

Thermos' All-Stainless Steel Gas Grill Sizzles

MODEL #461246804 HANDILY WEATHERS THE ELEMENTS WHILE COOKING UP TASTY MEALS QUICKLY AND EVENLY.

By Tyson Heyn



There are two major complaints we typically hear from those who avidly barbecue: pre-heating can take as long as waiting for a sunny day in Seattle and grills age as gracefully as an open bottle of soda.

There are other issues, as well, including how evenly grills cook, whether an engineering degree is required for assembly, and how much grilling space is afforded for food.

It's with these concerns in mind that we carefully reviewed Thermos' All-Stainless Steel Gas Grill (Model #461246804), a model that boasts of a 99-year parts warranty and quick pre-heating implied by its three internal burners and 50,000 BTU rating. At \$400, the grill isn't the least expensive on the market, but perhaps the Thermos would counter by convincingly proving that it's the best overall value.

GETTING STARTED WITH THE THERMOS

Our introduction to the grill began as any other: a heavy box of parts that awkwardly and narrowly fits in trunk of a car. We could have opted for the pre-assembled model available at Target for around \$50 more, but we wanted the full experience of tooling together the grill from scratch.

The assembly instructions were clear and the entire unit was ready to go in around two hours. One pleasant surprise was the discovery that the clamshell cooking area had come pre-assembled from the factory, which can be a rarity for this relatively daunting task. No special tools were required, and all the required components were included and easily identified.

The assembled grill looked like a work of art. The low clamshell cover was unique and practical—rising heat within the grill would stay closer to the food than in a bubble hovering just above the top rack.

The electronic ignition makes starting Thermos' All-Stainless Steel Gas Grill a snap. After approximately 150 start-ups, the igniter's AAA battery shows no need to be replaced anytime soon.

The fully enclosed storage compartment below the cooking surface and countertop holds a standard size propane tank with considerable room to spare. A stainless steel bolt with thumbscrew handily secures the tank in place. Storage racks integrated into the cabinet doors inside are a convenient space for storing spices, grill scrubbers, and the like.

IS THE GRILL ONE TO GET FIRED UP ABOUT?

Now the most important test: how well does Thermos' All-Stainless Steel Gas Grill cook? The first key issue is pre-heating time. To move from ambient outdoor temperature to 400°F, the grill needs around seven or eight minutes. (This is a few minutes more than when first used, assuming that black cooking residue is allowed to build on initially reflective stainless steel cooking surfaces.)

The temperature measured evenly across the grilling area. Food flavor was nicely enhanced through the use of the grill's integrated smoking tray, which allows for flavored wood chips to be placed within the grill for a smokier cooking experience. There was plenty of space to grill a meal for six.

WITHSTANDING THE ELEMENTS BETTER

Aside from aesthetic beauty, the supposed compelling reason to own stainless steel cooking equipment is durability. Componentry is alleged to be less likely to rust under rainy and humid conditions. Theoretically, the grill better withstands whatever Mother Nature throws it's way.

Through our extended testing session, we found Thermos' grill to mostly live up to this expectation. After around 100 hours of use and 180 days of outdoor conditioning, the barbecue displayed just very slight rust around one dial and wear upon the replaceable burner covers.

FINAL WORD: HIGH VALUE TRUMPS LOW COST

The Thermos' \$400 price is justified by what we gauge as a better grilling experience and projected long-term durability. Complete with side burner, the grill is hard to beat.

PRODUCT SNAPSHOT

HIGHS: Sizzling look and quick pre-heat. Deluxe cabinet, side burner, and long durability are major pluses.

LOWS: Smoker tray is somewhat flimsy. Even this grill isn't 100% impervious to elemental and grilling wear.

IN BRIEF: If you want to buy a grill once and not have to worry about replacing it for the next decade, this is the one.

RATING: ★★★★★½ (out of 5 stars)

FOR MORE INFO: www.target.com. Now available at Target and www.target.com online. Suggested Retail Price: \$399. (Found occasionally discounted for around \$50 less.)