

From Butcher To Bun

3 Rules for Perfect Burgers

1. Grind it out

Start with a hunk of chuck or brisket and have your butcher grind it fresh. "Make sure they use the medium grind this will give you a juicy, moist burger," says Hubert Keller, executive chef at Burger Bar in Las Vegas.

2. Master medium rare

Take the meat out of the fridge an hour before cooking. "Bringing it closer to room temp helps the burger cook evenly," says John DeLucie, chef at the Waverly Inn in New York City. Rub with olive oil, salt, and pepper.

Use high heat. "If you don't hear the sizzle when it hits the grill, you're screwed." Cook for 3 to 4 minutes a side, adding cheese at the end. The burger should feel soft and springy.

"Let it rest 3 to 4 minutes before eating so the juices redistribute," says DeLucie.

3. Expand your options

Raid your fridge for items you might not associate with burgers," says Keller. Keller likes mango on his turkey burger and grilled asparagus on his beef burger. Other inspired additions: zucchini, grilled shrimp, and guacamole.

Big Kahuna Recovery Burger

The carb-protein balance helps you build and repair muscle postworkout. 10 oz ground turkey, divided into two patties 4 Tbsp teriyaki sauce 2 slices fresh pineapple 2 thick slices red onion 2 whole-wheat buns (we like Martin's), toasted ½ jalapeño, sliced thin 2 slices Swiss cheese

Cook the turkey according to "3 Rules for Perfect Burgers" (above), basting with the teriyaki sauce as you go. While the burgers cook, grill the pineapple and onion until lightly charred. Put each burger on a bun and layer on onion, pineapple, jalapeño, and cheese; top with more sauce. Makes 2 servings

Heart-healthy Burger

Healthy fats in the tuna and pesto bring relief to your ticker. 10 oz ahi tuna, divided into two portions Olive oil Salt and pepper 2 ciabatta or focaccia rolls, toasted 2 Tbsp prepared pesto 2 Tbsp mayonnaise 1 tomato, sliced ¼ red onion, thinly sliced 2 cups mixed greens

Coat the tuna with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill on high heat for 2 minutes a side, until the outside is lightly charred but the interior is still pink and cool. Serve on a toasted bun slathered with the pesto and mayo and dressed with the vegetables. Makes 2 servings

Fat-burning Burger

Cut the carbs and up the protein to stoke your metabolic engine. 10 oz ground buffalo, divided into two patties 4 large romaine lettuce leaves, ribs removed 2 fried eggs 1/3 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese 2 slices grilled red onion Ketchup Dijon mustard

Cook the buffalo according to the instructions in "3 Rules for Perfect Burgers." Lay two romaine leaves together so they overlap slightly, and place a patty in the center. Top with a fried egg, cheese, onion, and condiments, and fold the lettuce over the burger as if making a burrito. Makes 2 servings

Antioxidant Burger

Mushrooms, arugula, garlic, and ketchup all take up arms in the war on cancer. 10 oz piece of brisket 2 whole-wheat buns, toasted 2 Tbsp aioli (garlic mayonnaise, available at savorypantry.com, or make your own) ¼ red onion, thinly

sliced 1 cup arugula ½ c sautéed mushrooms 3 oz crumbled blue cheese Ketchup

Follow the first two rules below in "3 Rules for Perfect Burgers." Slather the buns with aioli, then top with the remaining ingredients. Makes 2 servings