

*Elizabeth Karmel's*  
**Grill Friends™**

**For More Information:**

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**Organic Wood Planks and Wraps add new Flavor Dimension to Elizabeth Karmel's Grill Friends® line**



“The first time I heard about cedar planking was after a friend of mine took a trip to the pacific northwest and experienced a salmon cook-out where they pinned a whole salmon to a piece of wood and leaned it up against a fire. I was intrigued and knew that there had to be a way to translate this traditional Indian smoking method to a backyard grill, “ remembers Elizabeth Karmel, creator of the Grill Friends line of kitchen and grilling tools.

That was years ago when it was hard to find grill-ready cedar (or other wood) planks in stores. At that time, you had to go to a lumber yard, purchase untreated cedar wood and cut it down to size. The wood protects the fish from scorching and gives it a delicate smoked cedar flavor. Fast forward to a couple of years ago; Karmel met John Rich and Randy Barnard, owners of Great Lakes Grilling Company at an industry event. They bonded over their mutual love of grilling and planking. “Two years ago, I had never thought of cooking a steak on a wood plank. John swore it was the best way to make steak and so naturally, I had to try it out. I took one of their organic wood planks and made my steak. It was juicy and tasted of wood,” says Karmel.

“I loved the taste of the steak but I missed the deeply caramelized grill marks that you get from the direct contact with the grill grates. Now, it could have been psychological because we all eat with our eyes before we taste with our palate, but regardless, I wanted my grill marks.

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*Elizabeth Karmel's Grill Friends® and Kitchen Friends™ is a line of kitchen and grilling tools that solve problems that real cooks have in the kitchen, around the grill and at the table. [www.grillfriends.com](http://www.grillfriends.com).*

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That is when I realized, I could have my steak and grill marks too! If I seared the meat first and then put it on the plank to finish cooking, I would have the best of both worlds. I tried it out, it worked great and the Sear and Plank™ technique was born,” continues Karmel. John Rich set the record straight on where the wood-smoke flavor really comes from, “contrary to popular belief, it is actually the oils in the wood that flavor the food, not the “smoke,” per se. As the wet wood dries out from the heat of the grill, the steam has the flavor from the wood oils as well as the wisps of smoke that start once the wood gets hot enough,” explains Rich. “People think the wood has to burn to get flavor, but that is not the case,” concludes Rich.

After the steak experiment, it didn't take Elizabeth long to try out lots of different food and wood combinations. “I discovered that pecan wood was my favorite steak and game wood and hickory was my favorite pork and poultry wood. (Apple wood was conspicuously absent from testing because the knotty wood is too hard to make planks out of.) Cedar and alder can't be beat for salmon and other seafood, “ says Elizabeth.

Since no one was pairing wood with food, John, Randy and Elizabeth thought that the next logical step was to take this concept to market under Elizabeth's Grill Friends brand. This summer, we are excited to introduce Elizabeth Karmel's Grill Friends line of organic, sustainable, made in the USA, wood planks and wraps.

For those of you unfamiliar with wraps, they are Elizabeth's entertaining ace in the hole. The recipe can be as simple as salmon, olive oil, salt and pepper sitting on top of lemon slices. In fact, that is the one Elizabeth makes most often. Salmon fillets are enclosed in the wet wraps and tied with wet twine or if you want to get fancy, the green part of a scallion or chive. The finished cedar-smoked salmon is presented to your guests like a present on the plate. “I often make the salmon and serve it with a green herb oil or chimichurri sauce—more for color than anything else, says Karmel. “ In my line of wraps, I am the first person to make wraps out of wood other than cedar. I've made wraps out of pecan, cherry, hickory and maple to fit a range of foods that we all love to grill and eat. Regardless of what you choose, it is simply good eatin'!” announces Karmel.

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The wood planks and wraps will be distributed by Harold Import Co. (HIC) along with the rest of the Grill Friends line of kitchen and grilling tools including the award-winning Super Silicone Angled BBQ Brush and BBQ Mop. The organic wood planks and wraps are available nationally at kitchen, gourmet and housewares stores and online at [www.BBQPROSHOP.com](http://www.BBQPROSHOP.com) and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

Elizabeth Karmel's Grill Friends organic wood planks and wraps include the following SKUs: Grill Friends Cedar Planks, Grill Friends Hickory Planks, Grill Friends Pecan Planks, Grill Friends Personal Cedar Planks, Grill Friends Cedar Wraps, Grill Friends Maple and Hickory Wraps and Grill Friends Pecan and Cherry Wraps.

Look for four additional Grill Friends products this spring; the Marinade Shaker, the Ultimate 3-in-1 Rub Shaker, Steakhouse Grill Grate and 2-in-1 Rib Rack and Roast Holder. For more information, contact Elizabeth Karmel at 312-951-8394 or Kirsten Newman Teissier at 610-459-5575; or [Kirsten@GirlsattheGrill.com](mailto:Kirsten@GirlsattheGrill.com) and [Elizabeth@GirlsattheGrill.com](mailto:Elizabeth@GirlsattheGrill.com) .

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*"To me Grilling is about Fun and Function. My line of Grill Friends® and Kitchen Friends™ cooking and grilling tools combine fun, contemporary colors and features with functional designs. After 15 years of grilling for a living, I've learned a thing or two about what does and doesn't work. When I design these pieces, I make sure that each item in my line will work as well around the grill or in the kitchen for the new cook as it does for me. Each piece is both Functional and Fun, because when it doesn't function; you don't have fun!"*

--Elizabeth Karmel, creator of Grill Friends and Kitchen Friends