, or overnight.

Scrape off some of the liquid marinade on the chicken before you grill. Grill until tender.



Lamb Half Ribs

Mix together:

- 1 tablespoon Olive Oil
- Handful finely chopped rosemary
- Seasoning
- 1 tablespoon Dijon Mustard

(makes enough for ten lamb half ribs)



Beef Short Ribs

Braise with some suitable stock (seasoned and with a bit of soy) for three hours at 100°C and then leave in the oven for another hour or two. When ready to grill just shake off excess liquid and grill for 30 seconds per side to caramelize and serve.

Another option for the braise is to add a long black coffee into the stock: it adds another flavour dimension.



COOKING WITH THE OVEN SMOKER STEAMER

When you cook with grill, you are using radiated heat from the burning charcoal and the ceramic bricks. If you want to use the convection oven: take the grill off, fit on the centre extension, replace the grill and then add the hood. You now have an oven.

We provided a ceramic platter that sits at the bottom of the extension, reducing the radiated heating and also acting as a platform for smoking and steaming, while also acting as a further heatsink.

Grill



Grill with Extension

Then the oven hood sits on top of that



I like to use this combination for meals like butterflied leg of lamb, whole fish (including plank salmon), butterflied or whole chicken.

Butterflied Leg of Lamb

Marinated in olive oil with lots of chopped rosemary, salt and pepper.

Sear it at the grill level.

Put the extension and hood on and cook for 20-30 minutes.

Remove and wrap in silver foil.

Drop the grill back to the lower level, cook the vegetables, carve the meat, serve a sit-down meal for 4-10 people.



Capsicums, spring onions, zucchini, eggplants - cooked in 10 minutes.



Bread

When I build this Hibachi, I didn't think we would be able to bake bread but our ceramic platter makes this possible.

You need to get the oven temperature up, and you can try this sourdough (my first loaf of bread), with a nice hollow sound, crunchy crust, and delicate inside. It was as much luck as anything but it was fantastic.



There is so much more to add and, over the coming months, we will be releasing videos of the technical aspects of the Hibachi and also some well-known chefs cooking a meal of their choice.