

Want a better search experience? Set your Search to Yahoo

- Home
- Mail
- News
- Sports
- Finance
- Weather
- Games
- Groups
- Answers
- Screen
- Flickr
- Mobile
- More

Search Conversations

Search Groups

Search Web

Sign In

Mail

Browse Groups

- Terms
- Guidelines
- Help
- Privacy
- Feedback
- Blog

Join us to swap meat recipes!

Restricted Group, 7 members

- Conversations
- Photos
- Files
- More



View

6795 Haute off the Grill

Jamie Rahm

Aug 19, 2001

Haute off the grill: Americans take pride in their ability to reshape the classic hamburger

July 19, 2000

BY ANNABEL COHEN
DETROIT FREE PRESS SPECIAL WRITER

Americans just can't leave well enough alone.

Take the classic hamburger. Shape a half pound of ground beef into a patty about 1 1/2 inches thick. Grill it or fry it. Sprinkle it with a little salt and pepper. Top it with ketchup, mustard, relish -- take your pick -- and slap it on a bun. What could be simpler?

How to explain, then, today's haute variations with ingredients that range from abalone to zucchini and garnishes that go from avocado to yogurt?

The answer: 'Tis the American way. We are a nation of tinkers.

Crack open almost any classic American cookbook of the last 50 years, and you'll find recipes for hamburgers. Thumb through one written in the last decade, and you'll see the definition of a burger expanding far beyond beef.

Though ground meats, fowl and fish have been used extensively throughout history, they usually showed up as ingredients in dishes like casseroles or croquettes made with fillers.

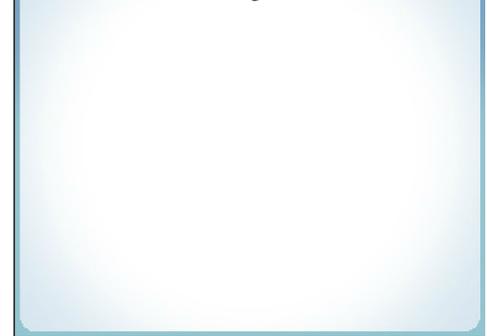
Meat, especially beef, was often scarce and expensive. So, while the affluent dined on steaks and roasts, everyone else settled for scraps and leftovers that were ground or chopped.

Ground meat as a stand-alone main dish came later. During the 1400s, it is said, German merchant sailors saw Russian Tartars pounding beef

Read more

- From **Jamie Rahm** All
- [ADMIN: Last Message on YahooGroups](#) 25 Jun, 2002
- [ADMIN: The List Move](#) 24 Jun, 2002
- [About The Move....If You Don't Want to Go...](#) 23 Jun, 2002

Safari Power Saver
Click to Start Flash Plug-in



It is said, German merchant sailors saw Russian sailors pounding beef fillets into a concoction they ate raw. (Today we know this as steak tartare.) When the Germans brought the idea back to the port of Hamburg, they started cooking the pounded beef with a little onion.

The Hamburg steak crossed the Atlantic with the wave of German immigration in the 1800s. It wasn't long before people started putting the beef between slices of bread. According to "The New Food Lover's Companion" (Sharon Tyler Herbst, Barron's, \$13.95), it was at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904 that "hamburger steak" first caused a public stir.

People discovered they could walk around the fair and eat at the same time. After that, it was just a few short turns of the spatula before the hamburger became a permanent fixture in American culture. In the "Popeye" comic strip, Wimpy regularly proclaimed, "I'll gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today."

Next stop, Blimpy Burgers

Toppings like steak sauce and ketchup were used, but there was no stopping inventive cooks. Now, burgers take a backseat at some stylish eateries. It's sort of a shabby-chic trend that has chefs scrounging for gimmicks to differentiate their offerings.

Fish, turkey and chicken, veal and vegetarian ingredients are replacing beef. Stuffed burgers feature fillings from blue cheese to crabmeat. The gourmet burger is no longer unusual.

Even fast-food chains are tinkering with their menu boards. Beyond "secret sauces," limited-edition burgers pop up at all the major fast-food players.

Still, some originals remain.

Krazy Jim's Blimpy Burgers opened its doors to University of Michigan students in the 1950s. The burgers at this landmark, which is still at 551 S. Division in Ann Arbor, were what are commonly known as sliders, two-bite sandwiches sold for pennies.

One of the most appealing features of the hamburger then -- as now -- was its low price tag. Blimpy's slogan -- "Cheaper than food" -- is still a reminder of the hamburger's humble beginnings.

Though no longer owned by founder James (Krazy Jim) Schafer, Blimpy burgers have become Ann Arbor icons in their own right. Currently, Blimpy claims to offer 1,235,760 burger combinations. In general, a Blimpy burger consists of one to five small burgers (five burgers equal about a half pound of beef) on a bun (plain, kaiser, onion or pumpernickel), with choices of dozens of toppings, including banana peppers, salami, horseradish and fried eggs.

Blimpy's repertoire has grown over the years and followed many trends by expanding to include veggie and turkey burgers.

According to longtime Blimpy cook Kevin Carlson, "This place has its own niche market. People come as much for the ambience and mystique or lore of the restaurant. And the unusual burgers, of course."

Detroit's Checker Bar and Grill, at 124 Cadillac Square downtown, is also known for burgers.

"We've been in business longer than McDonald's," boasts Karen Munro, one of the five current owners. The bar has been family-owned for more than 50 years.

Munro attributes the eatery's staying power to a secret beef blend that includes seven types of steak, Italian rolls made fresh daily and "tender-lovin' Polish hands" that shape and press the burgers. Checker also offers veggie and turkey burgers. But the original Checker Burger still reigns as the most popular, Munro says: "The mainstay of 50 years ago is still here today."

Munro calls hamburger the goodwill ambassador of the United States.

"Sounds corny, but it's true," she says. "No other food symbolizes America like the burger. Even though we offer other foods, almost everybody who comes here wants a burger."

Secrets to goodness

Cooking burgers to perfection isn't a mystery, though many people claim to have discovered the secret. A few common rules still apply.

Perfect burgers start with the right ingredients. Restaurants like Krazy Jim's Blimpy Burgers and Checker Bar and Grill have their meats ground daily.

"Freshly ground beef is the key to our delicious burgers," says Checker's Munro. "We use only the best ingredients. You could put all kinds of toppings on a burger, but you have to start with the best meat and the best buns."

While health-conscious folks are inclined to buy leaner meat and poultry, some fat is essential to a juicy burger, since naturally occurring fats melt and flavor the burger as they cook.

When it comes time to form the burgers, remember that too much shaping can make them tough and rubbery. Overhandling ground meat removes the air pockets that make for a tender burger.

Burgers should be large -- at least 4 1/2 inches in diameter -- to allow for shrinkage. They should have an even thickness.

When grilling or pan-frying, sear them first at high heat to trap the juices. It's important, too, not to turn a burger by piercing it with a fork, which will allow juices to escape; use a spatula or turner instead. And don't press down on burgers while they cook; that just squeezes out those tasty juices.

For safety, the U.S. Department of Agriculture says ground beef, pork, lamb and veal should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160 degrees; ground chicken and turkey should reach 165 degrees.

Time to tinker

Summer cooking just isn't complete without burgers. But what was once considered among the easiest foods to cook -- who needs a recipe for a plain hamburger? -- has gotten more complicated and, some would say, tastier.

That doesn't mean the original beef burger is passe. If, as "The New Food Lover's Companion" states, "gourmet food is that which is of the highest quality, perfectly prepared and artfully presented," even the most common of burgers could wear the mantle if it's the best you've ever eaten.

But for a different twist, start tinkering and try some of today's recipes for gourmet variations and toppings.

Veal Burgers

2 pounds lean ground veal
1 cup minced red onion
1/2 cup fresh chopped parsley
2 tablespoons minced garlic
1 tablespoon grated lemon zest
3 anchovy fillets, rinsed, lightly chopped
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary or 1 teaspoon dried rosemary

To prepare:

Salt and pepper to taste
3 tablespoons vegetable oil

In a large bowl, combine all the burger ingredients. Mix gently. Form into 6 patties about 4 1/2 inches in diameter.

Season with salt and pepper. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the burgers and cook 3-4 minutes per side or until done.

Makes 6 burgers.

From Annabel Cohen

Tested by Susan Selasky for the Free Press Test Kitchen

274 calories (52% from fat), 16 grams fat (4 grams sat. fat), 3 grams carbohydrate, 29 grams protein, 172 mg sodium, 118 mg cholesterol, 40 mg calcium, 1 gram fiber.

Savory Salmon Burgers

2 pounds boneless, skinless salmon fillet, ground medium or lightly processed into small chunks, but not pureed

1 egg

1 cup chopped scallions

3 tablespoons chopped fresh mint, optional

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon white horseradish

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon ground black pepper

1 to 1 1/2 cups plain bread crumbs

Olive oil to brush on burgers

In a large bowl, combine all the ingredients except the olive oil. Use 1 cup of bread crumbs to start. Stir or mash the ingredients together until well-blended. If the mixture is too mushy or sticky, add more bread crumbs. Form the mixture into 8 patties about 3/4-inch thick. Wrap the burgers in plastic wrap and chill them for 1 or more hours in the refrigerator.

Preheat the grill to medium-high. Brush the burgers with olive oil on both sides and grill 3-5 minutes on each side until the burgers are just cooked through. Remove and serve on breads or buns of choice and with condiments such as Dill Mustard Sauce (see accompanying recipe).

Makes 8 servings.

From Annabel Cohen

Tested by Susan Selasky for the Free Press Test Kitchen

210 calories (42% from fat), 10 grams fat (2 grams sat. fat), 5 grams carbohydrate, 24 grams protein, 410 mg sodium, 89 mg cholesterol, 33 mg calcium, 1 grams fiber.

Chevre-Stuffed Turkey Burgers

2 pounds ground turkey or chicken, very cold

1/2 cup bread crumbs

1/2 cup minced onion

1-2 teaspoons kosher salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

4 tablespoons olive oil

8 to 12 tablespoon chevre or other soft goat cheese

Nonstick cooking spray

In a large bowl, mix together the turkey, bread crumbs, onion, salt, pepper and olive oil. Gently combine. Form into 12 thin patties, about 4 1/2 inches in diameter. Crumble 1-2 tablespoons of chevre in the center of six of the burgers. Place the other six burgers on top of the cheese-topped burgers. Press the edges of the burgers together to seal in the cheese.

Spray the burgers on both sides with nonstick cooking spray and place them on the hot grates. Grill for 5-6 minutes on each side or until just cooked through.

Makes 6 burgers.

From Annabel Cohen

Tested by Susan Selasky for the Free Press Test Kitchen

396 calories (61% from fat), 27 grams fat (7 grams sat. fat), 3 grams carbohydrate, 34 grams protein, 504 mg sodium, 123 mg cholesterol, 65 mg calcium, trace of fiber.

Portabella Mushroom Burgers with Boursin Cheese

1/2 cup soy sauce
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons dried basil
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
6 large portabella mushroom caps (about 2 pounds)
1 cup Boursin cheese or other soft herbed cheese spread, softened

In a small bowl or glass measure, combine the soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, oil, basil and pepper. Whisk to mix well. Place the mushrooms in a large shallow nonreactive pan, stem side up, and pour the soy mixture over them. Marinate at room temperature for 1 hour or chilled for up to 6 hours, turning the mushrooms occasionally. Or place the mushrooms with the marinade in a large resealable bag and marinate as above.

Preheat the grill to medium-high. Arrange the mushrooms, stem side up, on the hot grill and cook for 6-8 minutes on each side or until the mushrooms are very tender. Remove them from the grill and place, stem side up, on bread or buns of choice. Immediately place a large spoonful of cheese on the hot mushrooms (the mushrooms must be hot or the cheese will not melt).

Makes 6 mushroom burgers.

From Annabel Cohen

Tested by Susan Selasky for the Free Press Test Kitchen

129 calories (60% from fat), 9 grams fat (4 gram sat. fat), 8 grams carbohydrate, 7 grams protein, 274 mg sodium, 15 mg cholesterol, 65 mg calcium, 2 grams fiber.

Barbecued Onions

2 large Spanish or other mild onions, cut into 1/2-inch circles (do not separate into rings)
Olive Oil to brush on the onions
2 cups prepared barbecue sauce

Preheat grill to medium-high. Stick toothpicks in the sides of the onions to keep the layers together. Brush both sides of the onions with olive oil and place on the grill. Grill for 3 minutes on each side.

Brush the onions with barbecue sauce and continue grilling until the onions are tender, slightly charred and glazed. Remove from the grill and allow to cool slightly, then remove the toothpicks. Serve warm or at room temperature on top of burgers.

Makes 6 servings.

From Annabel Cohen

Tested by Susan Selasky for the Free Press Test Kitchen

56 calories (31% from fat), 2 grams fat (trace of sat. fat), 9 grams carbohydrate, 1 gram protein, 130 mg sodium, 0 mg cholesterol, 19 mg calcium, 2 grams fiber.

Gorgonzola Spread

1 cup finely crumbled Gorgonzola or other blue cheese
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup minced scallions
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
1 tablespoon hot red pepper sauce (such as Tabasco)
1/2 teaspoon freshly grated black pepper

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and stir well. Chill until ready to spread on burgers.

Makes about 2 cups; analysis per 1 tablespoon.

Tested by Susan Selasky for the Free Press Test Kitchen

16 calories (76% from fat), 1 gram fat (1 gram sat. fat), 0 grams carbohydrate, 1 gram protein, 54 mg sodium, 3 mg cholesterol, 19 mg calcium, 0 grams fiber.

Dill Mustard Sauce

1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1/2 cup chopped dill
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
Juice of one lemon
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and stir well. Chill until ready to use.

Makes about 2 1/2 cups; analysis per 1 tablespoon.

Tested by Susan Selasky for the Free Press Test Kitchen

30 calories (9 % from fat), 3 grams fat (1 gram sat. fat), 1 gram carbohydrate, trace of protein, 66 mg sodium, 3 mg cholesterol, 9 mg calcium, 0 grams fiber.

Roasted Pepper Ketchup

2 red bell peppers
2 cups tomato sauce
1 cup minced onion
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup red pepper sauce (such as Tabasco)
1/4 cup cider vinegar
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon pepper

Grill the whole peppers on a medium-hot grill, turning often, until well-charred on all sides. Place the peppers in a medium bowl, covered tightly with plastic wrap, and cool completely. Rub off the skins and remove the stems and seeds (it sometimes helps to do this under running water). Chop the peppers slightly.

Combine all the ingredients in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook the ketchup for 20 minutes. Allow to cool, then puree the

Cook the ketchup for 30 minutes. Allow to cool, then puree the mixture in a blender or food processor until smooth. Use instead of regular ketchup on burgers.

Makes about 3 cups; analysis per 1 tablespoon.

From Annabel Cohen

Tested by Susan Selasky for the Free Press Test Kitchen

14 calories (5% from fat), trace of fat (0 grams sat. fat), 4 grams carbohydrate, 0 grams protein, 167 mg sodium, 0 mg cholesterol, 5 mg calcium, 0 grams fiber.

[See more posts from Jamie Rahm](#)