

VALENTINE'S morsels

When Mr Warner heads for the beach, his portable grill and barbecue field kit are first into the boot. But what does he throw on the coals – and where exactly does he go?



BOYS AND GRILLS

I love to barbecue. It's my favourite way to cook – although the whole flaming business is dominated by male bossiness and unnecessary stress. Preparations for a beach barbie involve far too much time clucking around at home with Tupperware boxes and cool bags when we could be sitting on the shore next to a sizzling mackerel.

To make life easier, I've devised my own barbecue 'doctor's bag' – a rucksack containing all the essentials, which I always keep to

hand in summer. Inside are salt and pepper, matches and other incendiaries (which I keep in a waterproof plastic bag), a small chopping board and knife, cutlery, napkins, plastic plates and small mixing bowls, a small baking tray, olive oil, ketchup, mustard, vinegar, a few spices, curry powder, honey, Worcestershire sauce – you get the idea. Woe betide anyone who tampers with this essential field response kit. Putting it all into a rucksack has another advantage: your hands are free to carry a cool bag [see Aggie's top-rated on p105] and all-important charcoal.

“Too much time is spent clucking around at home with Tupperware boxes”

LEADING A CHARRED LIFE

There are many good portable barbecues out there. Personally, I like the Pioneer Campfire Cooking Grill (£45 plus P&P, campfirecookinggrill.co.uk) and prefer it to the bucket-style grills. It's lightweight and easy to transport, so you can set it up just about anywhere.

The staple ingredients? Lemons, tomatoes, garlic and spring onions (brilliant charred, then seasoned with lime and salt). Then swing by the butcher, fishmonger or grocer in your chosen seaside town and see what's on offer. Top of my list would be squid with chilli, coriander, cumin and lemon; or grilled liver with Thai fish sauce, coriander seeds, lime and raw red onion. Asparagus performs well when grilled – dip into a simple basil mayonnaise and eat with a hard-boiled egg. And bass is great with salt, rosemary and lemon – just wipe the skin dry and sprinkle with plenty of flaky salt to raise the fish off the bars and prevent sticking. So... Ditch the blackened burgers and try something new!

BARBIE ON THE BEACH

And where to serve your gourmet barbecue? I'm hesitant to broadcast directions to my favourite beach, but occasionally my churlish ways are overcome by kindly spirit. I will encrypt the whereabouts slightly: Allhallows beach, which is west of Lyme Regis on the lower road, is opposite a garage. Turn left into the grounds of what was once a boys' boarding school, find your way downhill to the chimney in the woods, then scale down the ladder onto this beautiful pebble beach. You stand a good chance of having the place to yourself, save for a few happy Germans, hats on and naked bums to the sun. **d**

