

101 Things Every Consumer Should Know

# money

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## charcoal



### Best basic grill

**Weber One-Touch Gold**, 22½ inches (\$139; [weber.com](http://weber.com); 800-446-1071). This is the classic Weber kettle, renowned for having revolutionized American grilling. Leave the lid off and sear a steak; put the lid on and roast a chicken. As Bobby Flay says, "The classics are classics for a reason."



### Best gas compromise

**Weber Performer** (\$399). If you love charcoal cooking but hate the hassle, the Performer offers a novel twist: a small gas pilot burner that lights the coals. No lighter fluid, no chimney—just push a button. You still have to wait for the coals to heat up, but it's a nifty mechanism.



### Best smoker

**Big Green Egg** (\$800; [biggreenegg.com](http://biggreenegg.com); 404-320-2066). Wood chips will create smokiness in any grill. But serious smokehounds should consider the aptly named Big Green Egg. It's not ideal for items like steaks and burgers, but its ceramic shell is terrific for roasting and smoking.



### Best upscale grill

**Hasty-Bake Legacy 131** (\$889; [hastybake.com](http://hastybake.com); 800-426-6836). If you want to look beyond Weber, experts recommend Hasty-Bake; its grills have a hand crank so you can adjust the space between the coals and the food ("Always the one problem with the Webers," notes Flay).

## Everything but the oink

Burgers and steaks are fine, but for the ultimate cookout, try roasting a whole pig. This was once beyond the reach of the average backyard chef, because it took all day and required a deep pit or a large spit. But thanks to a clever product called the **Caja China** (\$250; [lacajachina.com](http://lacajachina.com); 800-338-1323), you can roast a 70-pound pig in 3½ hours, which is exactly what I did on a recent Saturday afternoon. The results were spectacular.

Essentially a roasting box on wheels, the Caja China (*ka-ha chee-nah*) has a recessed lid that serves as a charcoal tray. The heat from the coals radiates through the box's metal interior panels, cooking the hog—or the

lamb, or turkeys, or whatever—very efficiently. Since the coals are outside and the meat is inside, the food doesn't pick up any charcoal flavor, but you can put wood chips into the box for smokiness and provide additional flavor by injecting the pig with a marinade before cooking.

The Caja China has been popular for years among Miami's Cuban community (similar devices are sometimes called "Cajun microwaves" elsewhere in the South) but is just now drawing notice from food journalists. If the succulent, bronze-skinned pig I cooked is any indication, it will be attracting more well-deserved attention in the months to come. —PL.



The Caja China can roast a 70-pound pig to perfection in 3½ hours.