



The ultimate Aussie barbie



The barbeque is a big part of Aussie culture *explains* **Karen Bleakley**

Barbeques are all part of the outdoor lifestyle Down Under

One of the things I love about Australia is being able to cook outdoors all year round. Barbeques are an important part of our family time here – whether we cook at home or go to one of the free barbeque points at the parks or beaches.

The public barbeques are easy to use and have instructions on the front – you hold down a button to turn it on and wait as it warms up. In most locations these are free, but in some tourist areas they are coin operated.

To get started, wipe the hotplate surface to make sure it is clean. You can cook right on the hotplate but we use a



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re-usable non-stick square liner that we put on the hot plate and cook the food on. This makes cleaning up easier and the sheet can go in the dishwasher (they cost about A\$10 from the supermarkets and are a great investment).

Aside from your plastic plates, ketchup, chairs, sunscreen, hats and cooking utensils, there are a few other essentials you need to remember to bring.

Don't forget to bring some plastic bags to use as rubbish bags and to store your used cooking utensils/dirty plates/hot plate liner in. Plastic tubs are also handy to store leftover food away from flies. And if you're cooking into the evening, don't forget the mozzie repellent!

You need to clean the barbeque straight after cooking while it is hot. Having a scraper or barbeque brush is a good idea if you cook right on the hot plate but when

cooking on a sheet it saves a lot of the mess. A fish slice doubles as a good scraper too.

If someone asks you to join them for a beach/park barbeque, it's customary to bring your own food and drink.

If you're invited to a barbeque at somebody's house, people tend to take their own drinks rather than bringing a bottle of wine to share with the hosts.

I've been to lots of parties where people have come with their own cool box full of beers so they don't even need to use the host's fridge. People also often bring their own food to cook on the host's barbeque.

You might be asked to 'bring a plate' – so you bring something to share like a salad or nibbles i.e. not just an empty plate!

It's always a good idea to ask what is expected before showing up at a barbeque

because everybody's way is a little different and there are a lot of expats from all over the world in Australia who have brought their own customs with them! There are no hard and fast rules.

Barbeques are an important part of the social scene in Australia. We have barbeques with friends far more often than we go out to eat in restaurants now. We often do them on weeknights for a quick dinner too. I even cook pizzas on ours.

Long gone are the days of only managing three barbeques in a year (if we were lucky!) – now our barbeque gets as much use as our cooker! 🍷

■ **Karen Bleakley helps families take the stress out of moving to Australia. Visit her website to find out more: www.SmartStepstoAustralia.com.**