

EARL & JUNE PRUITT

Five Suppers for Two

A free start from Two Plates, One Grill

Five Suppers to Start With

Here are five suppers for two, and this is the order I'd cook them in. Each one asks a little more of the fire than the one before.

1. Sausage and Potato Packets. The foil does the work while you learn your fire.
2. Earl's Plain Burger. Now you use the thermometer.
3. Vinegar-Mopped Thighs. Cool side, lid on, then a short turn over the coals.
4. Thick Pork Chops, Never Dry. Same two zones, closer attention.
5. Chuck Eye Steaks for Two. By now your hands know the kettle, and the steak money is safe.

All five need only a kettle, a chimney, tongs, a thermometer and foil. They come from our book, Two Plates, One Grill.

Sausage and Potato Packets

JUNE: *I've got the receipt right here: $3.20 a plate and not one pot to wash. Earl says the packet was his idea. I let him have it, since he's the one standing over the fire.*

SERVES	TIME	FIRE	COST A PLATE
2	41 min	Half chimney, two-zone	about $3.20



JUNE'S RECEIPT

Smoked sausage, ½ lb	$2.00
Potatoes, ¾ lb	$0.75
Bell pepper	$1.00
Onion	$0.30
Butter and spice	$0.75
Heavy foil, 4 sheets	$0.60
Charcoal, half chimney	$1.00
All of it, about	**$6.40**
2 plates, each about	**$3.20**

JUNE'S SECOND SUPPER.

Leftovers go in the iron skillet to 165°F with an egg on top for breakfast, cooked firm. The rest of the ring goes in a pot of beans.

Sausage and Potato Packets

WHAT YOU NEED

- **1/2 lb** smoked sausage, in ½-inch coins
- **3/4 lb** potatoes, in ½-inch dice
- **1** bell pepper, chopped
- **1/2** onion, chopped
- **2 tbsp** butter, cut in bits
- **1 tsp** paprika
- salt and black pepper

You will want: heavy foil, wide spatula, thermometer.

HOW TO DO IT

1. Light a half chimney. When the coals are gray at the edges, bank them on one side.
2. Toss the sausage, potatoes, pepper, onion, paprika, salt and pepper in a bowl. Keep the potato pieces small, ½ inch, so they cook through.
3. Stack two sheets of heavy foil, then a second stack. Mound the mix on each, dot with butter, and fold tight with room for steam.
4. Set the packets on the hot side, lid on, 12 minutes. Turn them over with a wide spatula, lid on, 12 minutes more.
5. Open one with care. A fork must slide through a potato and the sausage must be 165°F or steaming hot. If not, reseal, 5 minutes on the cool side.

Earl says. Slide a wide spatula under the packet to turn it. Tongs poke holes, holes leak butter, and butter on coals makes a fire you didn't order.

Team June, in the oven. Set the packets on a sheet pan and bake at 425°F about 35 minutes, until the potatoes are soft and the sausage is 165°F or steaming hot.

Safe temperature: 165°F or steaming hot. Keeps: Fridge 3 to 4 days. Reheat to 165°F.

Earl’s Plain Burger

EARL: *At the fire hall they ask what I put in my burger. Salt and pepper. They keep waiting for the rest of it. June adds a tomato slice to hers, and after 49 years I have stopped commenting.*

SERVES	TIME	FIRE	COST A PLATE
2	22 min	Half chimney, two-zone	about $2.70



JUNE’S RECEIPT

Ground beef, ½ lb	$3.00
2 buns	$0.70
Tomato and onion	$0.50
Mustard, salt, pepper	$0.20
Charcoal, half chimney	$1.00
All of it, about	**$5.40**
2 plates, each about	**$2.70**

JUNE’S SECOND SUPPER.

A pound of beef splits clean in half. The other half goes flat in a dated freezer bag, good for 3 to 4 months, and turns into Hamburger Hobo Packets some weeknight.

Earl's Plain Burger

WHAT YOU NEED

- **½ lb** ground beef, 80 percent lean
- **½ tsp** salt
- **¼ tsp** black pepper
- **2** hamburger buns
- **2 slices** tomato
- **2 slices** onion, cut thin
- **1 tbsp** mustard

You will want: spatula, thermometer, clean plate.

HOW TO DO IT

1. Light a half chimney. When the top coals are gray at the edges, about 15 to 20 minutes, pour them all on one side. Scrape and oil the grate.
2. Split the beef in two. Shape patties ½ inch thick, a little wider than the bun, with a thumb dent in the middle. Salt and pepper the outside.
3. Set the patties on the hot side, lid off. Cook 3 minutes a side and do not press them.
4. Move them to the cool side, lid on, 2 to 3 minutes. A thermometer in through the side must read 160°F at the center.
5. Toast the buns cut side down on the cool side for 1 minute. Build the burgers on a clean plate.

Earl says. A burger pressed with a spatula leaves its juice on the coals. Keep your hands to yourself and let the thermometer do the talking.

Team June, in the oven. Bake the patties on a foil-lined sheet pan at 425°F about 15 minutes, turning once, until 160°F in the center. Toast the buns on the pan the last 2 minutes.

Safe temperature: 160°F in the center of each patty. Keeps: Cooked patties, fridge 3 to 4 days. Reheat to 165°F.

Vinegar-Mopped Thighs

EARL: *A customer once asked what I put on chicken to make it smell like that. I told him vinegar. He looked at me like I'd shorted him on a carburetor.*

SERVES	TIME	FIRE	COST A PLATE
2	55 min	Half chimney, two-zone	about $2.67



JUNE'S RECEIPT

4 bone-in thighs, 1½ lb	$3.30
Cider vinegar, ½ cup	$0.80
Sugar, salt, pepper, red pepper flakes	$0.25
Charcoal, half chimney	$1.00
All of it, about	**$5.35**
2 plates, each about	**$2.67**

JUNE'S SECOND SUPPER.

Chop any leftover thigh, warm it in a skillet with the table sauce to 165°F, and pile it on a bun with slaw. Bones go in the soup bag.

Vinegar-Mopped Thighs

WHAT YOU NEED

- **4** bone-in chicken thighs, about 1 ½ lb
- **½ cup** cider vinegar
- **1 tbsp** sugar
- **1 tsp** salt
- **½ tsp** red pepper flakes
- **½ tsp** black pepper

You will want: brush, clean cup, two pairs of tongs.

HOW TO DO IT

1. Light half a chimney. Stir the vinegar, sugar, salt and both peppers until the sugar melts. Pour a third of it into a clean cup for the table.
2. Bank the coals on one side and scrape the grate. Set the thighs skin up on the cool side. Lid on, 15 minutes.
3. Mop the thighs well with the brush. Lid on, 15 more minutes.
4. Mop them one last time. Turn them skin down over the coals, lid off, 2 to 3 minutes, and put the mop away.
5. Check the thickest thigh, away from the bone: 165°F. Past that does no harm, a thigh stays tender. Serve on a clean platter with the cup alongside.

Earl says. Pour the table cup before anything else. That one stays clean. The mop with the brush in it stays at the grill and doesn't go near the plates.

Team June, in the oven. Bake the thighs skin up on a foil-lined pan at 400°F for 35 to 40 minutes, mopping twice, until they read 165°F.

Safe temperature: 165°F in the thickest part, away from the bone. Keeps: Fridge 3 to 4 days. Freezer up to 4 months.

Thick Pork Chops, Never Dry

EARL: *We were raised to cook pork until it gave up. Took me a long while to trust the thermometer. First time I took a thick chop off at 145°F, June asked who cooked it.*

SERVES	TIME	FIRE	COST A PLATE
2	47 min + 2 hr in the fridge	Half chimney, two-zone	about $3.25



JUNE'S RECEIPT

2 thick bone-in chops, 1½ lb	$5.25
Salt, brown sugar, pepper	$0.25
Charcoal, half chimney	$1.00
All of it, about	**$6.50**
2 plates, each about	**$3.25**

JUNE'S SECOND SUPPER.

Slice a leftover chop thin and warm it in gravy to 165°F over toast, or chop it for fried rice. The bone goes in the bean pot.

Thick Pork Chops, Never Dry

WHAT YOU NEED

2 bone-in pork chops, 1 ¼ inches thick, about 1 ½ lb

2 cups cold water

2 tbsp salt

1 tbsp brown sugar

½ tsp black pepper

You will want: bowl, two pairs of tongs, clean plate.

HOW TO DO IT

1. Stir the salt and sugar into the water. Add the chops, cover, and refrigerate 2 hours. Longer makes them salty.
2. Light half a chimney. Bank the coals on one side and scrape the grate. Pat the chops dry and pepper them.
3. Set the chops on the cool side, bones toward the coals. Lid on, 12 minutes. Turn them. Lid on, 5 more minutes.
4. Move them over the coals, lid off, 2 minutes a side, until brown.
5. Check each chop through the side to the center, away from the bone: 145°F. If short, back to the cool side, lid on, 2 minutes.
6. Rest on a clean plate at least 3 minutes before you cut.

Earl says. A chop this thick cooks like a small roast. Slow on the cool side first, then a quick brown. Do it the other way and the edges dry out.

Team June, in the oven. Brown the chops in an iron skillet on the stove, 2 minutes a side, then bake at 375°F for 10 to 12 minutes, until 145°F. Rest 3 minutes.

Safe temperature: 145°F, rest at least 3 minutes. Keeps: Fridge 3 to 4 days. Freezer 2 to 3 months.

Chuck Eye Steaks for Two

EARL: *Chuck eye comes from right next to the rib steak, one cut over. The counter man only has a few. I've learned to show up early and act like I'm looking at the roasts.*

SERVES	TIME	FIRE	COST A PLATE
2	37 min + 1 hr in the fridge	Half chimney, two-zone	about $5.25



JUNE'S RECEIPT

2 chuck-eye steaks, 1 lb	$9.00
Butter, 1 tablespoon	$0.30
Salt, pepper, garlic powder	$0.20
Charcoal, half chimney	$1.00
All of it, about	**$10.50**
2 plates, each about	**$5.25**

JUNE'S SECOND SUPPER.

Leftover slices go on toast with a little onion, warmed to 165°F, or into a morning skillet of potatoes and egg cooked firm.

Chuck Eye Steaks for Two

WHAT YOU NEED

2 chuck-eye steaks, 1 inch thick, about 1 lb

1 tsp salt

1 tsp black pepper

½ tsp garlic powder

1 tbsp butter

You will want: two pairs of tongs, clean plate.

HOW TO DO IT

1. Salt the steaks on both sides and refrigerate uncovered on a plate for 1 hour. Salt that long gets inside the meat.
2. Light half a chimney. Bank the coals on one side and scrape the grate. Rub the steaks with pepper and garlic powder.
3. Set the steaks over the coals, lid off, 3 minutes a side.
4. Move them to the cool side. Lid on, 3 to 5 minutes.
5. Check through the side to the center: 145°F. Put half the butter on each.
6. Rest on a clean plate at least 3 minutes. Slice across the grain, or let each person do it.

Earl says. Run this steak across the grain in thin slices at the table. A sharp knife does more for older teeth than anything you do at the fire.

Team June, in the oven. Sear in a hot iron skillet on the stove, 3 minutes a side, then bake at 400°F for 4 to 6 minutes, until 145°F. Rest 3 minutes.

Safe temperature: 145°F, rest at least 3 minutes. Keeps: Fridge 3 to 4 days. Freezer 2 to 3 months.

THE REST OF IT

Two Plates, One Grill

90 backyard recipes for two, with the cost of every plate

If these five suit you, the book is at grillonline.org. It's a digital PDF, and there's no rush on it. Keep these five either way.

Earl & June