

Brats

These are not what you call a group of kids who are misbehaved. These are a type of German sausage called brats (pronounced like "knots".) No Wisconsin outdoor meal is complete without a brat. A picnic wouldn't be a picnic without it! If you're not from Wisconsin, it's hard to tell if you've ever seen a real Brat. They are not the white gray wiener's you see at county fairs. They are plump, rich, pork sausage gifts from the gods!

In Wisconsin they come from places like Sheboygan, where the very best in the whole world are made. If you're not in Wisconsin, ask your local butcher to get you Johnsonville brats. This how they recommend you cook them. Masterful grilling is 50 percent preparation and 50 percent perspiration. The rest is just hanging around and not losing your cool. So the first step to grilling greatness is to put two tall beverages on ice. Now, you're ready for the charcoal.



To figure out how many you'll need, lay out a single layer of briquettes on the lower rack of your grill. It's not time to fire up the grill. Mound the briquettes into a pyramid-shaped pile pointing up. Light the pyramid with your personal choice of fire. Please pay attention. The end step is important. Pour one of your frosty beverages into a mug. Enjoy and wait.

When your mug is empty, the coals should be white gray. Spread them out in a single layer. To determine when the coals are at the optimum for brats, place your hands, palms down two inches above the rack. Count the seconds until it feels uncomfortable. Four seconds is perfect! Remember, too much heat is too much heat. If you can still see a red glow, open another beverage.

Now, arrange brats in a random, but meaningful pattern on the rack. Never, never cover the grill! Why? Don't ask, this is no time to get philosophical. Turn brats every five minutes or so. Use tongs. Never use a fork as this will puncture the brat and release the great taste and savory flavor. Last step- after your brats have cooked for a casual 25 or 30 minutes, place them on a platter, carry them in, and take all the credit.

**After tasting a brat, you'll never go back to a hot dog again.
You've got my word on that!**