

Raichlen's **Burgers!**

25 of the World's Best Burgers,
Plus Condiments and Sides



Steven Raichlen

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Plus Condiments and Sides*

BY STEVEN RAICHLEN

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INTRODUCTION

Quick—what’s America’s favorite food to grill? Steak? Nah. Ribs? Not quite. Brats? Not by a long shot. The envelope, please. According to the American Barbecue Industry Association, the dish we fire up our grills most frequently for is the classic American hamburger. Last year, Americans consumed billions—nearly 150 burgers a year for every man, woman, and child.

America’s romance with hamburgers began in New York City in the 1800s, when food stands began selling “steaks cooked in the Hamburg style”—between two slices of bread—to German-speaking sailors and immigrants, often from Germany’s largest port, Hamburg. The exclusive NYC restaurant Delmonico’s featured “Hamburg Steak” on its menu in 1837, and charged 10 cents for it—double the price of roast beef. But hamburgers on *buns* first appeared in 1891, historians say, when Oklahoma farmer Oscar Weber Bilby served grilled ground patties of Angus beef on secret-recipe yeast rolls baked by his wife, Franny, at his annual July Fourth picnic. (The story gets better: Oscar forged his own barbecue grill from scrap iron in preparation for the event.)

The basic concept—a cooked ground beef patty on a bun—seems straightforward enough. Not all burgers are created equal, however. The spectacular Paul Newman Burgers served at the Dressing Room in Westport, Connecticut, have as little in common with thin, gray, fast food burgers as a dry-aged, wood-grilled, prime Porterhouse has with a pan-fried minute steak.

Like so many other dishes in the canon of American grilling and barbecuing, burgers reflect our regional tastes. Health-conscious Southern Californians chow down on “burgers” made with ground chicken, turkey, or tuna—their virtuous diets punctuated, of course, by the occasional beefy In-N-Out burger (double-double, Animal Style®, please). New Mexicans swear by their green chili cheeseburgers;

similarly, Pueblo, Colorado, loves its “sloppers,” griddled open-faced burgers served in bowls, smothered with green chili made from local mirasol peppers and topped with cheese. New York City and Las Vegas famously boast the world’s most expensive burger, chef Daniel Boulud’s \$120 sirloin patty stuffed with braised short ribs, root vegetables, black truffles, and foie gras. Meanwhile, Depression-era frugality still informs the “onion burgers” found in Oklahoma and the potato- or cracker crumb-enhanced “slugburgers” unique to a small triangular region anchored by northern Alabama.

Hamburger-obsessed Americans are often surprised to learn the burger family tree has branches in many grilling cultures on Planet Barbecue. There’s *bifteki*, a grilled ground beef and veal patty popular in Greece. Bosnians claim the world’s largest burger (excluding the monsters built for competitions): an eye-popping, big-as-a-dinner-plate, lamb, pork, and veal patty called *pljeskavica*. Romania’s garlicky *mici* are the Eastern European equivalent of “sliders,” while lamb burgers turn up throughout Central Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East. I’ll introduce you to these remarkable burgers, and many more.

You’ll also learn:

- What cuts to use to make the perfect blend of freshly ground beef.
- The optimum ratio of lean meat to fat.
- Techniques for forming and grilling the perfect patty that stays juicy—even when cooked to a safe temperature of 160 degrees F.
- Burger dos and don’ts, including what *not* to do with your spatula.

I’ll also cover the great burger-enhancing condiments and side dishes, from homemade ketchup and mustard to such iconic accompaniments as coleslaw, potato salad, baked beans, and onions you pickle yourself.

RAICHLEN’S BURGERS! is your ticket out of burger mediocrity (“*Burgatory*”?), offering all the tips, tricks, techniques, and recipes you need to know to achieve enlightenment on a bun. You’ll never press the juices out of a burger with a spatula again.

The Perfect Burger

Michel Nischan did extensive kitchen testing to develop the ultimate burger for the Dressing Room, the restaurant he opened along with the late Paul Newman in Westport, Connecticut. Here are his twenty secrets to grilling the perfect burger:

1. Use grass-fed beef. It tastes better, poses less risk of bacterial contamination, and is healthier for the planet.
2. Grind the beef from a combination of brisket and chuck (beef shoulder clod) in a ratio of 45 to 55 percent. The brisket provides the richness; the chuck, a rich beefy flavor.
3. Keep the fat content at 22 percent; according to Michel Nischan, this is the single most important taste factor. Sorry, folks: You'll have to cut back on your fat intake somewhere else.
4. Grind the meat twice through the coarse plate of a meat grinder. Freeze the grinder parts before grinding the meat to minimize the heat generated by friction. Heat softens the fat, which makes for an inferior burger.
5. The perfect weight for a full-size burger is 9 ounces. Make the patty at least 1 inch thick and at least 1 inch larger in diameter than the bun. That way, when the burger cooks down, it will be about the same size as the bun.
6. When forming the burger, work quickly and with a light touch, packing the meat as loosely as possible. You get a lighter texture and less shrinkage if you don't pack the meat.
7. Make a slight depression in the center of each patty. Burgers shrink more at the edges than in the center, so the indentation in the center will give you a patty of a more even thickness when the meat is cooked.
8. If you form the burgers ahead of time (and you can), store them in the refrigerator in a single layer so as not to crush the meat.
9. For the best flavor, grill the burgers over the embers of a hardwood fire. Nischan uses a blend of Connecticut hardwoods, like apple, cherry, and ash.

10. Immediately prior to putting the burgers on the grill, salt the tops (ideally with thin-flaked Maldon sea salt from England). Salt the other side when you turn the burgers.
11. Use a spatula for turning the burgers but never, *ever* press the tops with the spatula. Pressing the burgers serves only to squeeze out the juices.
12. The total cooking time will be 4½ to 5 minutes for a rare burger; 6 to 7 minutes for medium-rare. By using grass-fed beef that is custom ground for the restaurant, Nischan is able to serve rare or medium-rare burgers without a food safety risk. At home, you should go for medium—8 to 9 minutes total.
13. Turn the burgers only once. This gives you the best crust.
14. “Temper” the burgers—that is, let them rest on a warm plate for two minutes after grilling before serving them. This “relaxes” the meat, making it more juicy, while simultaneously keeping the juices in the patty, not spilling out into the bun.
15. Place a “thumbnail” (about 1 teaspoon) of unsalted butter on top of each hot burger while it rests, for extra moistness and richness.
16. Buy your buns at a bakery or make them at home. Nischan uses home-baked brioche buns, which he toasts on the grill before assembling the burgers. (Brioche is made from a French dough rich in eggs and butter.)
17. Shop at your local farmers’ market. Nischan uses locally raised lettuce and organic tomatoes, ideally heirlooms.
18. If you like a bacon cheeseburger, use a good smokehouse bacon, like Nueske’s. Nischan cures his own bacon. For cheese, he uses a farmhouse Cheddar from Grafton, Vermont.
19. Think seasonal. In the winter, Nischan forgoes tomatoes for caramelized onions.
20. Make a contribution. Paul Newman funded and Nischan runs the Wholesome Wave Foundation (www.wholesomewave.org), which among many other good works doubles the value of food stamps to help their users be able to shop at farmers’ markets.

Hamburger Safety

When I was growing up, an *E. coli* outbreak was a freak occurrence. Today you can hardly scan the news without reading about some sort of mass food contamination.

Ground meats seem to be particularly susceptible to contamination. In order to kill *E. coli* (or other bacteria), you need to cook hamburgers (and other meats) to an internal temperature of 160°F. That's the temperature of medium-done meat.

Some other ways to make hamburgers safer:

- Buy your meat at a top-notch butcher shop where the meat is ground daily. If possible, choose your meat before it's ground and have the butcher grind it while you wait.
- Store the meat in the refrigerator until you're ready to cook it.
- Wash any cutting board you've cut meat on with very hot water and plenty of soap immediately after each use.

How to Tell if a Burger Is Done

If you use commercially ground hamburger meat, I strongly recommend that you cook it through, meaning done to medium so there's no trace of red in the center. But how do you tell if a burger is cooked through? Use one of the following three tests.

1. Use the poke test: Press the center of the burger with the tip of your index finger—it should feel mostly firm, with just the slightest bit of yield in the center.
2. Take the burger's temperature: Insert the probe of an instant-read meat thermometer through the side of the burger (you won't get an accurate reading if the probe is inserted through the top). The internal temperature should be at least 160°F for beef and pork burgers and at least 170°F for poultry burgers. Tuna burgers, when made with sushi-quality tuna, can be served rare or medium-rare.
3. Make a small cut in the center of the burger with the tip of a paring knife. There should be no traces of red and only the faintest blush of pink in the center. Use this method sparingly, as each cut will release tasty juices. When serving the burger, place the cut side down.

Some establishments serve rare hamburgers, but to ensure safety, it's likely they

grind their meat fresh daily on the premises. If you're willing to do this, you can cook and serve your burgers to whatever degree of doneness you desire—even rare.

Must It Be Grilled?

You won't be surprised to learn that my preferred method for cooking burgers involves the grill—that elemental live-fire cooking machine on which I've focused so much energy, creativity, and, yes, love over the years.

Why barbecue your burgers? Not just for the grill marks. The high dry heat of the grill caramelizes the meat proteins, melts out excess fat, and gives you a seared smoky flavor you simply can't achieve using other cooking methods. Not to mention the street cred playing with fire confers . . .

To prepare your grill for cooking burgers, follow the grill master's mantra: "Keep it hot. Keep it clean. Keep it lubricated." That is, preheat your grate over a hot fire. Brush the grate clean with a stiff wire brush. And oil it with either a paper towel folded into a tight pad or a half onion dipped in vegetable oil, held in tongs and drawn across the bars of the grate.

Readers who want to feel the burger love but don't have access to a grill (or even a backyard): Take heart. It turns out that some of the world's best burgers are cooked indoors—on a griddle, in a skillet, or on a contact grill. And with minimal tweaks (such as omitting the charcoal and preheating the griddle or grill pan nice and hot), you'll be fine. All of the recipes in this e-book can translate to the stovetop. Just don't forget to butter and toast or broil your buns!

GREAT AMERICAN BURGERS

The Great American Hamburger

What makes a great hamburger? First there's the meat. You want to use a flavorful cut, like sirloin (for uptown burgers), or chuck or round (if you're feeling more democratic). And it shouldn't be too lean: 15 to 20 percent fat is ideal.

I adhere to the "less is more" school when it comes to making hamburgers. Namely, the fewer ingredients you add to the meat, the better. Oh, I know how tempting it is for cooks to want to season the meat with onion, garlic, spices, and condiments. But to taste a burger at its best, keep it utterly simple. The garnishes will add all the flavor you need.

Serves 6

FOR THE BURGERS

2¼ pounds ground round, chuck, or sirloin

6 slices (½ inch thick) Vidalia or other sweet onion (optional)

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, or 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

6 hamburger buns

FOR THE TOPPINGS—ANY OR ALL

Iceberg lettuce leaves

Sliced ripe tomatoes

Sliced dill pickles or sweet pickles

Cooked bacon (2 slices per burger)

Ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise

1. Divide the meat into six equal portions. Lightly wet your hands with cold water, then form each portion of meat into a round patty, 4 inches across and of an even thickness (see Note).

2. Set up the grill for direct cooking and preheat to high.
3. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate.
4. If using onion slices, brush them on both sides with melted butter and season with salt and pepper. Place the onions on the hot grate and grill until nicely browned, about 4 minutes per side, then transfer to a plate.
5. Brush one side of the meat patties lightly with melted butter and season with salt and pepper. Arrange the burgers, buttered side down, on the hot grate and grill until the bottoms are nicely browned, 4 to 5 minutes. Brush the tops lightly with some of the melted butter and season them with salt and pepper. Using a spatula, turn the burgers and grill until they are browned and cooked to taste, 4 to 5 minutes longer for medium. Meanwhile, brush the cut sides of the buns with the remaining melted butter and toast them, cut sides down, on the grill during the last 2 minutes the burgers cook.
6. Set out the toppings. Put the burgers and onion slices on buns and serve.

NOTE: If you are not planning on cooking the burgers immediately, place them on a large plate, cover them loosely with plastic wrap, and refrigerate them.

The Paul Newman Burger

How far would you go to make the perfect burger? Would you take the time to source organic grass-fed beef (better for flavor and better for the planet)? Would you custom grind the meat, going so far as to freeze the grinder parts to keep the fat sufficiently cold for the optimum texture? Michel Nischan would and he did so for a very demanding client. His late boss, Paul Newman, insisted that their Westport, Connecticut, restaurant, Dressing Room, serve the best burger in North America. Nischan and Newman spent several months creating and sampling burgers, varying the meat, fat content, size, weight, and shape of the patty, the fuel, cooking technique, and garnishes. It took thirty contenders to determine the winner.

So what constitutes the perfect burger? You'll know the moment you bite into it. Your teeth will sink through a softly crisp smoky crust into a rich, meaty, lasciviously moist interior. Of course, you should smell wood smoke and the beef should taste, well, like beef. In short, it will be the sort of burger that doesn't need ketchup or mustard or a lot of fancy garnishes but that benefits from a few judiciously chosen accompaniments.

Makes 4 burgers; serves 4

2 pounds (32 ounces) ground beef, ideally 14 ounces brisket and 18 ounces chuck, with a fat content of 22 percent

Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

4 teaspoons unsalted butter at room temperature, plus 1 to 2 tablespoons for buttering the buns

4 freshly baked buns (3½ inches across), preferably brioche

4 Boston or Bibb lettuce leaves, preferably organic

1 luscious, red ripe tomato, preferably an heirloom organic, thinly sliced

4 thick slices of smokehouse bacon (about 4 ounces, optional), cut in half crosswise and cooked until crisp

2 cups oak or fruitwood wood chips or chunks, soaked for 1 hour in water to cover, then drained

1. Divide the beef into 4 even portions. Lightly wet your hands with cold water and mold each portion into a patty about 1 inch thick and 1 inch larger in diameter than the buns. Work with a light touch, handling the meat as little as possible. Make a shallow depression in the center of each patty with your thumb (the patties should be slightly concave; this helps them cook evenly). You can form the patties up to 4 hours ahead. Place them on a plate lined with plastic wrap and

refrigerate them, covered, until you are ready to grill.

2. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat it to high. Ideally you'd grill over a wood fire. Alternatively you can use the wood chips or chunks to add a smoke flavor.
3. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Toss the wood chips or chunks on the coals of a charcoal grill or, if you are using a gas grill, add the chips or chunks to the smoker box or place them in a smoker pouch under the grate. If you are using a gas grill, wait until you see smoke, about 5 minutes, before putting on the burgers. Generously season the tops of the burgers with salt and pepper. Place the burgers on the hot grate and grill them until the bottoms are browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Using a spatula, turn the burgers over and season the tops with salt. Continue grilling the burgers until cooked to taste, 4½ to 5 minutes in all for rare, 6 to 7 minutes for medium-rare, 8 to 9 minutes for medium. Unless you're absolutely sure about the purity of your meat, you should cook the burgers to medium. Insert an instant-read meat thermometer through the side of a burger; when cooked to medium the internal temperature will be about 160°F.
4. Transfer the burgers to a warm plate. Place a teaspoon of butter on top of each. Let the burgers rest for about 2 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, butter the buns and toast the cut sides until golden brown, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Watch the buns; they can burn quickly.
6. To assemble the burgers, place a lettuce leaf on the bottom half of a bun. Place a burger on top and top it with tomato, bacon, if using, and the top half of the bun. Repeat with the remaining buns and burgers.

VARIATION

The Paul Newman Cheeseburger: To make these you'll need 4 slices, each about 1 ounce, of aged Cheddar cheese. Place a slice on each burger during its last 2 minutes on the grill.

The Ultimate Hamburger

For historic continuity, ferociously loyal community support, and an atmosphere that you could spread with a knife, you can't beat the hamburger joint Louis' Lunch, in New Haven, Connecticut. Since 1898, the Lassen family has been grinding its own beef daily, hand shaping patties to order, and grilling burgers on antique cast-iron broilers in front of live flames. (This answers the question once and for all—the proper way to cook a hamburger is by grilling, not by frying it on a griddle.) And as any regional American culinary landmark should be, Louis' Lunch is sufficiently quirky to allow melted processed cheese but militantly prohibits ketchup and mustard as accompaniments to its signature burgers. Here, then, is the granddaddy of all burgers; it's the next best thing to elbowing your way up to the counter at Louis'.

Makes 8 burgers

1¼ pounds ground chuck

1¼ pounds ground sirloin

Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

½ medium-size onion, cut into 8 thin wedges

16 slices sandwich bread

3 tablespoons butter, melted (optional)

1 large or 2 medium-size gorgeous, luscious, ripe red tomatoes, thinly sliced

8 Boston lettuce leaves or iceberg lettuce slices

Cheese Sauce (optional; recipe follows)

1. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high.
2. Place the chuck and sirloin in a large mixing bowl and mix with a wooden spoon, or mix the meat in a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook. If possible, avoid mixing the meat with your hands so your fingers don't warm it.
3. Wet your hands with cold water and divide the meat into 8 equal portions. Working quickly and with a light touch, pat each portion into a ½-inch-thick squarish patty. Generously season each patty on both sides with salt and pepper. Press an onion wedge into one side of each patty so that it's flush with the meat.
4. Lightly brush the bread slices with the butter, if using. Arrange the tomatoes and lettuce leaves on an attractive serving platter.

5. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Place the burgers on the hot grate, onion side down. Grill the burgers until cooked to taste, 3 to 4 minutes per side for medium-rare.
6. Meanwhile, place the bread slices on the hot grate and grill until lightly toasted, 1 to 2 minutes per side.
7. To serve, place a lettuce leaf on top of a slice of toast. Top with a burger, tomato slice, and Cheese Sauce, if using. Slap a piece of toast on top and serve at once.

Cheese Sauce

The Grilling Guru has a moral dilemma. To be strictly faithful to Louis' Lunch, he should tell you to top your hamburger with a liquid processed cheese, like Cheez Whiz. The Grilling Guru doesn't use Cheez Whiz himself, however, so he feels awkward about calling for it. So he's created a made-from-scratch cheese sauce that will satisfy the purist, while remaining faithful to the lurid orange cheese topping used by Louis'.

Makes about 1¼ cups

½ clove garlic

1 cup beer

2 cups (about 8 ounces) coarsely grated Colby cheese or orange Cheddar cheese

2 teaspoons cornstarch

2 teaspoons prepared mustard

Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

1. Rub the bottom and side of a heavy saucepan with the cut garlic. Place the garlic clove in the pan, add the beer, and bring to a boil over high heat.
2. Meanwhile, place the cheese and cornstarch in a bowl and toss to mix. Sprinkle the cheese into the boiling beer, stirring it with a wooden spoon. Let the sauce come back to a boil; it will thicken.
3. Reduce the heat slightly, stir in the mustard, and season the sauce with salt and pepper to taste. Let the sauce simmer gently until smooth and rich-tasting, 3 to 5 minutes, stirring steadily with the wooden spoon. The purist can fish out and discard the garlic clove; otherwise, one lucky person will get to eat it.

“Kobe” Beef Sliders

Kobe beef sliders began turning up a few years ago at marquee restaurants in New York City and Los Angeles. The irony of this was not lost on anyone who has eaten a “slyder” at one of the sixty-plus White Castle burger joints around the United States. Imagine small, thin, gray, square patties of ground beef, “steam grilled” (griddled) with onion and served on equally diminutive soft buns. The term *slyder*, coined shortly after the first White Castle opened in Wichita, Kansas, in 1921, was said to refer to the ease with which the burger slid out of its signature white cardboard box (or perhaps it had something to do with the way it slid down your gullet). Something about the burger’s iconic shape and role in American popular culture (rhapsodized by, among others, the Beastie Boys) struck the fancy of a new generation of American chefs. The humble slider went upscale, with top-grade meat, caramelized shallots, and a brioche bun. Here’s a slider you truly cook on the grill and that definitely will lend style and substance to your next grill session.

Makes 12 sliders; serves 4

FOR THE CARAMELIZED SHALLOTS

2 tablespoons (¼ stick) unsalted butter

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, or more butter

1 pound shallots, peeled and thinly sliced crosswise

Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE SLIDERS

1½ pounds ground *wagyu* or Kobe-style beef, ideally with a fat content of 15 to 20 percent

Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

12 small brioche rolls or Parker House rolls

2 tablespoons (¼ stick) unsalted butter, melted

Sliced dill pickles or sweet pickles (optional)

1. Make the caramelized shallots: Melt the butter in the olive oil in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add the shallots and cook until the shallots have been reduced to a dark, thick, sweet paste, 15 to 25 minutes; you will have to stir the shallots often. Lower the heat as needed to keep the shallots from burning. Season the shallots with salt and pepper to taste. The shallots can be caramelized several hours or even a day ahead and refrigerated, covered. Let them return to room temperature before using.

2. Make the sliders: Lightly wet your hands with cold water and divide the beef into 12 portions, then form each portion into a square patty about 2 inches square and ½ inch thick. Place the beef patties on a plate lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate them, covered, until you are ready to grill.
3. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat it to high. Ideally you'd grill over oak or another hardwood fire.
4. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Generously salt and pepper the beef patties and place them on the hot grate. Grill the sliders until cooked to taste, 2 to 3 minutes per side for medium, turning them with a spatula.
5. Brush the cut sides of the rolls with the melted butter and grill them until golden brown, 2 minutes. Watch the buns; they can burn quickly.
6. To assemble the sliders, place a spoonful of caramelized shallots on the bottom half of each bun. Top each with a slider, a slice of pickle, if desired, and the top of the bun and serve at once.

Wagyu to Go

Pronounced ko-bay, Kobe (more accurately, “Kobe-style”) is one of the most widely misunderstood terms for American beef eaters. Kobe is a coastal city in Japan renowned for its beef, specifically for a particular breed of Japanese cattle, *wagyu*, that is raised with a meticulous care that includes a special diet and grooming. This does not, contrary to popular myth, include baths in beer or sake and massages to redistribute the fat (if this were truly possible, we wouldn't need liposuction). The result is beef with a prodigious marbling of fat. (I first sampled Kobe beef in Tokyo in 1995, and I can still remember today how its melting richness felt on my tongue.) Despite Kobe's reputation (and name recognition), many other cattle districts in Japan—Saga, for example—are equally revered for their beef.

In 1976 a handful of *wagyu* cows were brought to the United States, launching a superpremium beef industry that supplies steak houses with Kobe-style beef. (Sorry, if it doesn't come from Kobe, Japan, it's not Kobe beef.) Unfortunately, there are no precise industry standards for diet, marbling, or aging that dictate just what constitutes *wagyu* or Kobe-style beef, with the result that, while some of the beef is good, much of it is extremely ordinary and price is no indication of quality.

Grilled Steak Tartare Burgers

Some months ago, I had steak tartare at a restaurant in Buenos Aires. It had been a long while since I'd ordered this dish, and the notion of eating beef raw seemed daring, even audacious. But Argentinean cattle are fed exclusively on grass, so the risks associated with beef in other countries are greatly reduced. Here's a way to enjoy the robust flavor of a steak tartare—the salty tang of capers and anchovies; the pungency of shallots and mustard—without the raw beef.

Serves 4

1½ pounds ground beef sirloin or chuck
1 large shallot, minced (3 to 4 tablespoons)
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 tablespoons drained capers
2 to 4 anchovy fillets, drained, blotted dry, and finely chopped
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon coarse salt (kosher or sea)
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
4 quail eggs (optional; see Note)
Cooking oil spray
1 bunch arugula leaves, rinsed and spun dry
4 slices dense white sandwich bread or rye bread, grilled or toasted

1. Place the ground beef, shallot, parsley, capers, anchovies, mustard, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in a large mixing bowl and stir with a wooden spoon to mix. Wet your hands with cold water and divide the beef mixture into 4 equal portions. Working quickly and with a light touch, pat each portion into a thick patty. Place the patties on a plate lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate, covered, until ready to grill. The patties can be prepared up to 2 hours ahead.
2. Grill the burgers until cooked through. Remove the burgers and cover to keep warm.
3. Fry the quail eggs in a nonstick pan coated with cooking oil spray.
4. Place some arugula leaves on each slice of toast. Top each with a burger, then slide a fried quail egg onto each burger.

NOTE: Quail eggs are available at many supermarkets and specialty food stores, but I've made them optional here.

Unlike chicken eggs, quail eggs are difficult to crack in half. To do this, hold each egg upright (narrow end up) in one hand. Using the cutting edge of a paring knife, knock off the top ¼ inch of shell (this may take several whacks). Pour the egg into the heated oiled skillet and fry it. It will take 1 to 2 minutes.

New Mexican Green Chile Burgers with Salsa Verde

The burger plays an iconic role in American gastronomy. Every region reinterprets the basic recipe—case in point, these green chile burgers from New Mexico. There's a double dose of chiles, first in the form of *rajas*, roasted chile strips spooned over the burgers, then in a classic New Mexican *salsa verde*—green chile sauce.

Serves 4

½ cup roasted New Mexican green chiles, Anaheim chiles, or poblano peppers cut into

¼-inch strips (4 to 5 chiles; see [Roasting Chiles](#))

4 ounces white Cheddar cheese, coarsely grated (about 1 cup)

1½ pounds ground beef sirloin or chuck

Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

4 hamburger buns

2 tablespoons olive oil

New Mexican Salsa Verde (recipe follows)

1. Place the chile strips in a serving bowl and stir in the Cheddar. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.
2. Wet your hands with cold water and divide the ground beef into 4 equal portions. Working quickly and with a light touch, pat each portion into a thick patty. Place the patties on a plate lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate, covered, until ready to grill.
3. Generously, and I mean generously, season each patty on both sides with salt and black pepper. Grill the burgers until they are cooked through. Remove the burgers and cover to keep warm. Leave the grill on.
4. Brush the cut sides of the hamburger buns with the olive oil. Place the buns on the hot grill, cut side down, and, lowering the temperature if necessary, grill until toasted, 1 to 2 minutes. You may need to work in batches.
5. Place each of the burgers on the bottom half of a bun and top each with a quarter of the chile and cheese mixture. Spoon some *salsa verde* over each, top with the other half of the bun, and serve at once.

New Mexican Salsa Verde

This fragrant, mild, green salsa is a staple—no, the very lifeblood—of New Mexican cooking. I’ve kept it simple, so you can appreciate the flavor of the chiles. This makes a bit more salsa than you can comfortably fit on the burgers. Spoon about two tablespoons on each and serve the rest in a bowl on the side for people to help themselves.

Makes about 1 cup

4 cloves garlic (leave the skins on), skewered on a wooden toothpick or small bamboo skewer
1 cup roasted New Mexican green chiles or Anaheim chiles cut into ¼-inch strips (8 to 10 chiles; recipe follows)
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
2 teaspoons fresh lime juice, or more to taste
½ teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon dried oregano
Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat the broiler.
2. Broil the garlic cloves until they are lightly browned and tender, 2 to 3 minutes per side (4 to 6 minutes in all).
3. Scrape any really burnt skin off the garlic. Place the garlic, chile strips, cilantro, lime juice, cumin, oregano, and 4 tablespoons of water in a blender and purée until smooth, scraping down the sides of the blender with a spatula.
4. Transfer the salsa to a saucepan and bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat. Let simmer until thick and flavorful, 5 to 8 minutes, stirring with a wooden spoon. The salsa should be thick (roughly the consistency of heavy cream) but pourable; add more water as needed. Taste for seasoning, adding more lime juice as necessary and salt and pepper to taste; the salsa should be highly seasoned.

Roasting Chiles

There are several ways to roast chiles: on a built-in or fireplace grill; in a grill pan; or in a hot, ungreased cast-iron skillet (a contact grill doesn’t get hot enough).

Makes about 1½ cups

1½ pounds New Mexican green chiles, Anaheim chiles, or poblano peppers

1. Grill the chiles until the skins are black and blistered on all sides, 2 to 3 minutes per side (8 to 12 minutes in all). Transfer the roasted chiles to a large bowl, cover with plastic wrap (this helps loosen the skins), and let cool to room temperature.
2. Using a paring knife, scrape the skins off the chiles. Cut the chiles in half lengthwise and scrape out the seeds. The chiles are now ready to be used in a recipe.

Pepper Jack Burgers with Slow-Burn Jalapeño Sauce

These cheeseburgers acquire Tex-Mex overtones thanks to cumin, cilantro, and cheese—Jack cheese laced with jalapeño peppers. Most cheeseburger recipes call for you to place a slice of cheese on top of the hot burgers, but I like to put the cheese inside, adding grated pepper Jack to the ground beef. The melting cheese keeps the burgers moist, even when they're cooked to medium.

Serves 4

1½ pounds ground beef sirloin or chuck
4 ounces pepper Jack cheese, coarsely grated (about 1 cup)
3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
1 teaspoon ground cumin
Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper
4 hamburger buns
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1½ cups shredded iceberg lettuce
1 medium-size ripe red tomato, thinly sliced
Pickled jalapeño pepper slices
Slow-Burn Jalapeño Sauce (recipe follows)

1. Place the ground beef, cheese, cilantro, and cumin in a mixing bowl and stir with a wooden spoon to mix. Wet your hands with cold water and divide the beef mixture into 4 equal portions. Working quickly and with a light touch, pat each portion into a thick patty. Season each patty on both sides with salt and pepper, then place on a plate lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate, covered, until ready to grill.
2. Grill the burgers until they are cooked through. Remove the burgers from the grill and cover to keep warm. Leave the grill on.
3. Brush the cut sides of the hamburger buns with the olive oil. Place the buns on the hot grill, cut side down, and, lowering the temperature if necessary, grill until toasted, 1 to 2 minutes. You may need to work in batches.
4. Place each of the burgers on the bottom half of a bun, then top them with some of the lettuce, tomato, jalapeño pepper slices, and a dollop of Slow-Burn Jalapeño Sauce. Top with the other half of the bun and serve at once.

Slow-Burn Jalapeño Sauce

This sauce is a hottie, so use it sparingly. I've given a range of jalapeños: two will give you a baby hot sauce; six a volcanic bruiser. Either way, it will burn low and slow for a while. For an even hotter sauce, leave the seeds in the jalapeños.

Makes about ½ cup

2 to 6 jalapeño peppers, seeded and coarsely chopped

½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

3 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped

½ teaspoon ground cumin

2 tablespoons fresh lime juice, or more to taste

½ teaspoon coarse salt (kosher or sea), or more to taste

Place the jalapeños, cilantro, garlic, cumin, lime juice, salt, and ¼ cup water in a blender. Purée until smooth, scraping down the sides of the blender with a spatula; add more water as needed for a smooth consistency. Taste for seasoning, adding more lime juice and/or salt as necessary.

Sticky Subject

The cheese in the burgers does have a tendency to stick to the grill. This is not a problem with contact grills that have nonstick surfaces. If your grill doesn't, make sure to oil the grate or grill plates well.

BUTTER BURGERS AND CHEESEBURGERS

Herb Butter Hamburgers

Here's a burger specifically designed to deal with today's safety guidelines. Desperate times call for desperate measures, and so in order to keep the succulence, I place a disk of herb butter in the center of the patty. The melting butter moistens the meat from the inside, so you can cook your burger all the way through without drying it out.

Serves 4

FOR THE HAMBURGERS

1½ pounds ground sirloin, round, or chuck
4 tablespoons Garlic-Herb Butter, cut into 4 half-inch-thick slices
Coarse salt and black pepper
4 slices (2 to 3 ounces) pancetta (Italian bacon; optional)
4 slices white Cheddar cheese (optional)
4 hamburger buns or kaiser rolls
2 tablespoons melted butter

FOR THE TOPPINGS (ANY OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING)

Bibb or red leaf lettuce leaves
Thin slices of raw or grilled sweet onion
Sliced ripe red tomato
Mustard, ketchup, mayonnaise, relish, or whatever other condiment you may fancy

1. Wet your hands with cold water and divide the ground beef into 4 portions. Pat each portion into a thick patty filled with a slice of herb butter. Season with salt and pepper and refrigerate the burgers, covered, on a plate lined with plastic

wrap while you preheat the grill.

2. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate.
3. Grill the pancetta, if using, until golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels to drain.
4. Place the burgers on the hot grate and season again with salt and pepper. Grill the burgers until cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes per side for medium. (If you like, rotate the burgers 90 degrees halfway through cooking to create an attractive crosshatch of grill marks.) If using cheese and/or pancetta, place a slice of each on each burger after you've turned it (pancetta first). To test for doneness, insert an instant-read meat thermometer through the side of the burger into the center. The internal temperature should be at least 160°F for medium.
5. Brush the buns with the melted butter and toast them on the grill, 30 seconds to 1 minute.
6. Assemble the burgers: On the bottom half of each bun, place a lettuce leaf followed by a slice of onion and tomato. Top with the burger, the condiments of your choice, and the top half of the bun.

Garlic Herb Butter

Garlic and grilling go together like smoke and fire. This garlicky butter is also delicious brushed on grilled bread, shellfish, fish steaks of all sorts, lamb and beef kebabs—in short, just about anything.

Makes about ½ cup

- 3 tablespoons finely chopped mixed fresh herbs, including parsley, chives, basil, oregano, and/or tarragon leaves
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) salted butter, at room temperature

1. Place the herbs, garlic, pepper, and butter in a small mixing bowl and beat with a wooden spoon until light and fluffy. Alternatively, you can do the beating in a mixer or food processor.

2. Lay a 12-inch-square piece of plastic wrap or parchment paper on your work surface and mound the flavored butter in the center. Roll it up into a cylinder, twisting the ends to compact the butter. Chill the butter in the refrigerator or freezer until firm. The flavored butter will keep for up to 5 days in the refrigerator or up to 3 months in the freezer. To use, unwrap the roll and cut crosswise into ½-inch slices.

A New Cheeseburger

Again, in this burger I incorporate the cheese into the patty for extra moistness. With a dollop of smoky chipotle mayonnaise and some uptown fixings, it's a smooth, smoky take on the traditional cheeseburger.

Serves 4

1½ pounds ground beef sirloin or chuck (15 or 20 percent fat)

6 ounces sharp Cheddar cheese or pepper Jack cheese, coarsely grated (about 1½ cups)

Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and plenty of freshly grated black pepper

4 hamburger buns

2 tablespoons butter (optional), melted

Arugula leaves

Ripe tomato slices

Sweet onion slices

Pickle slices

Chipotle Mayonnaise (recipe follows)

1. Place the ground beef in a mixing bowl. Add the cheddar and stir with a wooden spoon to mix. Wet your hands with cold water and divide the meat mixture into 4 equal portions. Working quickly and with a light touch, pat each portion into a thick patty. Place on a plate lined with plastic wrap. Refrigerate, covered, until ready to grill.
2. Generously season each patty on both sides with salt and pepper. Preheat the grill to high. Place the burgers on the hot grill, and cook for about 5 minutes per side, or until cooked through. Please resist the temptation to tamp down on the burgers with a spatula as the juices will run out. (An instant-read meat thermometer inserted through the side of the burger parallel to the grill grate should read at least 160 degrees F.) Remove the burgers from the grill and cover to keep warm. Leave the grill on.
3. Brush the cut sides of the hamburger buns with the melted butter, if using. Place the buns on the hot grill, cut side down, and grill until toasted, 30 seconds to 2 minutes. Watch carefully. You may need to work in batches.
4. Place each of the burgers on the bottom half of a bun and top with arugula, tomato, onion, pickle, and a dollop of Chipotle Mayonnaise. Top with the other half of the bun and serve at once.

Chipotle Mayonnaise

Chipotles are smoked jalapeño peppers and they're also one of the few foods I recommend buying canned. The reason is simple—canned chipotles come in an intensely flavorful vinegar sauce called *adobo*, so when you used the canned peppers you get the added benefit of the sauce. Look for canned chipotles at Hispanic markets and specialty food shops.

Makes about ½ cup

½ cup mayonnaise (preferably Hellmann's)

1 to 2 canned chipotle peppers, minced, with 1 tablespoon of their adobo sauce

½ teaspoon sweet paprika

Place the mayonnaise, chipotle(s), and paprika in a small nonreactive bowl and whisk to mix. If not serving at once, cover and refrigerate. The mayonnaise will keep for several days, covered, in the refrigerator.

Bacon and Smoked Cheese Burgers

Think of this as a “barbecue” burger, redolent with the wood smoke scent of bacon and smoked cheese. It’s the [Great American Hamburger](#) to the max:

Serves 6

FOR THE BURGERS

2¼ pounds ground round, chuck, or sirloin

12 thin slices of bacon

6 slices (½ inch thick) Vidalia or other sweet onion (optional)

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, or 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

6 hamburger buns

6 inches (¾ inch thick) smoked mozzarella or other smoked cheese

FOR THE TOPPINGS—ANY OR ALL

Iceberg lettuce leaves

Sliced ripe tomatoes

Sliced dill pickles or sweet pickles

Ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise

1. Divide the meat into six equal portions. Lightly wet your hands with cold water, then form each portion of meat into a round patty, 4 inches across and of an even thickness (see Note).
2. Season the meat patties with salt and pepper and wrap each patty with 2 slices of bacon.
3. Set up the grill for direct cooking and preheat to high.
4. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate.
5. If using onion slices, brush them on both sides with melted butter and season with salt and pepper. Place the onions on the hot grate and grill until nicely browned, about 4 minutes per side, then transfer to a plate.
6. Arrange the burgers on the hot grate and grill until the bottoms are nicely browned, 4 to 5 minutes. Using a spatula, turn the burgers and grill until they are browned and cooked to taste, 4 to 5 minutes longer for medium. Meanwhile,

brush the cut sides of the buns with melted butter and toast them, cut sides down, on the grill during the last 2 minutes the burgers cook.

7. Set out the toppings. Put the burgers, cheese, and onion slices on buns and serve. The heat of the burgers will melt the cheese.

LAMB, PORK, VEAL, AND TURKEY BURGERS

Lamb Burgers

I discovered lamb burgers at a popular Toronto restaurant called Jerusalem. Founded by a Greek-born, Jerusalem-raised chef named Romeo Vazdekis, the restaurant pays homage to Romeo's Mediterranean roots with a combination of meats and seasonings served in pita bread—what Middle Easterners would recognize as *kofita*. But Romeo prepares his *kofita* patty style, like hamburgers. The results hum with electrifying flavors.

Makes 4 burgers

FOR THE BURGERS

12 ounces ground lamb
12 ounces ground beef
1 small onion, finely chopped
3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
3 tablespoons chopped fresh mint, or 2 teaspoons dried mint
1 teaspoon coarse salt (kosher or sea)
1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

FOR SERVING

4 pita breads
Lettuce leaves
Cucumber slices
Tomato slices
Paper-thin red onion slices (optional)
Yogurt Garlic Mint Sauce (optional; recipe follows)

1. Make the burgers: Place the lamb, beef, chopped onion, parsley, mint, salt, and pepper in a mixing bowl and stir with a wooden spoon to mix. Wet your hands with cold water and divide the meat mixture into 4 equal portions. Working quickly and with a light touch, pat each portion into a large round patty. Place the patties on a plate lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate, covered, while you set up the grill.
2. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high.
3. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Place the burgers on the hot grate and grill until cooked to taste, 4 to 6 minutes per side for medium. (Middle Eastern–style lamb burgers are usually served medium to well-done.) Place the pita breads on the grill to warm them, 30 to 60 seconds per side. Watch them carefully so they don't burn.
4. Cut a slit in each pita bread and insert a burger. Insert a lettuce leaf and a few cucumber and tomato slices, and onion slices, if using. Pour a couple spoonfuls of sauce on top and serve at once.

Yogurt Garlic Mint Sauce

Modeled on a Middle Eastern yogurt dip, this tangy sauce is eminently refreshing on a hot summer day. The main challenge will be finding unsweetened, unflavored whole milk yogurt—if your supermarket doesn't have it, look for it at a natural foods store or Middle Eastern or Greek grocery store.

Makes about 1 cup

1 clove garlic, minced
½ teaspoon coarse salt (kosher or sea), or more to taste
1 cup plain whole milk yogurt
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint, or 1 teaspoon dried mint
Freshly ground black pepper

Place the garlic and salt in the bottom of a mixing bowl and mash to a paste with the back of a spoon. Stir in the yogurt, olive oil, and mint. Season with pepper to taste, then taste for seasoning, adding more salt as necessary; the sauce should be highly seasoned.

Barbecue Pork Burgers with Honey Mustard Sauce

These smoky burgers were inspired by traditional Carolina pulled pork (shredded smoked pork shoulder). They even contain a version of “brownies”—dark crisp flecks of smoke-roasted pork skin—in this case, browned bits of bacon that are mixed into the ground pork. The burgers are served with a tangy honey mustard sauce, just like you’d find in South Carolina. Think of these pork burgers as Southern barbecue without the wait.

Serves 4

2 slices bacon
1½ pounds lean ground pork
1 teaspoon liquid smoke
1 teaspoon coarse salt (kosher or sea)
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon sweet paprika
1 teaspoon brown sugar
½ teaspoon onion powder
½ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon celery seed
8 slices white sandwich bread, toasted
1 cup finely chopped or shredded green cabbage
Honey Mustard Barbecue Sauce (recipe follows)

1. Place the bacon in a medium-size skillet and cook over medium-high heat until deeply browned and crisp on both sides, 8 minutes total. Transfer the bacon to a plate lined with paper towels to drain and let cool to room temperature.
2. Crumble or finely chop the bacon, then place it in a mixing bowl. Add the pork, liquid smoke, salt, pepper, paprika, brown sugar, onion and garlic powders, and celery seed, then stir with a wooden spoon to mix.
3. Wet your hands with cold water and divide the pork mixture into 4 equal portions. Working quickly and with a light touch, pat each portion into a thick patty. Place the patties on a plate lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate, covered, until ready to grill.

4. Grill the burgers until they are cooked through.
5. Place a burger on a slice of toast. Top it with ¼ cup of the shredded cabbage and a generous dollop (about 2 tablespoons) of Honey Mustard Barbecue Sauce. Top with another piece of toast. Repeat with the remaining burgers and toppings, then serve at once.

Honey Mustard Barbecue Sauce

In South Carolina barbecue sauce is a sweet but sharp, tangy combination of honey or brown sugar, mustard, and vinegar. If you're used to a sweet, red Kansas City-style sauce, this one will come as a revelation.

Makes about 1 cup

1 tablespoon unsalted butter
2 slices bacon, cut crosswise into ¼-inch slivers
½ medium-size onion, finely chopped (about ½ cup)
⅓ cup honey
⅓ cup Dijon mustard
4 tablespoons cider vinegar, or more to taste
Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

1. Melt the butter in a nonreactive saucepan over medium heat. Add the bacon and onion and cook until golden brown, 4 to 5 minutes. Pour off any excess fat (for a richer sauce, leave it in).
2. Add the honey, mustard, and cider vinegar to the saucepan and stir to mix. Reduce the heat to medium-low, bring to a simmer, and cook the sauce until thick and flavorful, 8 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon. Taste for seasoning, adding more vinegar, if necessary, and salt and pepper to taste (see Note).

NOTE: This recipe makes more barbecue sauce than you'll need for 4 burgers. The extra sauce will keep, covered, in the refrigerator for several days and is delicious spooned over hot or cold grilled chicken or sliced pork. Reheat the sauce over low heat before serving.

Veal Burgers with Onion and Dill

What do you get when you cross a Swedish meatball with an American hamburger? An uptown burger made with ground veal and perfumed with fresh dill, coriander, and onion. The recipe was inspired by Minnesota's Swedish American community, although it's likely that it exists only in my imagination. What's very real is the exquisite contrast of flavors you get when you expose a delicate meat like veal to fire and wood smoke. In keeping with the Scandinavian theme, I serve the burgers with a mustard and dill sauce.

Makes 4 burgers

2 slices white bread

½ cup milk or water

1½ pounds ground veal

1 small onion, finely chopped (about ½ cup)

1 clove garlic, minced

3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh dill

1 large egg, lightly beaten with a fork

1 teaspoon coarse salt (kosher or sea), or more to taste

1 teaspoon ground coriander

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more to taste

4 hamburger buns (preferably topped with poppy seeds)

2 tablespoons butter, melted

Lettuce leaves

Tomato slices

Onion slices

Mustard Dill Sauce (recipe follows)

1 cup wood chips or chunks (optional; preferably oak or hickory), unsoaked

1. Cut off and discard the crusts of the slices of bread, then cut the bread into cubes. Place these in a bowl and stir in the milk. Let soak for 3 minutes, then squeeze the bread with your fingers to wring out the excess liquid. Place the soaked bread in a mixing bowl and stir in the veal, onion, garlic, dill, egg, salt, coriander, and pepper. Mix well with a wooden spoon. To taste for seasoning, grill or fry a little ball of the veal mixture; add more salt and/or pepper as necessary. You can make the burgers right away, but they'll be easier to shape if you chill the meat mixture, covered, for 2 hours.

2. Wet your hands with cold water and divide the veal mixture into 4 equal portions. Working quickly and with a light touch, pat each portion into a thick round patty. Place the patties on a plate lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate, covered, while you set up the grill. The burgers can be prepared up to this stage several hours ahead.
3. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high. If using a gas grill, place 1 cup of wood chips or chunks, if desired, in the smoker box or in a smoker pouch and run the grill on high until you see smoke. If using a charcoal grill, preheat it to high, then toss all of the wood chips or chunks, if desired, on the coals.
4. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Place the burgers on the hot grate and grill until cooked through, 4 to 6 minutes per side for medium. (If you like, rotate the burgers a quarter turn halfway through cooking on each side to create an attractive crosshatch of grill marks.)
5. Meanwhile, brush the buns with the melted butter and toast them on the grill, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Place each of the grilled burgers on a bun with some lettuce leaves, tomato and onion slices, and a dollop of Mustard Dill Sauce. Serve the remaining sauce on the side.

Mustard Dill Sauce

Most Scandinavian mustard sauces are sweet, which may taste great with smoked and grilled fish but would be jarring with a burger. Here's a mustard sauce free of the distraction of sugar.

Makes about 1 cup

⅔ cup mayonnaise (preferably Hellmann's)

⅓ cup Dijon or grainy mustard (not a sweet mustard)

2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, plus a whole sprig for garnish

½ teaspoon ground coriander

½ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, or more to taste

Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

Place the mayonnaise, mustard, dill, coriander, and lemon zest and juice in a nonreactive mixing bowl and whisk to mix. Taste for seasoning, adding more lemon juice as necessary and salt and pepper to taste. The sauce will keep for 3 days, covered and refrigerated. Let the sauce return to room temperature before using.

Oaxacan-Spiced Turkey Burgers with Chipotle Salsa

The southeastern state of Oaxaca is home to some of Mexico's most soulful cooking—moles replete with roasted vegetables, nuts, and chiles; *cecina* (grilled cured pork); *carne asada* (grilled beef); even fire-roasted corn served sizzling off the embers. These turkey burgers didn't originate in Mexico (although turkey was native to Central America and much prized by the Aztecs), but they are flavored with spices and seasonings that are characteristic of Oaxacan cooking. I think you'll find that the combination of roasted pumpkin, sesame, and cumin seeds makes the burgers irresistible.

Serves 4

3 tablespoons shelled pumpkin seeds
2 tablespoons sesame seeds
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1½ pounds lean ground turkey
3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro
1 scallion, both white and green parts, trimmed and minced
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tablespoon pure chile powder, preferably ancho chile powder
1 teaspoon coarse salt (kosher or sea), or more to taste
1 teaspoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
4 flour tortillas (each 10 inches)
Chipotle Salsa (recipe follows)
8 ounces jicama, peeled and cut into matchstick slivers
1 medium-size avocado, peeled, pitted, and diced

1. Heat a small skillet (not a nonstick skillet) over medium heat. Add the pumpkin seeds and cook until fragrant and lightly toasted, 2 to 3 minutes, shaking the pan to ensure even toasting. Transfer the pumpkin seeds to a heatproof mixing bowl. Add the sesame seeds to the skillet and toast until fragrant and lightly browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer the sesame seeds to the mixing bowl. Add the cumin seeds to the skillet and toast until fragrant and lightly browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer the cumin seeds to the mixing bowl. Let all the seeds cool to room temperature.

2. Place the turkey in the bowl with the toasted seeds. Add the cilantro, scallion, garlic, chile powder, salt, coriander, cinnamon, and pepper and stir with a wooden spoon to mix. Wet your hands with cold water and divide the mixture into 4 equal portions. Working quickly and with a light touch, pat each portion into a thick patty. Place the patties on a plate lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate, covered, until ready to grill.
3. Grill the turkey burgers until they are cooked through. Remove the burgers and cover to keep warm. Leave the grill on.
4. Place the tortillas on the hot grill, and, lowering the temperature and working in batches, if necessary, grill until toasted, about 1 minute on a contact grill; 1 minute per side on any of the other indoor grills.
5. Place a burger on one side of each tortilla. Spoon some Chipotle Salsa over each burger and top with a sprinkling of jicama and avocado. Fold the tortillas over the burgers and serve at once.

TIP: Ground turkey comes in many grades, some quite lean and others unpleasantly fatty. I find that white meat turkey with 8 to 10 percent fat makes the best burgers.

Chipotle Salsa

Not only is this grilled vegetable and chipotle salsa great with the Oaxacan turkey burgers, it's tasty with almost any Mexican-style grilled meat or seafood. The indoor grill master has several options for grilling the vegetables: grill pan, built-in grill, or fireplace grill. You can even roast them in a hot unoiled cast-iron skillet.

Makes about $\frac{3}{4}$ cups

6 tomatillos (about 8 ounces total), husked
5 plum tomatoes (about 12 ounces total)
4 cloves garlic, skewered on a wooden toothpick or small bamboo skewer
1 small onion, cut into quarters
1 to 2 canned chipotle peppers with 2 teaspoons of their adobo sauce, or more to taste
3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice, or more to taste
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sugar, or more to taste
Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

1. Grill the tomatillos, tomatoes, garlic, and onion, in batches if necessary, until darkly browned on all sides.
2. Transfer the grilled vegetables to a cutting board and let cool. Scrape any really burnt skin off the vegetables but leave most of it on; the dark spots will add color and character.
3. Cut the vegetables into 1-inch pieces and purée in a food processor, adding the chipotles with their adobo and the cilantro, lime juice, and sugar. Taste for seasoning, adding more adobo, and/or sugar and salt and pepper to taste. The salsa will keep, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

GREAT BURGERS AROUND THE WORLD

Three-Meat Patties

Pronounced che-VAP-chee-chee, *ćevapčići* are one of the many grilled ground meat patties popular in the Balkans. This version calls for an equal amount of beef, veal, and pork, but *ćevapčići* are also made with just lamb or any combination of these meats. The resulting flavor is so richly complex it tastes like a hamburger that's gone to finishing school. The addition of baking soda helps to make the mixture light. Note that the meat shouldn't be too lean.

1 to 2 hours for chilling the patties

Makes 8 patties; serves 4

FOR THE PATTIES

8 ounces ground beef chuck

8 ounces ground pork butt

8 ounces ground veal or lamb

½ medium-size onion, grated

3 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1½ teaspoons salt, or more to taste

½ teaspoon ground coriander

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more to taste

½ teaspoon baking soda

⅓ cup homemade beef stock, canned low-sodium beef broth, or water

FOR SERVING

- 1 medium-size onion, finely chopped
- 1 ripe tomato, finely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and finely chopped, or 3 tablespoons chopped pickled peppers
- 4 crusty rolls

1. Make the patties: Combine the beef, pork, veal, onion, parsley, salt, coriander, black pepper, and baking soda in a large bowl. Knead and squeeze the mixture with your hands until thoroughly blended, 3 to 4 minutes. Knead in the broth. To test the mixture for seasoning, cook a small amount in a nonstick skillet until cooked through, then taste, adding more salt and/or black pepper to the remaining mixture as necessary; it should be highly seasoned.
2. Lightly oil a large plate. Divide the meat mixture into eight equal portions. Lightly wet your hands with cold water, then roll each portion between your palms to form a sausage shape about 1 inch in diameter and 2 inches long. As they are made, place the *čevapčići* on the prepared plate. Cover them loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours.
3. Prepare the toppings: Place the onion, tomato, and bell pepper in separate serving bowls. Cover and set aside until ready to serve.
4. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high.
5. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Arrange the *čevapčići* on the hot grate and grill, turning with a spatula, until they are nicely browned and cooked through, 6 to 8 minutes in all.
6. Serve the *čevapčići* on crusty rolls (2 per roll), topped with spoonfuls of onion, tomato, and bell pepper.

Bazaar Burgers

The Grand Bazaar has served as Istanbul’s mercantile and cultural heart for half a millennium. Ibrahim Usta has been chopping and grilling lamb since 1975, and his restaurant, Seyhmuз, located in a homey storefront a few blocks from the main entrance of the bazaar, stands as a haven for hungry merchants, shoppers, and the occasional tourist in search of flavor-blasted food at moderate prices. You can’t miss Usta—he’s the guy with the giant *zirh*, a crescent-shaped chopper, which he uses to reduce just the right ratio of bright red lamb meat and fat to mincemeat—the base of his burgers and kebabs. The *zirh* appears through the lunch service, for unless the meat is chopped every fifteen minutes, Usta doesn’t consider it properly fresh. His *seyhmuз* kebabs (kebab simply means “meat” in Turkish)—spiced up with hot peppers, tomato, and garlic—are lamb burgers with an attitude. Serve them with grilled horn peppers and tomatoes and *pide* (puffy Turkish flatbread), if desired.

Makes 4 large or 8 small burgers; serves 4

1½ pounds ground or finely chopped lamb, with a fat content of 20 to 25 percent
1 red ripe tomato, seeded and finely diced
1 to 2 hot peppers, such as horn peppers or jalapeños, seeded and finely chopped (for hotter lamb burgers, leave the seeds in)
2 cloves garlic, minced
¼ cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1½ teaspoons coarse salt (kosher or sea)
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
8 long slender green peppers, such as horn peppers, or 1 to 2 poblano peppers
2 medium-size red ripe tomatoes, quartered
[Spicy Turkish Tomato Salad](#) for serving
[Onion Relish](#) (optional), for serving
Turkish Puff Bread (recipe follows), lavash, or pita bread, for serving
1 cup Turkish- or Greek-style plain yogurt (optional), for serving
Lemon wedges, for serving

1. Place the lamb, diced tomato, chopped peppers, garlic, parsley, salt, and pepper in a shallow bowl or on a metal tray and mix them with your fingers until well blended. Form the meat mixture into 4 large or 8 small patties, each about ½ inch thick. Place the patties on a plate lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate them, covered, until you are ready to grill.

2. Skewer the slender green peppers and tomato quarters crosswise on flat metal skewers.
3. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat it to high.
4. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Place the skewered peppers and tomatoes on the hot grate and grill them until brown and tender, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Place the lamb patties on the grate and grill them until nicely browned and cooked through, 3 to 5 minutes per side for medium to medium-well.
5. Transfer the grilled burgers, peppers, and tomatoes to a platter or plates and serve them with one of the tomato salads, the Onion Relish, if desired, bread, yogurt, and lemon wedges. The lamb burgers are generally eaten with knife and fork, not on the bread like a sandwich.

Turkish Puff Bread

Pide belongs to an extended family of Middle and Near East flatbreads cooked on the grill or in a wood-burning oven and served with grilled meats. No Turkish barbecue would be complete without these soft, puffy, wood oven-cooked pillows of dough, and while technically the cooking process is closer to baking than grilling, a grill top pizza stone produces excellent *pide*. The dough is easy to make, but allow yourself enough time for both the sponge—a sort of dough starter that adds extra lift and flavor—and the dough to rise. Roll out and bake the breads when other people are gathered around the grill—it’s really fun to see the *pide* puff on the grill.

Makes 8 breads

FOR THE SPONGE

- 1 envelope active dry yeast (2½ teaspoons)
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- ½ cup warm water
- ½ cup all-purpose unbleached flour

TO FINISH THE PIDE

- 3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour, or more as needed, plus flour for rolling
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- 2 teaspoons table salt
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus oil for the bowl

1¼ cups warm water

2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds or nigella seeds (see Note)

FOR SMOKE

2 cups unsoaked oak or other wood chips or chunks

1. Make the sponge: Place the yeast, sugar, and the ½ cup of warm water in a small bowl and stir to mix. Stir in the ½ cup of all-purpose flour. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let the mixture rise for 30 minutes.
2. Make the *pide*: Place the all-purpose and the whole wheat flours, salt, and oil in a food processor fitted with a metal blade or dough blade. With the processor running, add the sponge and the 1¼ cups of warm water. Run the processor in short bursts to obtain a soft and sticky dough, 3 to 5 minutes. The dough will be a little wetter than that of most flatbreads; you need the moisture for it to puff. However, if the dough is really sticky, add a little more flour.
3. Turn the dough out onto a very lightly floured work surface. Flour your hands and knead the dough for a minute or two until it is smooth (although I use a food processor for kneading, I always like to give the dough a human touch). Transfer the dough to a large, lightly oiled mixing bowl, turning it to coat all sides with the oil. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap, place it in a warm draft-free spot, and let the dough rise until doubled in bulk, 1 to 1½ hours.
4. Punch the dough down and turn it out onto a work surface. Divide the dough into 8 equal pieces. Roll each piece between the cupped palms of your hands to form a smooth ball. Arrange the balls of dough on a very lightly floured baking sheet about 3 inches apart. Cover the balls of dough with plastic wrap, then a clean dish towel. Let the dough balls rise until doubled in bulk, about 30 minutes.
5. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat it to high. Place a grill-safe pizza stone on the grate and preheat it as well.
6. Using a rolling pin, roll out each dough ball to form an oblong about 4 by 8 inches. Using your fingertips, dimple the top of each oblong in a lengthwise row, then sprinkle a generous ½ teaspoon of sesame seeds on top of each.
7. When ready to cook, if you are using a gas grill, add the wood chips or chunks

to the smoker box or place them in a smoker pouch under the grate and run the grill until you see smoke. If you are using a charcoal grill, toss the wood chips or chunks on the coals. Arrange the breads, seed side up, on the hot pizza stone, a few at a time (don't crowd the stone). Cover the grill and cook the breads without turning until puffed and browned, 5 to 8 minutes. Serve at once.

NOTE: Nigella seeds are available at East Indian markets or by mail order from www.chefshop.com.

Really Big Bosnian Burgers

Sure, there are larger burgers in the record books—monstrosities like the 8,266 pound hamburger created at the Burger Fest in Seymour, Wisconsin, on August 4, 2001. But when it comes to the largest burger served day in and day out to ordinary folks, the prize goes to *pljeskavica*, a grilled beef and veal patty from the Eastern European region once known as Yugoslavia. Every new country in this ancient land of grilling and religious tension has a version, but even hard-liners of opposing political camps will go out of their way to eat a *pljeskavica* made by a Bosnian grill master. Traditionally, the burger is eaten with a knife and fork and with bread on the side, but you can certainly serve it on a pita bread as a sandwich.

Makes 4 burgers

12 ounces ground beef, ideally chuck and with a fat content of 15 to 20 percent

12 ounces ground veal, or more ground beef

½ medium-size onion, minced

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 to 2 serrano peppers, stemmed, seeded, and minced (for a hotter *pljeskavica* leave the seeds in), or 1 tablespoon hot red pepper flakes

¼ cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1½ teaspoons coarse salt (kosher or sea)

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Grilled pita bread (optional, recipe follows), for serving

Tomato slices (optional), for serving

Lemon wedges (optional), for serving

1. Place the beef, veal, onion, garlic, serrano pepper(s), parsley, salt, and black pepper in a large mixing bowl and knead them gently with your hands until thoroughly blended. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate the beef mixture for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
2. Divide the meat mixture into 4 equal portions and place these on a metal baking sheet. Mold each portion into a large flat disk shaped like a pita bread. Each *pljeskavica* should be 6 to 8 inches across and ¼ inch thick.
3. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat it to high.
4. When ready to cook, brush and thoroughly oil the grill grate. Loosen the *pljeskavicas* from the baking sheet by sliding a slender metal spatula or carving

knife under them and then carefully transfer them to the hot grill grate. Grill the *pljeskavicas* until cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes per side for medium to medium-well, using a wide spatula to turn them. (Bosnians prefer their grilled meat medium to medium-well done.)

5. Transfer the grilled *pljeskavicas* to a platter or plates and serve them at once with pitas, tomato slices, and lemon wedges, if desired.

Pita Bread Grilled Two Ways

While reading the headlines, you might think that all Jews and Palestinians do is fight, yet they often coexist peacefully in Israel—especially in the presence of a lit barbecue grill. The popular Tel Aviv restaurant, Abu-Nassar-Hinnawi, was founded by an Arab butcher turned restaurateur, and the open-air eatery has been a popular gathering spot—for Israelis of all faiths—in the predominantly Arab neighborhood of Jaffa for more than half a century. It was there that I learned a great trick for oiling a grill grate using an onion half dipped in oil and stuck on the end of a barbecue fork. It was also there that I tasted two versions of grilled pita—one the Middle Eastern version of garlic bread; the other a sort of grilled herb flatbread.

Makes 8 pita bread halves

VERSION #1: GRILLED GARLIC PITA

2 cloves garlic, peeled and cut in half

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, in a small bowl

4 pita breads

2 tablespoons sesame seeds

1. Using a garlic press, squeeze the garlic into the olive oil. Don't have a garlic press? Smash the garlic cloves with the side of a cleaver or chef's knife on a cutting board and stir them into the oil.
2. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat it to medium-high.
3. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Gently tear each pita bread in half through the side; the idea is to have 2 flat halves. Brush each pita half on both sides with some of the garlic oil and sprinkle it with sesame seeds. Arrange the pita halves cut side up on the hot grate and grill them until toasted and brown, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Watch the pita carefully; it can burn quickly. Serve the grilled pita at once.

VERSION #2: GRILLED HERB PITA

4 pita breads

3 to 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

¼ cup *za'atar* (recipe follows)

1. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat it to medium-high.
2. When ready to grill, brush and oil the grill grate. Gently tear each pita bread in half through the side; the idea is to have 2 flat halves. Brush each pita half on both sides with some of the olive oil. Arrange the pita halves torn side down on the hot grate and grill them until toasted and brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Turn the pita halves over, sprinkle each half with about 1½ teaspoons of *za'atar*, and grill the second side the same way. Watch the pita carefully; it can burn quickly. Serve the grilled pita at once.

Middle Eastern Herb Blend (Za'atar)

Most grillers in the Middle East use ready-made *za'atar*; and in North America you can find it at Middle Eastern markets. Here's a quick recipe if you want to make your own. It makes a great seasoning for fish and poultry too.

Makes 1 cup

¼ cup dried oregano

¼ cup dried marjoram

¼ cup dried thyme

3 tablespoons lightly toasted sesame seeds (see box)

2 tablespoons coarse salt (kosher or sea)

1 tablespoon ground sumac (optional)

Combine the oregano, marjoram, thyme, sesame seeds, salt, and sumac, if using, in a mixing bowl and stir to mix. Store in a sealed jar away from heat and light. The *za'atar* will keep for several months.

How to Toast Nuts and Seeds

Toasting brings out a richer flavor in nuts and seeds. There are two easy ways to do this: Set a dry skillet over medium heat (do not use a nonstick skillet for this). Add the nuts or seeds and heat them until lightly toasted and aromatic, 3 to 5 minutes, shaking the skillet occasionally. Keep an eye on them—you don't want the nuts or seeds to burn. Transfer the toasted nuts or seeds to a heatproof plate to cool.

You can also toast nuts and seeds in a preheated 350°F oven. Spread them out on a rimmed baking sheet and bake them until lightly browned, five to ten minutes. Again, watch carefully to avoid burning.

This works equally well for almonds, walnuts, pine nuts, sesame seeds, and the like, as well as for bread crumbs.

Veal and Beef Burgers

Marry a Swedish meatball with an American hamburger and you wind up with Greek *bifteki*. The etymology of this singular dish is as convoluted as its description. The name comes from the French *bifteck*, a transliteration of the English beefsteak. There's nothing remotely steaklike about Greek *bifteki*; it's really more of a burger made with a mixture of ground veal, beef, and bread. If American burgers are characterized by their meatiness and chew, Greek *bifteki* are prized for a light consistency that could almost be described as airy. A paradoxical effect, to be sure, and the way you achieve it is by lightening the veal and beef mixture with white bread softened in water. Here's how *bifteki* is made by an Egyptian grill master named Mustaffa at the homey taverna Kallisti on the main square in the village of Pyrgos on the island of Santorini.

Makes 8 burgers; serves 4

FOR THE BURGERS

- 1 chunk (4 to 5 inches) country-style white bread, or 4 thick slices of white bread, crusts removed
- 1 pound coarsely ground veal
- ½ pound coarsely ground beef, ideally with a fat content of 15 to 20 percent
- ¼ red onion, finely chopped (about 3 tablespoons)
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1½ teaspoons coarse salt (kosher or sea)
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE ONION AND PARSLEY RELISH

- ½ medium-size red onion, or 1 large shallot, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- Lemon halves or wedges, for serving

1. Make the burgers: Place the bread in a bowl and add enough lukewarm water to cover it. Let the bread soak until very soft, about 5 minutes. Drain the bread well and, working in 2 or 3 batches, squeeze it between your fingers to wring out the water.
2. Place the soaked bread, veal, beef, onion, parsley, and the salt and pepper in a shallow bowl or on a metal tray, as they do in Greece, and mix with your fingers until smooth. (The motion is rather like kneading bread; mix with your fingers and push with the heel of your hand.) Divide the meat mixture into 8 equal

portions. Mold each portion into a patty about 3 inches across and ½ inch thick. Place the patties on a plate lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate them, covered, until you are ready to grill.

3. Make the onion and parsley relish: Combine the sliced onion and ¼ cup of parsley in a small bowl and refrigerate the relish, covered, until you are ready to serve.
4. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat it to high.
5. When ready to cook, if you are not using a grill basket, brush and oil the grill grate. If you are using a grill basket, spray it with cooking oil spray, arrange the burgers in the basket, and close it. Place the burgers on the hot grate and grill them until nicely browned and cooked through, 2 to 4 minutes per side for medium to medium-well. If you are not using a grill basket, use a spatula to turn the burgers.
6. Transfer the grilled burgers to a platter or plates and serve them with the Onion and Parsley Relish and lemon.

Moroccan “Sliders”

You know the scene: In every barbecue capital there's one street with grill restaurants lined up one after another. Four or five will have a handful of customers and one will have standing room only. Welcome to Haj Brik, located at the epicenter of the Marrakech, Morocco, grill scene: Bani Marine Street. Since 1947, this tiny storefront has been packing them in for *kofta* (ground lamb kebabs), Marrakech mixed grill, and the Moroccan equivalent of sliders. You sit down for lunch at Haj Brik and the grill man shapes and cooks your sliders to order. They come off the grill crusty on the outside; the succulence comes from the tomato-olive relish and the Onion Relish.

Makes 12 sliders; serves 4

1½ pounds ground beef or lamb, or a mixture of both, not too lean

1 small onion, finely chopped

¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1½ teaspoons coarse salt (kosher or sea)

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

½ teaspoon ground cumin

2 luscious, red ripe tomatoes

½ cup black olives, preferably Moroccan dry-cured olives

3 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1 lemon, cut into wedges

Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

Moroccan bread or pita bread

Onion Relish (recipe follows)

1. Place the beef, chopped onion, ¼ cup parsley, salt, pepper, and cumin in a mixing bowl and mix them together with your fingers. Lightly wet your hands with cold water and form the meat mixture into 12 patties that are about 2 inches across and ½ inch thick. Place the patties on a baking sheet lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate them, covered, until you are ready to grill.
2. Place the tomatoes, olives, and 3 tablespoons of parsley in a nonreactive bowl and toss to mix. Squeeze in the juice of one or two lemon wedges. Place the remaining lemon wedges in a dish and set them aside for serving. Season the tomato-olive relish with salt and pepper to taste; it should be highly seasoned.
3. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat it to high.

4. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Place the patties on the hot grate and grill them until crusty and brown and cooked through, 2 to 4 minutes per side for medium to medium-well. (Moroccans prefer their meat medium to medium-well done.)
5. Transfer the grilled patties to a platter or plate. To eat, place a patty on a piece of bread. Squeeze some lemon juice on top and spoon some tomato-olive salad and Onion Relish over the patty.

Onion Relish

Onion relishes are a constant on the world's barbecue trail—some flavored with flat-leaf parsley, others with chopped cilantro, all served with every imaginable grilled meat and seafood. The following version comes from Turkey, but similar relishes are found as far north as Moscow, as far south as India, as far west as Morocco, and as far east as Indonesia.

Makes about 1½ cups

- 1 red onion, cut in half lengthwise and thinly sliced crosswise
 - 1 teaspoon coarse salt (kosher or sea)
 - 1 bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley, coarsely chopped
 - 2 tablespoons sumac powder, or 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1. Place the onion in a mixing bowl lined with a clean cotton dish towel. Add the salt and toss to mix. Let the onion mixture stand for about 5 minutes. Working over the bowl, squeeze the onion as tightly as possible by gathering up and twisting the ends of the dish cloth to wring out the onion juice. Set the onion water aside for another use.
 2. Place the onion, parsley, and sumac in a mixing bowl and toss to mix. Serve the relish within 1 hour of mixing.

“Slipper” Burgers

His name was Mohammed Bashir and he wore a powder blue *shilwar* (pantaloons) and *kamiz* (tunic). I met him not in his hometown of Faisalabad, Pakistan, but in a taxi in Philadelphia. As is my wont with cabbies wherever I travel, I asked him about the barbecue of his homeland. He told me about a dish with the curious name of *chapli kebab*, literally slipper or sandal patties. (The word *kebab* is used here in the original sense of meat, not food on a skewer.)

To make *chapli kebab*, ground meat is shaped in a large, flat patty that looks like the sole of a slipper or sandal. *Chapli kebab* is a specialty of the town of Peshawar on the India-Pakistan border—Muslim country, so you can use either beef or lamb. Pakistani restaurants in the U.S. tend to serve *chapli kebab* pan-fried. But I like them grilled—the way I imagine they’re made in Peshawar—with naan alongside.

Serves 4

- 1 pound ground lamb or beef
- ½ medium-size onion, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 to 2 serrano or other hot peppers, seeded and minced (for hotter patties, leave the seeds in)
- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tablespoon grated peeled fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons ground or crushed coriander seeds
- 1 teaspoon salt, or more to taste
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more to taste
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin

1. Combine the lamb, onion, garlic, peppers, cilantro, ginger, coriander seeds, salt, black pepper, cayenne, and cumin in a large bowl. Knead and squeeze until thoroughly blended, 3 to 4 minutes. To test the mixture for seasoning, cook a small amount in a nonstick skillet until cooked through, then taste, adding more salt and/or black pepper to the remaining mixture as necessary; the mixture should be highly seasoned.
2. Line a large plate with plastic wrap. Divide the meat mixture into four equal portions. Lightly wet your hands with cold water, then form each portion of meat into an oval patty about 5 inches long and ¾ inch thick. As it is made,

place each patty on the prepared plate. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours.

3. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high.
4. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Arrange the patties on the hot grate and grill, turning with a spatula, until nicely browned on both sides and cooked to taste, 4 to 5 minutes per side for medium. Serve at once.

SEAFOOD AND VEGETARIAN BURGERS

Thai Tuna Burgers with Pickled Cucumbers and Chile Peanut Tartar Sauce

These offbeat tuna burgers are inspired by a Thai fried fish patty called *tod mun pla*. The meaty fish matches up great with a Thai cucumber salad, which stands in for the pickles that go with a conventional hamburger, while the fire-breathing condiment—Chile Peanut Tartar Sauce—makes the standard ketchup quake in the corner.

Serves 4

FOR THE CUCUMBER SALAD

2 Kirby (pickling) cucumbers, thinly sliced
¼ medium-size red onion, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon sugar
1 scant teaspoon coarse salt (kosher or sea)
3 tablespoons rice vinegar or distilled white vinegar
Freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE BURGERS

1½ pounds super-fresh red tuna
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
2 teaspoons grated peeled fresh ginger
1 teaspoon sugar
4 fresh basil leaves, thinly slivered
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
1 Thai chile or serrano pepper, seeded and minced (for hotter burgers, leave the seeds in)
2 tablespoons fish sauce or soy sauce, or more to taste

FOR SERVING

4 hamburger buns

2 tablespoons Asian (dark) sesame oil

Chile Peanut Tartar Sauce (recipe follows)

1. Make the cucumber salad: Place the cucumbers, onion, sugar, salt, and vinegar in a nonreactive bowl and toss to mix. Season the salad with pepper to taste. Let the salad stand for 1 hour at room temperature, tossing it again once or twice.
2. Make the burgers: Trim any skin or dark or bloody spots off the tuna. Rinse the tuna under cold running water, then blot it dry with paper towels. Finely chop the tuna by hand (you'll get the best consistency this way) or in a food processor. If using a food processor, cut the tuna into ½-inch chunks, don't fill the processor bowl more than a quarter full, and run the machine in short bursts.
3. Place the garlic, ginger, and sugar in a mixing bowl and mash to a paste with the back of a spoon. Add the chopped tuna, and the basil, cilantro, Thai chile, and fish sauce and stir with a wooden spoon just to mix. Taste for seasoning, adding more fish sauce as necessary (it's OK to taste high-quality tuna raw). Divide the tuna mixture into 4 even portions and shape into patties. Place the patties on a plate lined with plastic wrap and refrigerate, covered, until ready to grill.
4. Grill the tuna burgers until they are cooked to medium-rare. When done, the burgers will be cooked at the edges but still pink in the center when tested with a knife (unlike hamburgers, it's safe to serve tuna burgers medium-rare). Remove the burgers and cover to keep warm. Leave the grill on.
5. To serve: Brush the cut sides of the buns with the sesame oil. Place the buns on the hot grill, cut side down, and, lowering the temperature if necessary, grill until toasted, 1 to 2 minutes. You may need to work in batches.
6. Spoon some Chile Peanut Tartar Sauce onto the bottom half of each bun. Place a tuna burger on top. Using a slotted spoon, spoon some cucumber salad onto each burger, then top with the other half of the bun and serve at once.

TIPS: Use sushi-quality tuna, so you can serve the burgers medium-rare.

Fish sauce is a malodorous but tasty condiment made from fermented anchovies. It is available at Asian markets, gourmet shops, and a growing number of supermarkets. The best brands come in glass bottles. If fish sauce is unavailable or

off-putting, you can substitute soy sauce.

Chile Peanut Tartar Sauce

East meets West in this explosively flavorful tartar sauce, which goes great with any sort of grilled seafood. A good tool for grating ginger is a Microplane—a grater that looks like a file with razor-sharp slits. It's also useful for grating lemon zest, the oil-rich yellow rind of the lemon.

Makes about 1 cup

1 cup mayonnaise (preferably Hellmann's)
1 to 2 Thai chiles or serrano peppers, seeded and minced (for a hotter sauce, leave the seeds in)
2 tablespoons finely chopped dry-roasted peanuts
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro
2 teaspoons finely grated peeled fresh ginger
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice, or more to taste
1 tablespoon fish sauce or soy sauce, or more to taste
Freshly ground black pepper

Place the mayonnaise, chile(s), peanuts, cilantro, ginger, lemon zest, lemon juice, and fish sauce in a nonreactive mixing bowl and whisk to mix. Taste for seasoning, adding more lemon juice and/or fish sauce as necessary and pepper to taste. Any leftover sauce will keep, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

“Sushi” Burgers

Sushi has become such a part of the American diet, it’s hard to imagine a time when most Americans would have been horrified by the notion of eating seaweed and raw fish. Today the *tekka maki* (literally gambler’s roll), raw tuna wrapped in vinegared rice and nori and dipped in a tongue-blasting tincture of soy sauce and wasabi, is hardly more exotic than a hamburger. The comparison is apt—like the sandwich, *tekka maki* was supposedly created for an inveterate gambler, so he could eat it with his fingers while playing cards. Sushi morphed into tuna burgers in California in the 1980s. The burgers here feature such traditional sushi seasonings as soy sauce, sesame seeds, wasabi, scallion, *shiso*, and pickled ginger. Think of them as sushi for people who like their fish cooked.

Makes 4 burgers

1 tablespoon wasabi powder
1½ pounds superfresh ahi tuna
4 teaspoons toasted sesame seeds
4 teaspoons finely chopped gari or peeled fresh ginger
2 shiso leaves, or 4 large fresh basil leaves, or 8 mint leaves, thinly slivered
2 scallions, both white and green parts, trimmed and finely chopped
1½ to 2 tablespoons soy sauce, or more to taste
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more to taste
About 1 tablespoon Asian (dark) sesame oil
4 hamburger buns
Wasabi Cream Sauce (optional; recipe follows)

1. Place the wasabi in the bottom of a mixing bowl. Add 1 tablespoon water and stir to make a paste. Let stand for 5 minutes.
2. Finely chop the tuna by hand (you’ll get the best consistency this way) or in a food processor. If using a food processor, cut the tuna into ½-inch chunks, don’t fill the processor bowl more than a quarter full, and process in short pulses. Add the chopped tuna to the wasabi paste and stir in the sesame seeds, *gari*, *shiso*, scallions, soy sauce, and pepper. Taste for seasoning, adding more soy sauce and/or pepper as necessary (it’s OK to taste tuna raw).
3. Oil your hands with a little sesame oil. Divide the tuna mixture into 4 equal portions and shape these into hamburger-like patties.

4. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high.
5. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Place the tuna burgers on the hot grate and grill until cooked to taste, about 3 minutes per side for medium-rare, or until the burgers are cooked at the edges but still pink in the center when tested with the tip of a knife (unlike hamburgers, it's safe to serve tuna burgers medium-rare). Lightly brush the buns with sesame oil and toast them on the grill, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Serve the grilled tuna burgers on the buns. Wasabi Cream Sauce makes a good accompaniment.

Wasabi Cream Sauce

Wasabi is frequently described as Japanese horseradish. Actually, the root belongs to a different plant family, but there's certainly something horseradishy about its bite. Wasabi is most commonly sold in powdered form—simply mix the powder with enough water to form a thick spicy paste. Not only is the wasabi cream delicious with tuna, it's great served with grilled beef or chicken.

Makes about 1 cup

1 to 2 tablespoons wasabi powder

½ cup mayonnaise (preferably Hellmann's)

½ cup sour cream

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1. Place the wasabi in a nonreactive mixing bowl. Add 1 tablespoon of cold water and stir to form a thick paste. Let sit for 5 minutes.
2. Add the mayonnaise, sour cream, lemon juice, and soy sauce and whisk to mix. The mixture should be thick but pourable. If necessary, thin with a little more water. Although the wasabi cream tastes best served within a few hours of making, it can be refrigerated, covered, for several days.

Lomi Lomi Tuna Burgers

Flavored with onions, tomatoes, and ginger, *lomi lomi* is a Polynesian raw fish dish. (Don't forget, Hawaii marks the westernmost boundary of Polynesia.) *Lomi lomi*, too, is great grilled—my contribution to the tradition.

Makes 4 burgers

1½ pounds superfresh ahi tuna
½ cup finely diced sweet onion
1 medium-size ripe red tomato, peeled, seeded, and cut into ¼-inch dice (see Note)
1 scallion, both white and green parts, trimmed and finely chopped
1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger
1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds
3 tablespoons Asian (dark) sesame oil, plus more for your hands and for brushing the buns
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
4 hamburger buns

1. Finely chop the tuna by hand or in a food processor. If using a food processor, cut the tuna into ½-inch chunks, don't fill the processor more than a quarter full, and process in short pulses. Place the chopped tuna in a mixing bowl and stir in the onion, tomato, scallion, ginger, sesame seeds, sesame oil, and pepper.
2. Oil your hands with a little sesame oil. Divide the tuna mixture into 4 equal portions and shape these into hamburger-like patties.
3. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high.
4. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Place the tuna burgers on the hot grate and grill until cooked to taste, about 3 minutes per side for medium-rare, or until the burgers are cooked at the edges but still pink in the center when tested with the tip of a knife (unlike hamburgers, it's safe to serve tuna burgers medium-rare). Lightly brush the buns with sesame oil, if desired, and toast them on the grill, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Serve the grilled tuna burgers on the buns.

NOTE: To peel a tomato, using a paring knife, cut a shallow X on the end opposite the stem. Plunge the tomato into 1 quart of boiling water until the skin loosens, 30 to 60 seconds. Rinse the tomato under cold water, then pull off the skin. To seed the tomato, cut it in half crosswise. Holding a tomato half cut side down, gently squeeze it to wring out the seeds.

Florida Snapper Burgers

Here's a "meatless" burger from one of the pioneers of the new Floridian style of cooking, Allen Susser of Chef Allen's in North Miami Beach. Susser uses red snapper; in areas of the country where snapper isn't available, you could use monkfish or halibut (you need a fish that contains a lot of gelatin). The texture of these burgers is rather like that of fish mousse, and the fish sauce and fresh dill make them exceptionally flavorful. In keeping with the tropical theme, Chef Allen's serves this burger with a mango ketchup that Susser bottles and distributes nationally. If you can't find it, Mark Militello's Mango Barbecue Sauce makes a good substitute. Susser suggests serving the burgers on crusty French bread topped with spinach.

Serves 4

- 1¼ pounds skinless fresh red snapper fillets, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 large egg whites, lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon Thai fish sauce
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt (kosher or sea), or more to taste
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more to taste
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper, or more to taste
- 2 tablespoons chopped scallions, both white and green parts
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 3 to 4 tablespoons fresh bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 loaf French bread (about 16 inches long), cut in half lengthwise, then each half cut crosswise into 4 equal pieces
- 12 fresh spinach leaves, rinsed and patted dry
- ½ cup Mark Militello's Mango Barbecue Sauce (optional; recipe follows)

1. Run your fingers over the snapper fillets, feeling for bones, then use needle-nose pliers or tweezers to remove any you may find. Transfer the snapper to a food processor and process it, in short bursts, just until finely chopped. Do not overprocess; you don't want a purée (see Note). Still processing in short bursts, add the egg whites, fish sauce, salt, black pepper, and cayenne. Add the scallions, dill, and enough bread crumbs to bind the mixture together (start with 3 tablespoons). To test the mixture for seasoning, cook a small amount of it in a nonstick skillet until cooked through, then taste, adding more salt and/or black pepper to the remaining fish mixture as necessary; it should be highly seasoned.

2. Divide the fish mixture into 4 equal portions. Lightly wet your hands with cold water and form each portion into a patty 3½ inches across and about ½ inch thick. Place the patties on a generously oiled plate, cover them, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour, or up to 6 hours.
3. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high.
4. When ready to cook, brush the tops of the fish patties generously with olive oil. Brush and oil the grill grate, then arrange the patties, oiled side down, on the hot grate. Grill, turning with tongs, until nicely browned on both sides and cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes per side, adding the French bread pieces, cut sides down, to the grill to toast when you turn the patties. Do not overcook the burgers.
5. Serve the burgers on the toasted French bread, topped with spinach leaves and barbecue sauce, if desired.

NOTE: As an alternative, you can chop the fish by hand with a cleaver or sharp, heavy knife; transfer it to a bowl and work in the remaining ingredients by hand.

Mark Militello's Mango Barbecue Sauce

Here's a mango-based barbecue sauce that fairly explodes with tropical flavor. Grilled bell peppers and tomatoes pump up the smoke, while Scotch bonnet chiles stoke the fire. (Tender of tongue take comfort: The sauce is piquant but not incendiary.) This sauce was inspired by Florida superchef Mark Militello, who serves it with grilled swordfish.

Makes about 3 cups

- 1 medium-size green bell pepper
- 1 medium-size red bell pepper
- 2 large ripe tomatoes
- 1 large or 2 small ripe mangoes, peeled, seeded, and diced (about 2 cups)
- ⅔ cup finely chopped red onion
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 Scotch bonnet chile, seeded and cut in half (for a hotter sauce, leave the seeds in)
- ⅓ cup cider vinegar
- ½ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons molasses
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons Tamarind Water (recipe follows); frozen tamarind puree, thawed; or fresh

lime juice
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 cinnamon stick (3 inches)
1½ teaspoons fresh thyme, or ¾ teaspoon dried thyme
1½ teaspoons fresh marjoram, or ¾ teaspoon dried marjoram
1 teaspoon ground cumin
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 cup wood chips, soaked for 1 hour in cold water to cover and drained

1. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high. If using a gas grill, place all of the wood chips in the smoker box.
2. When ready to grill, if using a charcoal grill, toss all of the wood chips on the coals. Brush and oil the grill grate. Place the red and green bell peppers and the tomatoes on the hot grate. Grill the bell peppers and tomatoes, turning with tongs, until charred on all sides, 12 to 20 minutes in all. Transfer the bell peppers and tomatoes to a cutting board to cool.
3. Scrape most of the charred skin off the bell peppers and tomatoes, then cut them in half and core, seed, and coarsely chop them. Transfer the bell peppers and tomatoes to a large nonreactive saucepan and add the mango, onion, garlic, Scotch bonnet, cider vinegar, brown sugar, molasses, mustard, Tamarind Water, soy sauce, cinnamon stick, thyme, marjoram, cumin, ½ cup of water, and a little salt and black pepper. Let the sauce come to a simmer over low heat and cook gently, uncovered, until richly flavored, about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add water as needed to keep the sauce soupy.
4. Discard the cinnamon stick, transfer the sauce to a food processor or blender, and process to a purée. For extra smoothness, press the sauce through a fine-meshed strainer. Season the sauce with salt and black pepper to taste.
5. Transfer the sauce to a serving bowl and serve warm or at room temperature. The sauce will keep, tightly covered in the refrigerator, for several weeks.

Tamarind Water

Tamarind is the fruit of a tall tropical tree, a fava bean-shaped pod filled with a fruity, orange-brown, sweet-sour pulp. The fruit takes its name from the Arabic words *tamr hindi*, literally Indian date. Actually, tamarind tastes more like a

prune than a date—prune mixed with lime juice and a drop of liquid smoke. This distinctive sweet-sour flavor has endeared tamarind to cooks all along the world's barbecue trail, from Asia to the Caribbean. You've probably tasted it, for tamarind is a key flavoring in Worcestershire sauce and A.1. steak sauce.

You can buy fresh tamarind pods in Caribbean and Asian markets. Look for fleshy, heavy pods with cracked skins that reveal the sticky brown pulp inside; tamarind with an unbroken skin is underripe. Peeling fresh tamarind is time-consuming, so most ethnic markets and many supermarkets sell peeled tamarind pulp, which is quicker and easier to use.

Stringy and full of seeds, tamarind is rarely used in its natural state. The first step is to transform the sticky flesh into tamarind water, also known as tamarind puree. This is done by puréeing the pulp from peeled tamarind pods with boiling water.

If you live in an area with a large Hispanic community, you may be able to find frozen tamarind purée, which eliminates the need to make this recipe.

Makes about 1½ cups

8 ounces tamarind pods (8 to 10 pods), or ½ cup peeled tamarind pulp (see Note)

1¾ cups boiling water

1. If using tamarind pods, first peel the skin off with a paring knife to expose the pulp. Break the pulp into 1-inch pieces and place it in a food processor or blender with 1 cup of the boiling water. Let the tamarind soften for 5 minutes.
2. Run the blender or food processor in short bursts at low speed for 15 to 30 seconds to obtain a thick brown liquid. Don't overblend, or you'll break up the seeds. Pour the resulting liquid through a strainer, pressing hard with a wooden spoon to extract the juices, scraping the underneath side of the strainer with a spatula.
3. Return the tamarind pulp in the strainer to the food processor or blender and add the remaining ¾ cup of hot water. Blend again and pour the mixture through the strainer, pressing hard to extract the juices. The Tamarind Water can be stored in a tightly covered container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days or frozen for several months (I like to freeze it in plastic ice-cube trays, so I have convenient premeasured portions).

NOTE: Indian markets sell plastic jars of smooth, dark, syrupy tamarind extract. This product has an interesting flavor, but you can't use it to make tamarind water.

Mushroom-Rice Burgers with Cheddar Cheese

When I was growing up, no one knew from vegetarian burgers. Today, they've become big business, as more and more health-conscious Americans adopt at least partial vegetarian diets. The following recipe combines mushrooms, oats, and brown rice in a patty that looks somewhat like a hamburger and has a rich, earthy flavor that could almost be described as meaty. It's also a great way to use up leftover brown rice. Note that vegetarian burgers are more fragile than beef or lamb burgers. Cook them on a well-oiled vegetable grate and turn them as gently as possible with a spatula.

Serves 6

FOR THE BURGERS

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium-size onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
8 ounces white mushrooms, wiped clean with dampened paper towels and finely chopped
1 cup cooked brown rice
½ cup quick oats
4 ounces coarsely grated sharp Cheddar cheese (about ¾ cup)
1 egg, lightly beaten
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 to 3 tablespoons fine dry bread crumbs, as needed

FOR SERVING

½ head iceberg lettuce, thinly sliced
1 large ripe tomato, thinly sliced
1 large onion (optional), thinly sliced
Pickle slices
4 whole-wheat hamburger buns
Ketchup and/or mayonnaise and/or mustard

1. Prepare the burger mixture: Heat the olive oil in a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook until soft but not brown, about 4 minutes. Increase the heat to medium-high, add the mushrooms, and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender and most of the mushroom liquid has evaporated, about 4 minutes.

2. Stir in the brown rice and cook for 1 minute. Transfer the mushroom mixture to a large bowl. Stir in the oats, Cheddar cheese, and egg. Season with salt and pepper to taste. If the burger mixture seems too moist, add the bread crumbs. Cover the burger mixture and refrigerate it until firm, 3 to 4 hours.
3. Line a baking sheet or large plate with plastic wrap. Divide the burger mixture into equal portions. Lightly wet your hands with cold water, then form each portion of the burger mixture into a patty. Place the patties on the prepared baking sheet, cover them loosely with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 1 hour. Arrange the lettuce, tomato slices, onion slices (if using), and pickles on a platter and set aside.
4. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high.
5. When ready to cook, place a vegetable grate on the hot grill and preheat it for 5 minutes. Oil the vegetable grate and arrange the patties on it. Grill the patties, turning them carefully with a spatula, until nicely browned on both sides, 4 to 6 minutes per side. As the patties cook, toast the hamburger buns on the grate as well.
6. Serve the patties as you would any burger, piling the buns high with tomato, onion (if desired), lettuce, pickles, and smearing on ketchup, mayonnaise, or mustard—or all three.

CONDIMENTS AND SIDES

Sweet and Spicy Mustard

This sweet-spicy mustard is the forerunner of an American deli classic. The brown sugar and corn syrup soften the bite of the mustard and vinegar, while the cinnamon, allspice, and cloves add a spicy sweetness. The mustard seeds are only partially ground, giving the mustard its signature speckled appearance and pleasing semisoft crunch.

The actual preparation time of this mustard is brief, but because of the various infusions and soakings, you'll need a couple of hours from start to finish.

Makes 2 cups

- 2 tablespoons yellow mustard seeds
- 2 tablespoons brown mustard seeds
- 5 tablespoons mustard powder
- 1 cup cider vinegar
- ¼ cup hot water
- 3 tablespoons dark corn syrup
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons coarse salt (kosher or sea)
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves

1. Combine the yellow and brown mustard seeds, mustard powder, ½ cup of the vinegar, and the water in a small bowl and stir to mix. Let stand for 1 hour at room temperature.

2. Combine the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vinegar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water, the corn syrup, onion, garlic, brown sugar, salt, cinnamon, allspice, and cloves in a saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat and boil, uncovered, for 1 minute. Remove the pan from the heat, cover, and let stand for 1 hour.
3. Combine the soaked mustard mixture and the spice mixture in a food processor and purée to a coarse paste. Transfer the purée to the top of a nonreactive double boiler or to a nonreactive saucepan sitting in a sauté pan of simmering water and cook, stirring often, until thick and creamy, 15 to 20 minutes. Don't worry if the mixture isn't quite as thick as commercial mustard; it will thicken on cooling. Transfer the mustard to a large jar, cover, cool to room temperature, and refrigerate. The mustard will keep for several months.

Five Seasons Ketchup

Ketchup may not seem like the sort of condiment you'd expect to find at a macrobiotic restaurant. But when I lived in Boston, I'd make special trips to the Five Seasons just to enjoy the made-from-scratch french fries served with a natural ketchup concocted by the brother chefs, Jon and Rob Pell. If you find commercial ketchup overly sugary, you'll love the subtle, gentle sweetness of this one—sweetened with barley malt syrup (or rice syrup). Both sweeteners are available at natural foods stores.

Makes 3 cups

1 can (28 ounces) tomato purée (one good brand is the organic Muir Glen)

¾ cup barley malt syrup or rice syrup, or to taste

½ cup tarragon vinegar, or more to taste

2 tablespoons pure chili powder (not a blend)

1 tablespoon Tabasco sauce

1 tablespoon prepared mustard

1 teaspoon coarse salt (kosher or sea), or more to taste

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon onion powder

1 teaspoon ground coriander

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

½ teaspoon celery seeds

¼ teaspoon ground allspice

¼ teaspoon ground cloves

¼ teaspoon ground mace or allspice

½ cup cold water, or as needed

Place all the ingredients in a large, heavy nonreactive saucepan over medium heat and bring to a simmer. Reduce the heat to medium-low and continue simmering until the ketchup is thick and richly flavored, whisking often to keep it from scorching, 15 minutes. The ketchup should be thick but pourable; if too thick, add a little more water. Correct the seasoning, adding more of any ingredient to taste. The ketchup should be highly seasoned. Transfer the ketchup to jars or squirt bottles, cover, cool to room temperature. Refrigerate until serving. The ketchup will keep for several weeks.

NOTE: For a sharper tomato flavor, replace up to half the tomato purée with tomato paste.

Basil Aioli

Aioli is a garlic mayonnaise from the south of France. This version uses commercial mayonnaise as a base to avoid the small but worrisome health risks associated with eating raw egg yolks.

Makes about 1 cup

1 cup mayonnaise
3 cloves garlic, put through a garlic press
24 fresh basil leaves, thinly slivered
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Combine the mayonnaise, garlic, basil, and lemon juice in a small bowl and whisk to mix. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Pickled Onions

In Nicaragua, grilled beef is always served with pickled onions. This is one of the quickest and easiest pickle recipes there is—perfect for any grilled meat.

Serves 6

1 cup distilled white vinegar

1½ teaspoons salt

½ teaspoon sugar

1 large white onion, cut into thin wedges

1 to 2 fresh jalapeño peppers, thinly sliced

1. Place the vinegar, salt, and sugar in a nonreactive bowl and whisk until the salt and sugar dissolve. Stir in the onion and jalapeños. Press a piece of plastic wrap directly on top of the mixture to keep the onions submerged.
2. Let the onions and jalapeños pickle at room temperature for 6 to 8 hours, then transfer them to a clean 1-pint jar. Cover the jar, placing a piece of plastic wrap between the mouth of the jar and the lid (to prevent the vinegar from corroding the metal lid). The *cebollita* can be refrigerated, tightly covered, for several weeks.

Memphis Mustard Slaw

Memphis coleslaw is characterized by a tangy, sharp, sweet mustard dressing. Here's how it's been made at Leonard's for more than eighty years. Well, almost: Leonard's uses canned red peppers, but I prefer the sweet crunch of fresh, which I call for here.

Makes 5 to 6 cups

FOR THE SLAW

1 small or ½ large head green cabbage (about 1½ pounds)
½ red bell pepper

FOR THE DRESSING

¼ cup yellow mustard
¼ cup mayonnaise
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup distilled white vinegar
½ teaspoon celery seed
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more to taste
Salt

1. Remove the core from the cabbage and discard it. Cut the cabbage into 8 chunks. Finely chop the cabbage in a food processor using the metal blade and pulsing the motor (this is a chopped, not sliced or slivered, slaw). Work in several batches so as not to overcrowd the processor bowl.
2. Cut the bell pepper into the finest possible dice.
3. Make the dressing: Place the mustard, mayonnaise, and sugar in a nonreactive mixing bowl and whisk until smooth. Whisk in the vinegar, celery seed, and black pepper. Add the chopped cabbage and diced bell pepper and stir to mix. Taste for seasoning, adding salt and more pepper as necessary. The slaw can be made up to 1 day ahead.

Slaw the Joe's Stone Crab Way

My all-time favorite coleslaw comes not from a barbecue joint but from Miami's legendary crab house, Joe's Stone Crab. It's an easy vinegar-based slaw that would be right at home in North Carolina, and it goes great with any sort of fatty barbecue, from brisket and ribs to a whole hog, and of course, alongside a burger. Joe's family (now in its fifth generation at the restaurant) has served this tart, sweet, tooth-squeakingly crisp slaw—with its signature garnish of sliced tomato, mayonnaise, and relish—to adoring multitudes since 1913.

Serves 4

FOR THE DRESSING

⅓ cup cider vinegar
3 tablespoons sugar, or more to taste
1 teaspoon salt, or more to taste
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE SLAW

½ medium-size head green cabbage (about 16 ounces)
2 large ripe tomatoes, cut crosswise into ¼-inch slices
4 tablespoons mayonnaise (preferably Hellmann's)
2 tablespoons sweet pickle relish

1. Make the dressing: Combine the vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper in a large nonreactive mixing bowl and whisk until the sugar and salt dissolve. Taste for seasoning, adding sugar or salt as necessary; the dressing should be highly seasoned.
2. Make the slaw: Remove the core from the cabbage and discard it. Cut the cabbage into 4 chunks. Finely shred the cabbage in a food processor using the shredding disc or using a mandoline. Work in batches so as not to overcrowd the processor bowl. You'll have about 5 cups of cabbage.
3. Add the shredded cabbage to the bowl with the dressing, stir to mix, then let stand for 10 minutes. Mound the slaw on a platter or plates. Lean the tomato slices against the coleslaw. Garnish with dollops of mayonnaise, placing a spoonful of relish in the center of each.

Smoked Potato Salad

A barbecue feast just isn't complete without potato salad, and this one plays every smoke card in the deck. The spuds and garlic are both smoke-roasted on the grill. You can certainly do all this the day you plan to serve the salad, but you may find it easier to smoke these ingredients a day or two ahead.

Serves 4 to 6

1½ pounds small new potatoes, rinsed and scrubbed with a stiff brush

2 to 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

6 cloves garlic, peeled

½ cup mayonnaise (preferably Hellmann's)

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar, or more to taste

1 scallion, trimmed, white part minced, green parts thinly sliced

1 tablespoon drained capers

1 tablespoon drained, finely chopped pitted green olives or pimiento-stuffed olives

1 tablespoon finely chopped cornichons (tiny tart French pickles) or dill pickles (optional)

2 hard-cooked eggs, peeled

Sweet or smoked paprika (optional), for garnish

1. Cut any large potatoes in quarters; cut medium-size potatoes in half; leave small ones whole. All the pieces should be bite size (about 1 inch across). Place the potatoes in an 8- by 12-inch aluminum foil pan. Add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and stir to coat. Season the potatoes generously with salt and pepper and stir to mix.
2. Set up the grill for indirect grilling (see [directions](#)) and preheat to medium-high (400°F).
3. When ready to cook, place the pan with the potatoes in the center of the grate away from the heat. If cooking on a charcoal grill, toss three-quarters of a cup of wood chips on each mound of coals. Cover the grill and cook the potatoes for 15 minutes.
4. Add the garlic to the pan with the potatoes and stir in 1 tablespoon of olive oil if the potatoes look dry. Re-cover the grill and continue cooking the potatoes until they are browned and tender (they should be easy to pierce with a skewer)

and the garlic is soft, 30 to 45 minutes more, stirring once or twice so they cook evenly. Remove the pan from the heat and let cool to room temperature.

5. Meanwhile, make the dressing: Place the mayonnaise, mustard, and vinegar in a large nonreactive mixing bowl and whisk until smooth. Chop the garlic and add it to the dressing. Add the scallion white, capers, olives, and cornichons, if using, and whisk to mix.
6. Coarsely chop the hard-cooked eggs, then add them and the cooled potatoes to the dressing. Stir to mix. Taste for seasoning, adding salt and/or more vinegar to taste; the salad should be highly seasoned. You can serve it right away or refrigerate it, covered, for several hours to let the flavors blend. If you refrigerate the salad, taste for seasoning just before serving, adding more salt and/or vinegar as necessary.
7. Transfer the potato salad to a bowl, platter, or plates for serving. Sprinkle the scallion greens and paprika, if using, on top and serve at once.

How to Set Up Your Grill for Indirect Grilling

To set up a **charcoal grill** for indirect grilling, light charcoal in a chimney starter. Dump or rake the lit coals into two mounds on opposite sides of the grill. Place an aluminum foil drip pan in the center under the grate. You'll grill the ribs on the grate that's over the drip pan, away from the heat, making sure to cover the grill. Any time you grill for longer than one hour, you'll need to replenish the coals. You can do this by lighting fresh charcoal in a chimney starter.

To set up a **gas grill** for indirect grilling, if your grill has two burners, set one burner to the temperature you want. Place the food on the other, unlit burner and cover the grill. On a three-burner gas grill, set the outside or front and rear burners to the desired temperature. Cook the food over the center, unlit burner, with the grill covered. To use the indirect grill method on a four- or six-burner gas grill, set the outside burners on the temperature you need. Cook the food over the center, unlit burners, covering the grill.

Red, White, and Blue Potato Salad

Blue potatoes come to us by way of Peru (although they're now grown in the United States), and their bluish flesh never fails to delight. Many supermarkets carry red, white, and blue fingerling potatoes these days, but if you can't find them, everyday full-size red- or white-skinned potatoes will taste just as good.

Serves 4 to 6

1 or 2 slices of bacon or pancetta (optional)
3 tablespoons mayonnaise, or more if needed
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard, or more to taste
1 tablespoon tarragon vinegar or distilled white vinegar, or more to taste
1 tablespoon capers with their juices
2 scallions, both white and green parts, trimmed, finely chopped (set aside 2 tablespoons scallion greens for garnish)
1½ pounds red, white, and Peruvian blue fingerling potatoes
1½ tablespoons olive oil
Plenty of coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

- 1 cup wood chips or chunks (preferably hickory or oak), soaked for 1 hour in water to cover, then drained
1. Cut the bacon, if using, into ¼-inch slivers, put it in a small nonstick frying pan, and cook over medium heat until lightly browned and the fat is rendered, 3 to 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the cooked bacon to paper towels to drain.
 2. Make the salad dressing: Place the mayonnaise, mustard, vinegar, capers, scallions, and bacon, if using, in a large nonreactive serving bowl and whisk to mix. Set the salad dressing aside.
 3. Scrub the potatoes with a brush, but leave the skins on. Place the potatoes in an aluminum foil drip pan. Drizzle with the olive oil and season very generously with salt and pepper. Toss the potatoes to mix.
 4. Set up the grill for indirect grilling (see [directions](#)) and preheat to medium-high. If using a gas grill, place all the wood chips or chunks in the smoker box or in a smoker pouch and preheat on high until you see smoke, then reduce the heat to medium-high.

5. When ready to cook, if using a charcoal grill, toss all the wood chips or chunks on the coals. Place the pan with the potatoes in the center of the hot grate, away from the heat. Cover the grill and cook the potatoes until tender, about 40 minutes. To test for doneness, insert a metal skewer into a potato; it should pierce it easily. Remove the pan with the potatoes from the grill and let cool.
6. Cut any large potatoes in quarters; cut medium-size potatoes in half. Leave small potatoes whole. Add the potatoes to the salad dressing and toss to mix. Taste for seasoning, adding salt, mustard, or vinegar as necessary; the salad should be highly seasoned. If the salad is too dry, add a little more mayonnaise. Sprinkle with the reserved scallion greens and serve at once.

Grilled French Fries

Grill jockeys are an ingenious lot and few foods escape their fiery attentions. Not even french fries, as I learned at a book signing at Books & Co. in Dayton, Ohio. Whenever possible, I try to grill at these events, and my cookout drew Mike Kohl, a local barbecue buff and creator of this singular side dish. I always ask the audience what's the strangest thing they've ever grilled and Mike duly obliged with these fries. It's one more example of Raichlen's rule: If something tastes good baked, fried, sautéed, or steamed, chances are it will be even better grilled.

Serves 4

1½ pounds jumbo baking potatoes (2 to 3 potatoes)

Coarse salt (kosher or sea)

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, or 2 teaspoons dried dill

1 teaspoon cracked black peppercorns (or to taste)

1 cup wood chips or chunks (optional; preferably hickory), soaked for 1 hour in water to cover, then drained

1. Scrub the potatoes. Cut each one lengthwise into ½-inch-thick slices. Place the potatoes in a pot with cold salted water to cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Cook the potatoes until just tender, 4 to 6 minutes. Do not overcook. Drain the potatoes in a colander, rinse under cold water, and drain again. The recipe can be prepared up to this stage several hours ahead.
2. Blot the potatoes dry with paper towels and place in a bowl. Toss the potatoes with the olive oil. Add the garlic, dill, and pepper. Taste for seasoning, adding more pepper and salt to taste (lots), then toss to coat.
3. Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high. If using a gas grill, place all of the wood chips or chunks, if desired, in the smoker box or a smoker pouch and run the grill on high until you see smoke. If using a charcoal grill, preheat it to high, then toss all of the wood chips or chunks, if desired, on the coals.
4. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate. Lay the potato slices on the hot grate so that they are perpendicular to the bars. Grill the potatoes until nicely browned on both sides, crisp on the outside and tender inside, 4 to 6 minutes per

side, turning with tongs. Transfer the fries to a serving platter, season with salt and pepper, if necessary, and serve at once.

Spicy Turkish Tomato Salad

Tomato salads like this one accompany grilled meats throughout Turkey—you could think of them as Turkish salsa. Here's one that's particularly nice with lamb burgers.

Serves 4

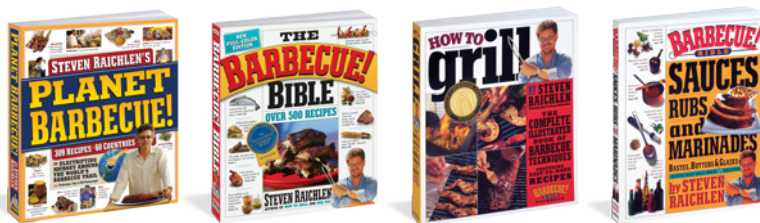
- 2 luscious, red ripe tomatoes, cut into ¼-inch dice, with their juices
- ½ small sweet onion, cut into fine dice (about ¼ cup)
- 1 to 2 hot green peppers, such as horn peppers or jalapeños, seeded and cut into fine dice (for a hotter salad, leave the seeds in)
- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tablespoon Aleppo pepper, 1 tablespoon Turkish pepper paste (see Note), or 1 to 2 teaspoons hot red pepper flakes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil or vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- Coarse salt (kosher or sea) and freshly ground black pepper

Place the tomatoes, onion, hot pepper(s), parsley, Aleppo pepper, oil, and lemon juice in a nonreactive mixing bowl. Toss to mix, then season the tomato salad with salt and black pepper to taste.

NOTE: Red pepper paste—*biber salçası*—is a spicy red condiment made with dried Turkish red peppers and salt. Aleppo peppers are rust-colored hot pepper flakes that are simultaneously milder and more flavorful than North American hot pepper flakes. They have a metallic, almost lemony tartness. Look for both at a Turkish or Near Eastern market.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Steven Raichlen is America's "master griller" (*Esquire*). His bestselling, award-winning cookbooks have more than 4 million copies in print, and his articles appear regularly in *Food & Wine*, *Bon Appetit*, and other magazines and newspapers. He has been the host of PBS's popular series *Barbecue University* and *Primal Grill*, *Bon Appetit's* Cooking Teacher of the Year (2003), and the winner of 5 James Beard Awards. He lives and grills in Coconut Grove, Florida, and on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and can be found at www.barbecuebible.com.



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