



IT GRILLS. IT SMOKES. IT BAKES.

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From Ancient Cooker to Modern Marvel How Ed Fisher Turned the Big Green Egg into a Barbecue Success Story

The path to barbecue fame has been a long, winding and circuitous one for both the Big Green Egg® and its president and founder, Ed Fisher.

To trace this path, you'd have to rewind 3,000 years. It was then that the original concept for the egg-shaped clay cooker first took root in the Orient. Centuries later, U.S. servicemen were exposed to the "kamado" in Asia during World War II and many soldiers shipped them home after the war.

Next, fast forward to the early 1970s when Ed Fisher first tasted the incredibly moist and flavorful food prepared in one of the Oriental kamado cookers. Fisher instantly knew this was a special product and came up with an idea for a charcoal-fueled barbecue grill based on the ancient cooking concept. He envisioned it being versatile enough to grill, smoke and bake. His new grill was shaped like a large egg and he was inspired to paint it green and give it a whimsical and memorable name that he thought would ensure consumer appeal and assist in marketing the new product -- The Big Green Egg. He began selling the unusual barbecue from a little store in a suburban Atlanta strip mall.

With no money for advertising, Fisher demonstrated and sold the units one by one. It was a slow process, but a labor of love for Fisher who knew he could win over customers with the delicious results his demos produced. His assumption was correct and little by little sales of the quirky cooker grew.

Thirty years and thousands of EGGs later, the product is still largely sold by the philosophy of “seeing (and in this case, *tasting*) is believing.” Individual product demos and word-of-mouth recommendations from satisfied owners are still at the core of Big Green Egg’s success.

In fact, a large and growing worldwide contingent of “EGGheads,” Big Green Egg® devotees who share an unbridled passion and enthusiasm for the product, is responsible for spreading the EGG® gospel and converting many people to the EGG way of cooking.

“We’ve experienced at least double-digit sales increases almost every year since we started,” Fisher says proudly. “It is rather amazing that we’ve been able to take a cooking concept virtually unknown in the U.S. and catapult it to one of the most talked-about grilling and smoking products in the country.”

Adding to the chatter is extensive media coverage of the EGG in recent years, particularly on television cooking and home-improvement type programs. And, it hasn’t hurt that the EGG has become the darling of numerous celebrity chefs and cookbook authors, many of whom espouse cooking over charcoal for its flavor benefits. More and more competition barbecue chefs, who virtually always cook over charcoal, also prefer this versatile, green ceramic cooker which is helping them win many coveted championships.

A renewed nationwide consumer interest in charcoal grilling, particularly over all-natural, hardwood lump charcoal, has helped spark sales of the charcoal-fueled EGG®. Thanks to the inventive design of the EGG, which draws air in through the base and out through the lid, the lump charcoal lights quickly without need of a chemical liquid fire starter, and is ready for cooking in about 10 minutes. The fuel-efficient EGG also uses charcoal sparingly because the thick ceramic walls hold the heat so well; about 80 percent of the charcoal remains intact after cooking and can be reused, so a 20-pound bag can last several months, depending on how often one barbecues.

While still strongly grounded as a grass-roots product, the Big Green Egg Company has transitioned from a small niche manufacturer to a major player in the grill industry. An active product research and development department, customer service operations, and greatly expanded warehousing facilities and administrative offices are now headquartered in Tucker, Georgia, only a few miles from the original store. A modern new retail store in the complex allows the company to test new products and keep close tabs on its customers' wants and needs. The retail store also serves as a training center for the growing number of Big Green Egg® dealers from all across the U.S. and Canada.

Manufacturing technology has taken a monumental leap forward, as well. Unlike the somewhat fragile clay kamado cookers Fisher first imported over 30 years ago, today's Big Green Eggs are made from high-tech ceramics. The state-of-the-art ceramic technology was developed by NASA and offers improved insulation, thermal shock tolerance, durability, and material strength.

What does this mean to consumers? "Fantastic food anytime," Fisher says simply. "The Big Green Egg is so well insulated and practically impervious to the elements that even in cold, windy or rainy weather you can still grill, roast, bake or smoke in it. And the results are moister, juicier and more flavorful than anything you could ever achieve on a gas grill or even a metal charcoal grill."

Today, the EGG® is available in 20 countries and offered in five different sizes, including the newest and largest Extra-Large EGG. Dozens of accessory products have been introduced from ceramic baking stones to multi-tiered cooking grids that significantly increase the cooking space, to its own brand-name line of natural lump charcoal. All these "EGGcessories" are geared to expanding cooking capabilities and enhancing the "EGGsperience."

Is Fisher pleased with the evolution of his ancient cooker? You bet. "But," he adds, "evolution is an ongoing process and we are constantly improving, upgrading and introducing new items. Feedback from our enthusiastic EGG owners helps us focus on changes that ensure they will enjoy their EGGs even more. The EGG still has a long, exciting future ahead of it."

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