

Interview with Dr Ulrich Nehring, certified food technologist

Barbecuing with aluminium trays

What advantages do aluminium trays offer for barbecuing?

Dr Ulrich Nehring: When aluminium trays are used for barbecuing, you can prevent the fat in the food from dripping into the coals or flames, where it can burn and release carcinogenic substances that can then be found in the barbecued food. Using aluminium grilling trays can thus protect your health.

What must I bear in mind when I use aluminium trays on my barbecue?

Dr Ulrich Nehring: If you use aluminium trays to grill your food, you shouldn't prepare any acidic foods such as acid-marinated meat or fish seasoned with lemon juice.

What exactly happens when I grill pre-marinated or pre-seasoned food on an aluminium tray, and can I still enjoy an occasional BBQ without exposing myself to any health risks?

Dr Ulrich Nehring: Acid-marinated meat or lemon juice drizzled onto grilled fish, for example, can in given circumstances dissolve the surface of the aluminium BBQ trays. This releases aluminium salts, which then migrate into the food. Especially in people with kidney problems, aluminium can become enriched in the body, and in large amounts this can lead to disorders of the nervous system. But if by chance you do occasionally barbecue acidic food on a grilling tray, you don't have to fear any immediate consequences for your health. Most of the aluminium we take up with our nutrition comes from the food itself – it's a natural ingredient in many foodstuffs, like cocoa, chocolate, tea, or certain spices, occurring in quite large amounts in some cases. All the same, as a rule people should heed the basic precautions when grilling on aluminium trays to keep the uptake of aluminium as low as possible.

For more information on this issue and an interview: www.allesueberalu.de/Alu-Grillschalen.html.

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(GDA, German Association of Aluminium Manufacturers)

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