

Grind It Up!

BY CHEF CRAIG DEIHL

BURGERS. Is there any one item in the summer that people cook more than burgers? At my house there isn't. Whether it's traditional or nontraditional, on a grill or in an iron skillet, for a family gathering or a group of friends, burgers are always present at the picnic table. Between the expected inquiries of "What do you like on your burger?" and "How do you like your burger cooked?" one of the questions I am asked a lot is "What's your favorite kind of grind?" From what I have available on a regular basis, my favorite is a blend of steak cuts—rib-eye, tenderloin, chuck, and New York strip. When I have brisket in-house, I like to use it with cuts from the round. When I don't have these options available, I prefer ground chuck. In my opinion, it's the perfect blend for a burger and can be found at any local grocery store. If I want a more interesting, flavorful burger, a merguez spiced lamb burger is the way to go. Another option is a tuna burger. The high fat content lends itself to a great juicy burger—just don't overcook it! Cook a tuna burger as you would a tuna steak, on a very high-temperature grill. Regardless of whether it's beef, pork, lamb, tuna, or salmon, it has to be ground and pattied, period. ➔

PHOTOS BY ANDREW GEBULKA



Wood Grilled Burger

2 pounds ground beef
Salt and pepper
4 buns, preferably homemade
½ cup pimento cheese*
4 tablespoons bacon jam (see recipe below)
1 large tomato, cut into 4 equal-size slices
Butter lettuce leaves, washed
with stems removed

1. Form ground beef into 4 equal-size patties. Season with salt and pepper. Place burgers on a high temperature grill and cook for 3–4 minutes on each side. These will be medium.
2. Remove from grill and rest for 1–2 minutes.
3. To plate, top each burger with 2 tablespoons pimento cheese. On each bottom bun, spread 1 tablespoon of bacon jam. Place burger on top of bottom bun. Top burger with sliced tomato, butter lettuce, and finish with top of bun.
*Chef Deihl makes his own pimento cheese, but your preferred variety will work.

Yield: 4 burgers

Bacon Jam

2 pounds bacon, diced
1 pound brown sugar
1 cup sherry vinegar
1½ tablespoons thyme
1½ tablespoons fresh sage
½ tablespoons chili flakes

1. Render bacon, but do not crisp.
2. Add remaining ingredients to pan and reduce by 1/3. Slightly cool to room temperature then puree until smooth in a blender, adding water if needed.

Yield: approximately 1½ pints

Lamb Burger

(IMAGE ON PREVIOUS PAGE)

1 English cucumber, shaved into coins
2 tablespoons mint, chopped chiffonade
Salt and pepper
Juice and zest from 1 lemon
¼ cup Greek yogurt
2 pounds ground lamb shoulder
6 tablespoons merguez spice (see recipe below)
4 buns, preferably homemade
1 large tomato, cut into 4 even slices

1. Macerate cucumbers, mint, salt, pepper, and lemon juice for 10 minutes. Strain and mix with



Greek yogurt and lemon zest. Refrigerate.

2. In a bowl, combine ground lamb and merguez spice. Lightly incorporate, but do not overwork, and form into 4 equal-size patties.
3. On a high-temperature grill, cook burgers for 4–5 minutes on each side. They should be medium well. Remove from grill and rest for 1–2 minutes.
4. Place a burger on the bottom of each bun, top each burger with a tomato slice, and finish with cucumber mixture and top bun.

Yield: 4 burgers

Merguez Spice

2 tablespoons ground fennel
2 tablespoons ground cumin
2 tablespoons fresh oregano, chopped
¼ cup smoked paprika
2½ tablespoons black pepper
2 tablespoons ground coriander
2 teaspoons crushed red pepper
¼ cup salt
3 tablespoons granulated garlic
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Combine all ingredients evenly.

Yield: approximately 1½ cups

Portobello Mushroom Burger

4 large Portobello mushroom caps
Olive oil
Salt and pepper
½ cup Boursin cheese (see recipe below)
4 buns, preferably homemade
Caramelized sweet onions*
1 large tomato, cut into even-size slices,

seasoned with salt, pepper, and olive oil.

1. Brush mushroom caps generously with olive oil and season with salt and pepper.
2. Place mushroom caps on a high-temperature grill and cook for 5–6 minutes on each side. After flipping, spread each cap with 2 tablespoons Boursin cheese. Allow cheese to slightly melt (approximately 1 minute) and then remove mushrooms from grill.
3. Add a generous amount of caramelized onions to the bottom buns. Then add a mushroom cap. Next add a sliced tomato, and finish with top of bun.
*Chef Deihl recommends Vidalia, Palmetto, Walls Walls, or Maui onion caramelized in olive oil, salt, and pepper.

Yield: 4 burgers

Boursin Cheese

3 tablespoons butter
¼ cup shallots, diced
3 tablespoons garlic, minced
1 cup raw spinach, julienned
1½ teaspoons thyme, chopped
1½ teaspoons basil, chopped
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon white pepper
1 pound cream cheese
2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese
½ cup Danish blue cheese
¼ cup goat cheese

1. Place a sauté pan over medium heat. Add the butter. When melted, add shallots and garlic. Stir often while cooking for 5 minutes. Mixture should be lightly caramelized.
2. Remove pan from heat and fold in spinach, thyme, basil, salt, and white pepper. Allow to cool to room temperature.



SALMON BURGER



TUNA BURGER

3. Using a mixer, cream together the cheeses until smooth. Using a rubber spatula, fold spinach mixture into the cheese mixture until incorporated evenly. Place in a container and refrigerate for up to 1 week.

Yield: 1½ pints

Salmon Burger

- 1½ pounds salmon ground, or finely diced by hand
- 2 tablespoon shallots, finely minced
- 1 tablespoon chives, minced
- 2 teaspoons salt
- Cracked black pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 4 eggs
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 4 buns, preferably homemade
- 4 tablespoons Korean spicy mustard (see recipe below)
- ½ cup kimchi*

- 1.** In a mixing bowl, combine salmon, shallots, chives, salt, pepper, and oil. Form into 4 equal-size patties. Place burgers on a high-temperature grill and cook for 2 minutes on each side, cooking medium rare to medium.
- 2.** While burgers are cooking, fry eggs in butter in a hot nonstick skillet, sunny side up. Season with salt and pepper.
- 3.** Spread ½ tablespoon Korean mustard on the top and bottom of each bun. Add 2 tablespoons kimchi to bottom bun. Add salmon burger and top with egg. *Kimchi can be purchased at your local Asian market.

Yield: 4 burgers

Korean Spicy Mustard

- 1½ cups Colman's mustard powder
- 1½ cups apple cider vinegar
- 4 whole eggs
- 1½ cups sugar
- 1/3 cup sesame oil
- ¼ cup Korean pepper flakes
- ½ cup + 2 tablespoons Korean pepper paste
- 2 teaspoons garlic, minced
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce

- 1.** Combine mustard powder and apple cider vinegar. Allow it to sit overnight to hydrate.
- 2.** The next day, combine all ingredients, including mustard mixture, in a non-reactive bowl. Cook over a double boiler until slightly thickened. Remove from heat and refrigerate, stirring occasionally until cold.

Yield: 1 quart

Tuna Burger

- 1½ pounds tuna, ground or finely diced by hand
- 2 tablespoons green onion, finely minced
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 4 buns, preferably homemade
- ½ cup black sesame mayo (see recipe below)
- 12 slices of tempura avocado (see recipe below)
- 12 sprigs fresh cilantro

- 1.** In a mixing bowl, combine tuna, green onion, crushed red pepper, salt, and sesame oil. Mix evenly and form into 4 equal-size patties. Place 4 burgers on a high-temperature grill and cook for 2 minutes on each side. These will be medium rare.

- 2.** Spread 1 tablespoon of black sesame mayo on the top and bottom of each bun. Place tuna burger on bottom bun, top each burger with 3 slices of tempura avocado and 3 sprigs of cilantro. Finish with top of bun.

Yield: 4 burgers

Black Sesame Mayo

- ¼ cup black sesame seeds, toasted
- 2 egg yolks
- ¼ cup + 2 tablespoons water
- ½ cup canola oil
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1½ teaspoons salt

- 1.** In a blender, add sesame seeds and puree until smooth. Add egg yolks and water. Blend.
- 2.** Slowly add canola oil in a very thin stream, allowing mixture to emulsify. Still blending, finish with sesame oil, crushed red pepper, and salt. Refrigerate.

Yield: 1 pint

Tempura Avocado

- 1 gallon canola oil
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup corn starch
- 1/3 cup + 2 tablespoons ice-cold soda water
- Fine sea salt
- 1 extra-firm, unripe avocado (do not use a soft avocado)

- 1.** In a deep saucepan, bring canola oil to 350 degrees.
- 2.** In a mixing bowl, combine flour and corn starch, using a whisk to incorporate evenly. Using a fork, slowly mix in soda water. Do not overmix.
- 3.** Cut avocado into quarters; remove skin and pit. Cut quarters into thirds to total 12 equal-size slices.
- 4.** In 2 batches, dredge 6 slices of avocado into tempura batter and add to oil. Cook for 3 minutes. Remove and place on paper towels; season with sea salt.

Yield: 12 slices

For another of Chef Deihl's burgers, his burger rules, and for his recipe for homemade burger buns, visit us online at thelocalpalate.com.