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Smart Grills & Smokers

Traeger, Weber and Pit Boss apps, Wi-Fi at the patio and safe cooking — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for backyard cooks and their families

Take your time — you can't break it

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(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Traeger, Weber, Pit Boss, recteq & Ninja Woodfire · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to Wi-Fi grills and smokers: the pellet grills and smart cookers that let you check the temperature, get a "food is done" alert and adjust the heat from your phone. Read it in any order and at your own pace. Most problems with these grills aren't the grill at all — they're the Wi-Fi out on the patio — so this guide spends real time on getting a good signal to where you cook, and on cooking safely.

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PART 1

Getting Started

What makes a grill "smart," which app goes with your grill, and what you need before you pair it. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you have a pellet grill or smoker that promises you can "check it from your phone," and the phone keeps saying the grill is offline — this guide is for **you**. And if a new Traeger, Weber or Pit Boss just arrived for a birthday or Father's Day and you're not sure where to begin, this guide is for you too.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years working with technology, and these days I help folks here in Portage County feel at home with theirs. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it standing next to your grill: slowly, in plain English, and without trying to sell you anything. When I use a word like "2.4 GHz" or "firmware," I'll stop and explain it right then.

What this guide will do for you

- Explain what the app on a smart grill really does — and what it doesn't.
- Show you which app goes with which grill: Traeger, Weber Connect, Pit Boss Grills, recteq and Ninja Pro Connect.
- Get Wi-Fi to the patio, the deck or the back yard, the number one reason these grills "don't work."
- Walk you through pairing, software updates, meat probes, alerts and recipes.
- Give you a calm, step-by-step plan for when pairing fails or the grill drops offline mid-cook.
- Cover the safety rules that matter most: outdoors only, never unattended, grease fires and carbon monoxide.
- Help with pellets, winter cooking in Ohio, and the scams that target grill owners.

The big promise: you can't break it by learning

Pressing buttons in a grill app won't hurt anything. If pairing fails, you simply try again. If a setting looks wrong, you change it back. Every smart grill in this guide still works from its own knob or touchscreen even when the Wi-Fi is down, so the app is a bonus, never a requirement. The only parts of this subject that truly deserve caution are **fire** and **smoke**, and I'll mark those clearly.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

A working grill app means fewer trips out into the cold or the rain to peek under the lid, an alert on your phone when the brisket or the chicken reaches the right temperature, and a lot less guesswork. For anyone whose knees or back don't love the patio steps, that's a real kindness.

STAY SAFE

One rule before anything else

A smart grill is still a fire. The app lets you keep an eye on it from the kitchen or the living room — it is not a reason to leave home while it's lit. Chapter 23 explains why, and what to do if grease catches.

I'm only a phone call away

If anything in this guide leaves you unsure, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There's no such thing as a silly question.

Let's start with the simplest question: what makes a grill "smart"?

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What Makes a Grill "Smart"

A **smart grill** is an ordinary grill or smoker with a small computer inside its controller and a radio that can talk to your phone. Most are **pellet grills**: they burn small wood pellets that an electric screw, called the **auger**, feeds from a box called the **hopper** into a fire pot. Because the controller decides how many pellets to feed, it can hold a temperature you choose, a lot like an oven.

The two radios, in plain words

Part	What it does
Bluetooth	A short-range link straight between your phone and the grill. Good for the first setup and for standing nearby. It fades quickly with distance and walls.
Wi-Fi	The grill joins your home's wireless internet, just like a laptop. Then the app can reach it from anywhere in the house — or anywhere your phone has internet.
The app	Free from the maker. It shows the grill's temperature, your meat probe readings, timers and alerts, and on most models lets you change the temperature.
The cloud	The maker's computers that pass messages between your phone and the grill over the internet. If the maker's service has a problem, the app may not connect even when your Wi-Fi is fine.

What the app can usually do

- Show the grill's temperature and each meat probe's temperature, live.
- Let you set or change the grill temperature without walking outside (on most Wi-Fi models).
- Send an alert when the grill is preheated, when food reaches your target temperature, or when a timer ends.
- Offer recipes and step-by-step cooking programs that set times and temperatures for you.
- Install software updates for the grill's controller.

What the app can't do

- Put out a fire, clean the grease tray, or fill the hopper. Those still take you.
- Make up for a weak Wi-Fi signal at the patio. That's a home-network job (Part 2).
- Replace a good meat thermometer reading at the thickest part of the food.

GOOD TO KNOW

Gas and charcoal grills too

Most smart features live on pellet grills and electric grills, but add-on gadgets can bring some of them to a gas or charcoal grill. Weber's **Connect Smart Grilling Hub** (Chapter 14) and wireless meat thermometers are the common ones. Our **Smart Meat Thermometers** guide covers the thermometer side in depth.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once you see the grill as a thermostat plus a radio, the rest is just two jobs: getting that radio a good signal, and learning which alerts you want.

CHAPTER 3

Which App Goes with Your Grill

Each maker has its own free app, and they don't work with each other's grills. Find your brand below, then install that app from the **App Store** on an iPhone or **Google Play** on an Android phone. Search for the exact name, and check that the developer listed is the grill maker.

Grill brand	App name	Connects by	Good to know
Traeger (WiFIRE models)	Traeger	Bluetooth to find it, then Wi-Fi	2.4 GHz Wi-Fi only
Weber (Searwood, SmokeFire, Smoque, Connect hub)	Weber Connect	Bluetooth first, then Wi-Fi	Weber recommends 2.4 GHz
Pit Boss (Wi-Fi models)	Pit Boss Grills	Bluetooth to find it, then Wi-Fi	Replaces the older Smoke IT app
recteq	recteq	Wi-Fi	2.4 GHz for setup
Ninja Woodfire Pro Connect	Ninja Pro Connect	Wi-Fi	Reviews report 2.4 GHz only

A word about Pit Boss and "Smoke IT"

Older Pit Boss Wi-Fi grills used an app called **Smoke IT**. Pit Boss now uses the **Pit Boss Grills** app, and its own website has a page on connecting a Smoke IT controller to the Pit Boss app. Chapter 16 walks through it.

Does it cost anything?

As of November 2026, the Traeger app is listed as free on the App Store, and its listing mentions more than 1,000 recipes. The Weber Connect, Pit Boss Grills, recteq and Ninja Pro Connect apps are also offered as free downloads, and I found no paid subscription needed for basic grill control from any of these makers. You'll need to create an account with the maker, using your email address and a password.

HEADS UP

Look-alike apps

App stores sometimes carry "grill timer" or "BBQ helper" apps with similar names and logos. Only the maker's own app can talk to your grill. If an app asks for payment just to connect your grill, close it and look again.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Getting the right app the first time saves a frustrating hour of trying to pair a grill with an app that was never going to see it.

CHAPTER 4

Before You Pair: A Five-Minute Checklist

Pairing is the step where the app finds your grill and hands it your Wi-Fi name and password. It goes far more smoothly with a little preparation.

Gather these first

1. **Your phone**, charged, with its software up to date.
2. **Your Wi-Fi name and password**, exactly as typed, capital letters and all. They're often on a sticker on the router.
3. **Bluetooth turned on** on your phone. Most grills use it to be found, even though they'll end up on Wi-Fi. Weber, for example, says the grill must be paired over Bluetooth before it can join your Wi-Fi.
4. **The grill plugged in and switched on**, with its screen awake.
5. **Ten quiet minutes**, standing at the grill. Pairing from the kitchen often fails because the phone and grill can't hear each other.

When the app asks for permissions

The app will ask to use Bluetooth, to find devices on your local network, and to send you notifications. Say **Allow** to each. Android phones may also ask for location permission, which Android requires for Bluetooth scanning. Saying no is the most common reason the app "can't find" a grill that's right in front of you.

Power at the patio

Pellet grills need a household outlet. Use an outdoor outlet with a weather cover, and follow your grill manual's advice on extension cords. If there's no outdoor outlet near where you cook, or one keeps tripping, that's a job for a **licensed electrician**, not for an indoor cord through a window.

TIP

Write it down

Note the grill's model and serial number (on a sticker, often under the hopper lid or on the back) and the email you used for the app account. The Cheat-Sheet in Chapter 28 has blanks for both.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Five minutes of preparation turns pairing from a guessing game into a two-minute job.

PART 2

Wi-Fi at the Patio

Why grills lose the signal outdoors, how to test it where you cook, the 2.4 GHz rule, and the simple ways to bring Wi-Fi outside.

CHAPTER 5

Why Your Grill Says "Offline"

When a smart grill won't stay connected, the grill is rarely broken. Far more often, the Wi-Fi signal that's strong in the living room is weak or gone by the time it reaches the patio. Here's why.

What stands between your router and your grill

- **Distance.** Wi-Fi gets weaker with every room it crosses. A router in a front-room corner may barely reach the back deck.
- **Exterior walls.** Brick, stone and stucco block much more than indoor drywall. Apple's interference guide ranks brick as a medium barrier and concrete and plaster as high.
- **Metal.** Apple ranks metal as a very high barrier. A steel grill body, a metal patio door frame, aluminum siding or a refrigerator near the back wall all get in the way.
- **Energy-saving windows.** Installers and forum users report that some coated (Low-E) window glass weakens Wi-Fi passing through it.
- **The grill itself.** The radio is often inside or under the controller, with the steel body behind it.

Signs that it's the signal, not the grill

- The app connects when the grill is rolled close to the house, and drops when it's back in its usual spot.
- It works in the morning and drops in the evening, when everyone in the house is streaming.
- Your own phone shows only one bar of Wi-Fi while you stand at the grill.
- The grill paired fine over Bluetooth but "couldn't join the network."

GOOD TO KNOW

Traeger's own advice points here first

Traeger's support site has whole articles on "Network Not Showing Up when Pairing," "Grill Couldn't Get the Time from the Internet" and Wi-Fi compatibility and performance. They center on the 2.4 GHz band, the signal at the grill and router settings. That's a good sign you're looking in the right place.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing the usual cause saves you from returning a perfectly good grill or replacing a controller that was never the problem.

CHAPTER 6

Test the Signal Where You Cook

Before changing anything, measure. Your phone makes a fine signal meter, and the test takes two minutes.

The two-minute phone test

1. Stand right next to the grill, in its usual spot, with the lid closed.
2. Look at the Wi-Fi symbol at the top of your phone. Count the bars: three is good, one is trouble.
3. Turn off your phone's cellular data for a moment, so it must use Wi-Fi.
4. Run a speed test at **speedtest.net** or **fast.com** in your web browser. Write down the result.
5. Do the same test inside, next to the router, and compare. A huge drop at the grill means a weak signal outside.
6. Turn cellular data back on when you're done.

Use the app's own clues

Traeger says its app lists only 2.4 GHz and dual-band networks while pairing. So if you're standing at the grill and your home network doesn't appear in the list, either that network is 5 GHz only, or the signal can't reach the grill from there.

TIP

Test with the grill where it really lives

It's tempting to pair the grill on the garage floor and then roll it out. Test it in its real cooking spot, because that's where it has to stay connected for hours.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A number on paper tells you whether you need a better signal outside, or whether to look at the grill, the app or the router instead.

CHAPTER 7

The 2.4 GHz Rule and Mesh Routers

Home Wi-Fi comes in "bands," like stations on a radio dial. The **2.4 GHz** band reaches farther and passes through walls better. The **5 GHz** band (and the newer 6 GHz) is faster but shorter-range. Almost every smart grill uses **2.4 GHz only**.

What the makers say

Maker	2.4 GHz guidance
Traeger	Grills can't connect to 5 GHz networks. During pairing, your phone should be on the same 2.4 GHz network you want the grill to join.
Weber	Weber's Smoque setup article recommends a 2.4 GHz network. A TechHive review reports the Connect hub joins 2.4 GHz only.
recteq	Put your phone on the 2.4 GHz network, then repeat the app's connection steps.
Pit Boss	Compatible Pit Boss Wi-Fi controllers need the router's 2.4 GHz band turned on.
Ninja Woodfire	An Expert Reviews test of the Woodfire Pro Connect XL reports that it connects on 2.4 GHz only.

Why newer routers confuse grills

Many newer routers and **mesh** systems (eero, Deco, Orbi and the boxes from internet companies) broadcast both bands under **one** Wi-Fi name and quietly steer each device to the band they think is best. That's great for phones but can confuse a grill during pairing. Traeger has a whole support article on connecting to eero and other mesh networks.

Three fixes, gentlest first

1. **Pair standing at the grill.** Far from the router, your phone is more likely to be on 2.4 GHz already.
2. **Use your router's temporary 2.4 GHz option.** The eero app's **Troubleshooting** settings include an option for devices that are 2.4 GHz only, which pauses 5 GHz for a short time. Owners on the Traeger forum report pairing worked once 5 GHz was paused and the grill was switched off and on. Other mesh apps have similar options.
3. **Ask about a separate 2.4 GHz name.** recteq's support suggests giving the 2.4 and 5 GHz bands separate names on dual-band routers, and notes that your internet provider can split them for you.

HEADS UP

Don't rename your whole network to fix one grill

Changing your main Wi-Fi name or password can knock every other device in the house offline. Try the temporary options above first. If you split the bands, keep your current name and password on one of them so the rest of the house carries on. It's a good job to do with help.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once you know about the 2.4 GHz rule, most "couldn't join network" errors turn into a five-minute fix.

CHAPTER 8

Bringing Wi-Fi Out to the Patio

If the test in Chapter 6 showed a weak signal, the cure is to put a Wi-Fi source closer to the grill. None of the options below involve electrical work. Start with the simplest.

Option 1: Move the router or add a mesh point by the back door

If you have a mesh system, place one of its units inside, near the wall or door closest to the grill. eero suggests about 20 to 30 feet between units and no more than 50 feet. A unit near a back window can often cover a deck or patio just outside.

Option 2: A plug-in extender near the back of the house

A Wi-Fi extender plugs into an indoor outlet and repeats your signal. It's inexpensive and easy, though speeds can drop. Our **Wi-Fi Extenders & Dead Zones** guide covers choosing and placing one. Make sure it offers a 2.4 GHz signal, since that's what the grill needs. recteq's own support even names an extender as the simplest way to stretch a 2.4 GHz signal to the grill.

Option 3: A weatherproof outdoor access point

For big yards, decks far from the house, or a grill on a covered patio, an outdoor Wi-Fi unit mounted on the outside wall can blanket the area. Two examples that join a matching mesh system:

Example	What to know
eero Outdoor 7	Rated IP66 (dust-tight, resists powerful water jets); about -40°F to 130°F. Powered over an Ethernet cable using **PoE+** (802.3at).
TP-Link Deco X50-Outdoor	Rated IP65; about -22°F to 140°F. Powered by PoE or a plug-in adapter; works with other Deco units.

GOOD TO KNOW

PoE means one cable carries both data and power

"PoE" stands for Power over Ethernet. A small box indoors sends low-voltage power down the same network cable, so no outdoor outlet is needed at the mounting spot. Running that cable through a wall is a careful job. Our **Wi-Fi to the Garage, Barn & Backyard** guide covers it in depth.

STAY SAFE

Leave wiring to a licensed electrician

Adding an outdoor outlet, moving one, or anything inside your electrical panel is a job for a **licensed electrician**. I'm a technology helper, and I'll always tell you honestly which jobs are which.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A good signal at the patio makes every other chapter in this guide work: steady alerts, live temperatures and no more "grill offline" in the middle of a long cook.

CHAPTER 9

Bluetooth or Wi-Fi: What Works Where

Most smart grills can use Bluetooth, Wi-Fi or both. Knowing which one you're on explains a lot of puzzling behavior.

	Bluetooth	Wi-Fi
Range	Short — the yard, maybe the kitchen	Anywhere the phone has internet
Needs home internet?	No	Yes, at the grill
Used for	Finding the grill, first setup, standing nearby	Monitoring from inside or away from the grill
Software updates	Slower (Weber)	Faster (Weber recommends Wi-Fi)

Why the app sometimes "switches"

Some apps hop between Bluetooth and Wi-Fi depending on how close you are. Pit Boss owners report the app using Bluetooth up close and Wi-Fi farther away, and some say Bluetooth reaches only a few feet from their grill. If the app connects only when you're standing at the grill, you're probably on Bluetooth, and the grill hasn't joined your Wi-Fi yet.

GOOD TO KNOW

Range really matters

Expert Reviews reports that its Ninja Woodfire Pro Connect XL wouldn't connect from outside at first and had to be moved next to the router for setup. Every grill in this guide can still be cooked on from its own controls without the app.

TIP

Check the connection icon

Most apps show a small Bluetooth or Wi-Fi symbol near the grill's name. If you see only Bluetooth, go back to the app's Wi-Fi setup step (Chapter 10, Chapter 13 or Chapter 16).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Understanding the two radios means you'll know whether you need a better Wi-Fi signal, or just need to finish the setup.

PART 3

Traeger & WiFIRE

Setting up the Traeger app, cooking with it, and keeping the grill's software current.

CHAPTER 10

Setting Up the Traeger App

WiFIRE is Traeger's name for the Wi-Fi feature built into many of its grills. The phone app is simply called **Traeger**. Setup steps differ a little by grill family — Traeger has separate pairing articles for touchscreen grills (such as Timberline and Ironwood), Woodridge, and Westwood — so keep your grill's quick-start card handy.

Pairing, step by step

1. Install the **Traeger** app and create your account, or sign in.
2. Stand at the grill. Turn on your phone's **Bluetooth** and connect your phone to the **2.4 GHz** Wi-Fi network you want the grill to use.
3. Plug in the grill and turn it on.
4. Follow the app's prompts for your grill family. Traeger's support articles, such as **Connecting & Pairing Touchscreen Grills** and **Connecting & Pairing Woodridge Grills**, show each screen.
5. In the app, follow the prompts to add your grill. Choose your home network and type the password carefully.
6. Wait for the success message. The grill may download an update right away (Chapter 12). Let it finish.

If pairing fails

- **"Grill couldn't find the network":** the grill can't hear your 2.4 GHz network. See Chapter 7 and Chapter 8.
- **"Unable to connect/join":** often a mistyped password, or the phone is on 5 GHz. Retype slowly.
- **Restart both:** close the app fully, switch the grill off and on, and try again.
- **Mesh router (eero and others):** Traeger has a support article, **Connecting a Traeger Grill to an Eero or Mesh WiFi Network**. Chapter 7 covers the idea.
- **Still stuck:** contact Traeger customer support through its support site.

GOOD TO KNOW

A Traeger notice from 2025

Traeger's support site notes that, as of September 30, 2025, WiFIRE grills that were *not* connected to WiFIRE may have lost remote access because of a firmware update from its cloud partners. Traeger says this does not affect cooking with the controller. If an older grill that sat unconnected for a while now refuses to pair, mention this notice when you contact Traeger support.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once the grill is on Wi-Fi, you can check on it from your recliner — and still cook from the controller any day the internet is down.

CHAPTER 11

Cooking with the Traeger App

After pairing, the app's home screen shows your grill with its current temperature and your probe reading. Here's what Traeger lists among the app's features as of November 2026.

Feature	What it does
Remote temperature	Monitor and adjust the grill temperature from your phone.
Alerts and timers	Set alerts and timers so the app tells you when it's time to act.
Super Smoke	A grill mode for extra smoke flavor, found on select models such as the Woodridge Pro.
Recipes	More than 1,000 recipes in the app, as of November 2026.
Clean Grill alert	A reminder from the grill and app to clean it. Traeger's care guide says WiFIRE grills show it every 35 cooks.
Probe	Shows your meat probe's temperature and lets you set a target for an alert.

A first cook with the app

1. Fill the hopper with dry pellets and start the grill as your manual describes.
2. In the app, set the grill temperature and wait for the **preheated** alert.
3. Insert the meat probe into the thickest part of the food, away from bone, and plug it into the grill.
4. Set a probe target. Chapter 18 lists the USDA's safe minimum temperatures.
5. Go inside and keep your phone with you, sound on. Check the grill in person now and then.
6. When the food-done alert arrives, go out, check the food with a thermometer, and take it off.
7. Shut the grill down using its proper shutdown cycle. Don't just unplug it.

TIP

Use a recipe the first time

A recipe in the app sets the temperatures for you, so you can focus on learning how the alerts and probe work. Try something simple, like chicken thighs, before a 12-hour brisket.

STAY SAFE

Close enough to act

The app lets you watch from inside the house. Stay home and look in on the grill now and then while it's lit. Chapter 23 explains why.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Fewer trips outside to lift the lid — which also keeps the heat in, so the food cooks more evenly.

CHAPTER 12

Traeger Updates and the Status Page

Firmware is the software inside the grill's controller. Updates fix problems and sometimes add features. Traeger says your grill should update automatically whenever Traeger releases an update, as long as it's connected.

Find your grill's firmware version

Grill	Where to look
D2 WiFIRE grills	**Menu** > **About Grill** > **Firmware**
Touchscreen Timberline and Ironwood	**Menu** > **About Grill** > **Display & Software**
Any WiFIRE grill	The version also shows in the app.

Traeger lists the latest firmware for each model on its status page at **traeger.com/status**. Updates roll out in stages, so not every grill gets a new version on the same day. If yours is a little behind, give it time while it stays connected.

Why an update might not install

- The grill isn't connected to Wi-Fi, or the signal was weak during the attempt.
- First fix: power-cycle the grill — switch it off, wait a minute, switch it on — and keep it on Wi-Fi.
- If it still won't update, or a touchscreen grill is stuck on the update screen, contact Traeger customer support.

GOOD TO KNOW

The status page helps on bad days

If the app suddenly won't connect and nothing changed at home, check **traeger.com/status**. If Traeger's service is having trouble, the fix is to wait, and you can keep cooking from the controller.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

An up-to-date grill pairs more reliably and gets fixes for problems you may never notice.

PART 4

Weber Connect

Weber's smart pellet grills, the Weber Connect app, and the add-on hub that makes any grill a bit smarter.

CHAPTER 13

Setting Up Weber Connect

Weber's smart grills — the **Searwood** and **SmokeFire** pellet grills and the **Smoque** — use the free **Weber Connect** app. They connect by Bluetooth or Wi-Fi, and the app shows your cook, sends alerts and walks you through recipes.

Pairing, step by step

1. Update your phone's software, then install **Weber Connect** and create an account or sign in.
2. Plug in the grill and turn it on. Stand next to it with your phone's Bluetooth on.
3. In the app, choose to add or pair a device and pick your grill.
4. When the app asks, confirm the pairing on the grill. The app should show a success message.
5. Follow the prompts to join your home Wi-Fi. The grill must be within range of your router. Weber recommends a 2.4 GHz network.
6. If an update is offered, let it run (Chapter 15).

If Wi-Fi won't connect

Weber's Searwood manual suggests making sure the grill is paired over Bluetooth first, and is within range of your router. If it isn't, move the grill closer or add a signal extender (Chapter 8). The tips in Chapter 7 about mesh routers and 2.4 GHz apply here too.

TIP

Bluetooth works without Wi-Fi

Even before Wi-Fi is sorted out, a Bluetooth connection lets you see temperatures while you're nearby. That's handy for the first cook while you work on the signal.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A Weber on Wi-Fi tells you how the cook is going from anywhere in the house, with alerts telling you when it's time to act.

CHAPTER 14

Weber Connect Programs and the Smart Hub

Weber Connect is built around step-by-step help. Weber describes the app as a grilling assistant, with grilling programs developed by its Weber Grill Masters.

Features Weber lists

- **Real-time food monitoring** from your probes.
- **"Flip-and-serve" notifications** that tell you when to turn the food and when it's ready.
- An **estimated cooking time**, so you know when to make the side dishes.
- **Choose your doneness** and get an alert when the food is ready.

The Weber Connect Smart Grilling Hub

The **Weber Connect Smart Grilling Hub** is a small box with plug-in meat probes. It sits on or near any grill — gas, charcoal or pellet — and sends the readings to the Weber Connect app. TechHive's review says it pairs with your phone over Bluetooth, then joins your Wi-Fi, and connects to 2.4 GHz networks only. Weber's product page has listed it at $139.99; check the current price before you buy.

GOOD TO KNOW

Thermometers are their own guide

If what you really want is probe alerts rather than a whole new grill, see our **Smart Meat Thermometers** guide for wireless probes from several makers.

HEADS UP

The hub isn't a heat controller

On a gas or charcoal grill, the hub watches temperatures and alerts you, but it can't turn the burner or the vents. You still adjust the fire by hand.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Step-by-step alerts take the guesswork out of when to flip and when to pull the food, which matters most for thick cuts and expensive roasts.

CHAPTER 15

Weber Software Updates

Weber grills and the Connect hub get software updates through the app. According to Weber's Searwood manual, once paired, the controller updates in the background each time it connects.

When the app asks you to update

1. Make sure the grill is on Wi-Fi if you can. Weber says Wi-Fi updates are faster than Bluetooth.
2. Keep your phone near the grill while the update runs. Weber's pellet grill article says it can take roughly 5 to 15 minutes.
3. Don't switch off the grill or close the app until it says the update is done.
4. If the update fails, power the grill off and on and try again from the app.
5. The Connect hub takes longer: Weber says about 25 minutes for its software update.

TIP

Update on a calm day

Install updates when you're not about to cook — not with guests arriving and steaks waiting.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Current software means fewer dropouts and access to the app's newest cooking programs.

PART 5

Pit Boss, recteq & Ninja

The Pit Boss Grills app, moving over from Smoke IT, and the recteq and Ninja Pro Connect apps.

CHAPTER 16

Setting Up the Pit Boss Grills App

Pit Boss Wi-Fi grills use the free **Pit Boss Grills** app. Pit Boss describes it as a way to monitor the grill temperature, keep track of your probe temperatures, get alerts when a target temperature is reached, and adjust the temperature during the cook. The app also carries Pit Boss recipes.

Pairing, step by step

1. Install **Pit Boss Grills** from the App Store or Google Play and create an account, or sign in.
2. Stand at the grill with your phone's **Bluetooth** on. The app uses Bluetooth to find the grill, even though you're setting up Wi-Fi.
3. When the app asks to use Bluetooth, tap **Allow**.
4. Turn the grill on. If you own more than one Pit Boss, leave the others off while you pair.
5. In the app, go to **Grills** and tap **+ Add Grill**. Choose your grill when it appears.
6. Pick your home Wi-Fi network — the **2.4 GHz** one if your router shows two — and type the password.
7. If the app offers a controller update, say **yes** and let it finish.

GOOD TO KNOW

Where these steps come from

Pit Boss publishes a step-by-step Wi-Fi setup walkthrough on its blog. The app's screens change from time to time, so if a button name doesn't match, follow what the app shows you.

If you had the old Smoke IT app

Earlier Pit Boss Wi-Fi grills came with a controller called **Smoke IT** and an app of the same name. Pit Boss has a page titled **Connecting your Smoke IT controller to the Pit Boss App**, so you can move to the newer app without a new grill. Install Pit Boss Grills, sign in, and add the grill the same way as above.

When it won't connect

- **Combined band names.** Pit Boss owners report that many newer routers use a "Smart Connect" setting that joins both bands under one name, which can stop the grill from finding 2.4 GHz. See Chapter 7.
- **Weak signal at the grill.** Move the router, add a mesh point or an extender (Chapter 8).
- **You said no to an update.** Close the app completely, open it again, and say yes when it asks.
- **Only works within a few feet.** That usually means you're on Bluetooth and the Wi-Fi step didn't finish (Chapter 9).

HEADS UP

Owners report login hiccups

Some Pit Boss owners report sign-in errors and dropouts in the app. If the app says "There was an error," close it, wait a few minutes and try again before changing anything at home. Your grill keeps cooking from its own controller either way.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once your Pit Boss is on Wi-Fi, you can watch the grill and probe temperatures from the house and get an alert when the food hits your target.

CHAPTER 17

recteq and Ninja Woodfire Pro Connect

Two other brands come up often. Both follow the same pattern as the others: a free app, an account, a 2.4 GHz network and a good signal at the grill.

recteq

recteq pellet grills use the free **recteq** app. recteq's support site has separate Wi-Fi guides for iPhone and Android, an advanced connection guide, a page on extenders, and a "hotspot test" for checking whether the grill's Wi-Fi works at all.

1. Connect your phone to your home's **2.4 GHz** network before you start.
2. Open the recteq app and follow its steps to add the grill.
3. If setup stalls, recteq's advice is to make sure the phone is on 2.4 GHz, then repeat the connection steps.
4. If your router uses one name for both bands, recteq suggests giving the 2.4 and 5 GHz bands separate names; your internet provider can often do this for you.

Ninja Woodfire Pro Connect

Ninja's Wi-Fi outdoor grills, sold as **Woodfire Pro Connect**, use the **Ninja Pro Connect** app from SharkNinja. The same app also runs some Ninja ovens and the ProChef wireless thermometer. In the app, you add a grill from **Your appliances** > **Add Another Appliance**.

Expert Reviews' test of the Woodfire Pro Connect XL reports that it joins 2.4 GHz networks only, and that it had to be brought near the router for the first setup. Plan on testing the signal where the grill will live (Chapter 6).

GOOD TO KNOW

It's an electric grill

The Ninja Woodfire grills plug into an outlet and use a small amount of pellets for flavor. They're still outdoor appliances. The safety rules in Chapter 22 and Chapter 23 apply.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Whatever brand you have, the fixes are the same few steps. Once you've learned them for one grill, you know them for all of them.

PART 6

Cooking with the App

Meat probes and safe temperatures, alerts that actually reach you, recipes and planning a cook, and what to do when the grill drops offline.

CHAPTER 18

Meat Probes and Safe Temperatures

A **meat probe** is a thin metal spike on a cable that plugs into the grill. It reads the temperature inside the food and sends it to the controller and the app. It's the single most useful smart feature, because it tells you when food is done instead of making you guess.

Placing the probe

1. Push the probe into the **thickest part** of the food, about halfway in.
2. Keep the tip away from bone and away from fat pockets, which read differently.
3. Route the cable so the lid won't pinch it, and plug it into the grill's probe port.
4. Check that the app shows a probe reading close to the food's starting temperature.
5. Set your target temperature in the app or on the controller.

USDA safe minimum internal temperatures

Food	Safe minimum
Chicken and turkey (whole or pieces)	165°F
Ground beef, pork and lamb	160°F
Beef, pork, veal and lamb steaks, chops and roasts	145°F, then rest 3 minutes
Fish and shellfish	145°F
Leftovers and casseroles	165°F

The USDA says you can't judge doneness by color. Many barbecue recipes take brisket and pork shoulder far past these numbers so they turn tender; that's about texture, not safety. The table is the minimum.

TIP

Check with a second thermometer

Before you serve, check the food in a second spot with an instant-read thermometer. Probes can sit in a thin spot or get bumped. Our **Smart Meat Thermometers** guide covers wireless probes in depth.

HEADS UP

Probes get hot

Use an oven mitt to remove a probe from hot food, and let it cool before you wipe it. Check your grill's manual before putting a probe in water or the dishwasher.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A probe alert means the chicken comes off safe and the roast comes off right — without opening the lid every twenty minutes.

CHAPTER 19

Alerts That Actually Reach You

An alert only helps if your phone lets it through. If you've ever missed a "food is done" alert, it's usually a phone setting, not the grill.

Turn on notifications for the grill app

1. **iPhone:** open **Settings** > **Notifications**, tap your grill app, and turn on **Allow Notifications** and **Sounds**.
2. **Android:** open **Settings** > **Notifications** (on some phones, **Apps** > your grill app > **Notifications**) and make sure the grill app is allowed.
3. In the grill app itself, look for notification preferences. Traeger says you can adjust them in the app's settings.
4. Test it: set a short timer in the grill app and wait for the alert.

Let grill alerts through Do Not Disturb and Focus

On an iPhone, a **Focus** (such as Do Not Disturb or Sleep) silences most notifications. You can add your grill app to the list of apps allowed to break through.

1. Open **Settings** > **Focus** and tap the Focus you use, such as **Do Not Disturb**.
2. Under **Allow Notifications**, tap **Apps**.
3. Tap **Add** and choose your grill app.
4. Repeat for any other Focus you use during a long cook.

GOOD TO KNOW

Alerts on your wrist

Traeger's support site has articles about its app for **Apple Watch** and its notifications. A tap on the wrist is easy to notice when your phone is in another room.

TIP

Keep the phone with you

An alert can't help if the phone is charging upstairs. During a cook, keep it in your pocket with the sound on.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Reliable alerts let you relax inside, knowing your phone will tell you when it's time to head out.

CHAPTER 20

Recipes, Programs and Planning a Cook

Every app in this guide has recipes or step-by-step programs. They're the easiest way to learn your grill, because they tell you the temperature, the time and what to do next.

What each app offers

App	Recipes and programs
Traeger	More than 1,000 recipes in the app, plus alerts and timers you can set for each step.
Weber Connect	Step-by-step programs by Weber Grill Masters, flip-and-serve alerts, a readiness countdown and an estimated cooking time.
Pit Boss Grills	Pit Boss's own recipes with ingredients and instructions, plus probe alerts.

Plan backward from dinnertime

1. Pick the time you want to eat.
2. Look at the recipe's total time and add an hour of cushion for a big cut. Long cooks often run longer than planned.
3. Add preheat time, and more of it on a cold day (Chapter 25).
4. Set a phone reminder for when to light the grill.
5. Use the app's estimated time or probe alerts to know when to start the side dishes.

STAY SAFE

Only start a grill when you're home

However your app works, light the grill only when you're home and able to check on it. Never schedule or start a cook while you're out. Chapter 23 explains why.

TIP

Keep notes

Write down what worked: the cut, the weight, the temperature and how long it really took. Next time, you'll plan with your own numbers.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Planning backward means dinner is ready when the family sits down, not an hour after.

CHAPTER 21

When the Grill Drops Offline Mid-Cook

It happens: you're three hours into a cook and the app says the grill is offline. Don't worry. The grill's own controller keeps holding the temperature you set — it doesn't need the app to cook. Traeger says plainly that losing remote access doesn't affect cooking from the controller.

Calm steps, in order

1. **Go look at the grill.** Check the controller's screen for the grill and probe temperatures. That's your real reading.
2. **Check your phone's Wi-Fi.** Is your phone on the home network? Turn Wi-Fi off and on.
3. **Close the app completely** and open it again.
4. **Check your internet.** Can you load a web page? If not, the router or the internet is the problem. Restart the router if you know how.
5. **Check the maker's status.** For Traeger, **traeger.com/status**.
6. **Move closer.** If the app connects over Bluetooth near the grill, you can at least monitor from the patio door.
7. **Finish the cook by hand.** Check the probe reading on the controller every so often.

HEADS UP

Don't switch off a lit grill to fix the Wi-Fi

Turning a pellet grill off mid-cook starts its shutdown and can let the fire go out. Save restarts and pairing for after the cook, once the grill has finished its normal shutdown.

After the cook

If it happens often, it's almost always the signal at the patio. Repeat the test in Chapter 6 in the evening, when the household is busiest online, and look at the options in Chapter 8.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing the grill keeps cooking without the app turns an "offline" message from a panic into a shrug.

PART 7

Safety, Pellets & Ohio Weather

Where a grill belongs, why you never leave it alone, what to do about a grease fire, keeping pellets dry, cooking through an Ohio winter, and the scams aimed at grill owners.

CHAPTER 22

Where the Grill Belongs: Outdoors Only

A pellet grill burns wood, and burning wood makes **carbon monoxide** (CO), a gas you can't see or smell. Outdoors, it drifts away. In an enclosed space, it builds up. That's why this rule matters more than any other in this guide.

What the makers and fire experts say

- Traeger's owner's manuals say the grill is for **outdoor use only**, and never to use it in any enclosed area or any area without adequate ventilation.
- The same manuals warn that burning pellets produces carbon monoxide, which can cause illness, serious injury or death, and that CO poisoning is easily mistaken for a cold or flu.
- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) says to place the grill well away from the home and deck railings, and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- NFPA also says to keep children and pets at least **three feet** away from the grill.

STAY SAFE

Never in the garage or on an enclosed porch

A garage — even with the big door open — and a screened-in, glassed-in or enclosed porch are enclosed areas. Don't cook there, don't move a lit or cooling grill in there to get out of the rain, and don't run it under a low roof. If anyone feels a headache, dizziness, nausea or confusion near a grill, get everyone into fresh air and call 911.

Choosing the spot

1. Pick level ground or a solid patio, out in the open.
2. Keep it well back from the house wall, windows, doors and deck railings.
3. Make sure nothing hangs overhead: no eaves, awnings or branches.
4. Check that the power cord reaches an outdoor outlet without crossing a walkway.
5. Then test the Wi-Fi in that exact spot (Chapter 6).

TIP

A CO alarm inside is still wise

A working carbon monoxide alarm inside the home, near bedrooms, protects you from every source of CO, not just the grill.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The right spot keeps smoke and heat away from the house, and keeps your family safe.

CHAPTER 23

Never Unattended, and What to Do About Grease Fires

The app lets you watch the grill from the kitchen. It doesn't let you leave. NFPA's advice is simple: never leave a grill unattended while it's in use. "Attended" means you're home and you check on it in person now and then — not just on the phone.

Why grease fires happen

Fat drips from the food onto a drip tray and down a grease chute into a bucket. Over many cooks, grease builds up, and enough heat can light it. Traeger's manuals point to grease buildup on the drip tray and in the grease drain as the usual cause, and NFPA says to clean fat and grease from the grates and the trays below.

If grease catches fire in a pellet grill

1. **Keep the lid closed.** Opening it feeds the fire with air.
2. **Turn the grill off** at its switch or controller, as your manual says.
3. **Step back** and keep children and pets away.
4. **Wait** with the lid closed until the fire is completely out.
5. If flames spread beyond the grill, or it doesn't die down, **get away and call 911**.

STAY SAFE

Never throw water on a grease fire

Water can make burning grease spatter and spread. Keep the lid closed and let it burn out, or call 911.

Prevent it

- Change the drip-tray liner and empty the grease bucket regularly.
- Scrape the grates and the drip tray every few cooks.
- Watch for the **Clean Grill** alert on a Traeger WiFIRE grill — Traeger's care guide says it appears every 35 cooks. It's a reminder only; clear it after cleaning.
- After a grease fire, let the grill cool fully and clean it before cooking again.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Regular cleaning and a closed lid are what stand between a nice cook and a call to the fire department.

CHAPTER 24

Pellet Storage and the Hopper

Wood pellets are pressed sawdust. They hate water. Damp pellets swell, crumble back into sawdust, and can jam the **auger** — the screw that feeds the fire.

Storing pellets

- Traeger recommends a **dry, airtight container**. A lidded bin or bucket in the garage or shed works well. (Storing the pellets in the garage is fine; it's the lit grill that must stay outside.)
- Traeger says pellets can stay in the hopper for a short while in dry weather, but should go back into airtight storage when long rain or high humidity is forecast.
- Pit Boss's own pellet-storage advice also warns that pellets left to get damp in the hopper can expand and jam the auger.

Emptying the hopper

1. Make sure the grill is off, cool and unplugged.
2. Use the hopper's clean-out door if it has one, or scoop out the pellets.
3. Traeger suggests a wet-dry vacuum to remove leftover pellets and sawdust from the hopper and auger tube.
4. Don't tip the grill over to empty it — Traeger warns against that.
5. After refilling, prime the auger as your manual describes, until pellets drop into the fire pot.

TIP

Wet pellets go in the trash, not the grill

If pellets look swollen or crumbly, throw them out. They won't burn well and they're what jams augers.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Dry pellets mean steady temperatures, fewer flame-out alerts and no auger jams in the middle of a cook.

CHAPTER 25

Cold-Weather Cooking in Ohio

Northeast Ohio winters don't have to end grilling season. A pellet grill works hard in the cold, so a few habits help — and the Wi-Fi alerts make winter cooks much more pleasant, since you're not standing out in the snow.

Winter habits

- **Allow extra preheat time.** Cold steel takes longer to come up to temperature.
- **Keep the lid closed.** Every peek lets out heat; use the probe and the app instead.
- **Block the wind** by choosing a spot sheltered from it — but still out in the open, away from the house.
- **Clear snow and ice** off the lid and from around the grill before you light it.
- **Keep it covered** between cooks once it has cooled.
- **Keep the hopper topped up** on long cooks so it doesn't run out partway through.

Insulation blankets

Traeger sells fitted **insulation blankets** for many models and suggests using one when it's **35°F or colder**. The blanket helps hold a steady temperature with fewer pellets. Blankets are model-specific, and Traeger notes that some higher-end grills are insulated well enough not to need one.

STAY SAFE

Cold is not a reason to move indoors

On the coldest days it's tempting to pull the grill into the garage or under a porch roof. Don't. The rules in Chapter 22 apply in January just as much as in July.

HEADS UP

Mind your footing

Clear and salt the path to the grill before a winter cook. With alerts on your phone, you'll only need to make the trip when it counts.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A warm house, a phone alert and a steady grill outside make a Sunday roast in February genuinely easy.

CHAPTER 26

Scams Aimed at Grill Owners

Grills are expensive and popular, which makes them bait. Here are the patterns to watch for.

Too-good-to-be-true grill ads

Snopes documented paid Facebook ads offering Traeger grills at a "big sale" for under $150, claiming the store was closing. They weren't from Traeger. Scam watchers have reported similar fake ads using Pit Boss's name.

SCAM ALERT

The "free grill, just pay shipping" trick

A survey or giveaway says you've won a grill and only need to pay a small shipping fee. Scam-report sites describe the fine print signing you up for repeated charges. A real prize never asks for your card number. Close the page.

SCAM ALERT

Fake support phone numbers

When the app won't connect, searching "Traeger support phone" can turn up look-alike numbers. Go to the maker's own support website by typing its address, or use the help link inside the official app. Never let someone who called you, or whom you found through a pop-up, take remote control of your phone or computer.

Safer ways to buy

- Buy from the maker's own website or a store you know.
- Type the store's address yourself rather than tapping an ad.
- Pay with a credit card, never gift cards, wire transfers or payment apps to strangers.
- Report scams at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A minute of doubt before you click can save hundreds of dollars and a lot of heartache.

PART 8

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary to keep near the back door.

CHAPTER 27

When to Call Bill

I've written this guide so you can set up and enjoy a smart grill on your own. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves time and frustration. Here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **The grill won't pair** no matter what you try, and you're not sure whether it's the grill, the app or the router (Chapter 7 and Chapter 10).
- **Wi-Fi doesn't reach the patio** and you'd like help choosing and placing a mesh point, extender or outdoor access point (Chapter 8).
- **Your router combines both bands** under one name and you want to change that without knocking the rest of the house offline.
- **Alerts don't come through** on your phone or watch (Chapter 19).
- **A gift grill just arrived** and you'd like the app set up, an account made and a first cook walked through together.
- **You'd simply rather have a patient person handle it.** That's always a good enough reason.

What I don't do

I don't do electrical work. A new or moved outdoor outlet, or anything inside your electrical panel, belongs to a **licensed electrician**. I'm happy to help you plan the technology side and set it up afterward. For other connected gadgets around the house, see our **Smart Home Installation** guide.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace — no rushing, no talking down, no jargon. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll always tell you honestly when something isn't worth the money. Home visits are here in Portage County, Ohio; remote help reaches you wherever you are. I've been doing this work for more than 30 years.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. This guide is free to read and share with family and neighbors.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may be greeted by Sophie

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you might first meet **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time. The actual help always comes from me.

Thank you for reading. Enjoy the cooking — and the extra time inside while the grill does the work.

— Bill

CHAPTER 28

Your Smart Grill Cheat-Sheet

Keep a copy of this near the back door or in the kitchen drawer. The whole guide, boiled down.

The essentials

Remember	
Which app	Traeger · Weber Connect · Pit Boss Grills · recteq · Ninja Pro Connect
Wi-Fi band	**2.4 GHz**. Pair standing at the grill, phone on the same network.
Bluetooth	On, and allowed for the app. Most grills are found over Bluetooth first.
Offline mid-cook	The grill keeps cooking. Read the controller's screen.
Safe temps (USDA)	Poultry 165°F · ground meat 160°F · steaks, chops, roasts 145°F + 3-minute rest · fish 145°F
Where to cook	**Outdoors only**, away from the house. Never the garage or an enclosed porch.
While it's lit	Stay home and check on it in person.
Grease fire	Lid closed, grill off, step back. No water. Spreading? Call 911.
Pellets	Dry, airtight container. Swollen or crumbly ones go in the trash.
Winter	Extra preheat; insulation blanket at 35°F or colder (Traeger).

Write it down once

Keep handy	
Grill brand and model	_____
Serial number	_____
App account email	_____
Wi-Fi name the grill uses (2.4 GHz)	_____
Firmware version / date checked	_____ / _____
Date of last grease clean-out	_____
Pellet brand and flavor we like	_____
Maker's support (from the official website)	_____
Electrician (name and phone)	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. App says offline: look at the grill itself first. It's still cooking (Chapter 21).
2. Can't pair: stand at the grill, phone on 2.4 GHz, Bluetooth on, permissions allowed (Chapter 4 and Chapter 7).
3. Network not listed: the signal doesn't reach the patio, or the network is 5 GHz only (Chapter 6 and Chapter 8).
4. No alerts: check phone notifications and Focus settings (Chapter 19).
5. Update stuck: keep it on Wi-Fi, power-cycle when not cooking, then contact the maker (Chapter 12 and Chapter 15).
6. Fire or smoke where it shouldn't be: lid closed, grill off, step back, call 911 if it spreads (Chapter 23).
7. Still stuck: call Bill at (330) 200-8042.