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INDUCTEE**



HENRY FORD

Business/Industry Category

Henry Ford, best known as the founder of the Ford Motor Company, the creator of the Model T and the innovator behind the assembly line technique of mass production, also made a significant contribution to the world of barbecue. Ford's longtime interest in materials science and engineering, combined with his knack for maximizing resources, led to his involvement in developing the charcoal briquette after expanding on Ellsworth B. A. Zwoyer's original idea patented in 1897.

Henry's contribution to the modern-day griller began when he realized a large amount of money was being wasted on wood used in his car manufacturing process. Looking for a way to use the wood more profitably, Henry, along with his brother-in-law, E.G. Kingsford, began using the wood scraps to make charcoal briquettes. Charcoal produced in this way is made from sawdust, typically left over from the milling of wood. It is then mixed with a binding agent and formed into blocks and fired in an oxygen-free furnace. Most of the binder burns off in the firing, but purists will say what is left can add a unique flavor to the meat being cooked. The process was easy and cheap.

Initial clients included many steel mills across America. For a time, Ford Charcoal was even packaged and given away with Model T's. This proved to be a masterful marketing ploy. Quickly, people started using the briquettes for heat and cooking across the country.

Originally known as Ford Charcoal, the company was renamed Kingsford in honor of E.G. Kingsford.

Today, the Kingsford Products Company remains the leading manufacturer of charcoal in the U.S. More than one million tons of wood scraps are converted into charcoal briquettes annually.