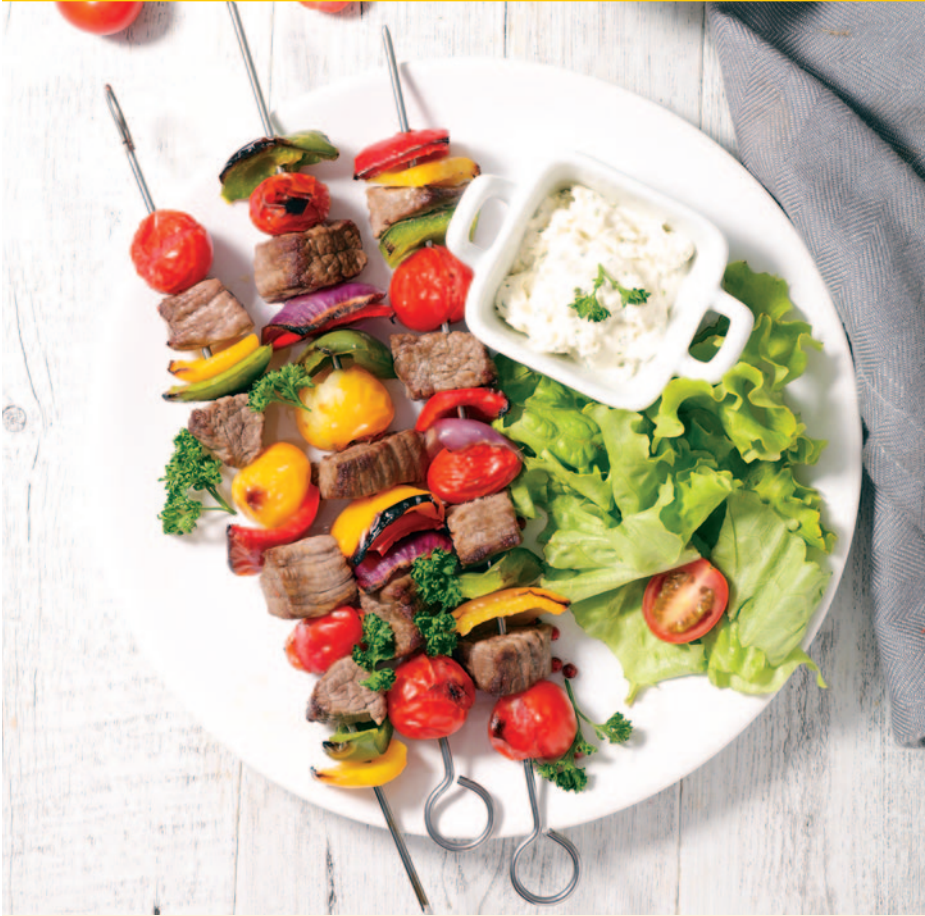


Middle Eastern Venison Kabobs

By Tom Dickson | Preparation time: 15 minutes plus 2–6 hours | Cooking time: 6–10 minutes | Serves 4



Kids are heading back to school. College football has started. Even some big game hunting seasons have begun. Summer's over, right?

Not for me. I like fall as much as the next person, but Montana's summer is far too short and much too sweet not to savor until the official ending date in late September.

Besides, does it even feel like summer's done? I recall a September 1 sharptail opener a few years ago north of Miles City when the afternoon high was 104 degrees. During the first month of grouse hunting, my dog and I are often high in the Big Belts, as much to flee the sauna-like conditions in town as to chase dusky (blue) grouse. September can be sweltering.

So until the calendar confirms the transition from summer to fall on the autumn equinox, I'll still be wearing my shorts, swimming in lakes, and cooking dinner on the grill.

One of my favorite ways to salute the season's waning days is by grilling venison kabobs. This recipe came from experimenting with a half-dozen others found online and in Middle Eastern cookbooks. I wanted one that approximated the aromatic kabobs I bought years ago from street vendors in Istanbul. Though that grilled, marinated meat was lamb, I've found that prime cuts of venison work just as well. 🐾

—Tom Dickson is editor of Montana Outdoors.

BRINE

2 lbs. venison loin, steak, or roast, all white bits trimmed, cut into 1-inch cubes

½ c. olive oil

1 T. white vinegar

1 t. ground cumin

½ t. ground coriander

½ t. paprika

1 t. minced garlic

½ t. salt

Cherry tomatoes and pepper and onion chunks as desired

DIRECTIONS

Mix all ingredients except meat and vegetables in a ceramic or glass bowl or 1-gallon sealable bag. Add venison and cover completely with marinade. Place in refrigerator and let sit for 2 to 6 hours.

Fire up the grill. Remove meat from marinade and thread onto skewers. Oil grill to prevent sticking and grill kabobs over high heat for 6 to 8 minutes, turning every few minutes. Meanwhile, skewer onions, peppers, and tomatoes separately,* brushing with leftover marinade. Grill tomatoes 2 minutes, turning once, and onions and peppers for 10 minutes, turning once.

Serve with warmed pita bread and tzatziki (yogurt and cucumber) sauce.

EASY TZATZIKI (TSAH-ZEE-KEE) SAUCE

1 c. plain Greek yogurt

½ c. seeded and diced cucumber

1 T. lemon juice

1 garlic clove, minced

1 T. finely chopped fresh dill or ½ t. dried

Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

In a medium bowl or food processor, combine yogurt, cucumber, lemon juice, garlic, and dill. Stir or whiz until well combined. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Chill 1 hour before serving if possible.

*Some cooks prefer to skewer the meat and veggies together (as in the above photo), but I keep them separate to better control the different cooking times.