

SMASH BURGERS

I think this one is fairly recent, maybe within the last year. I am not sure exactly how this entered my realm of consciousness, but it is a good bet it was You Tube or the Food Network. Now the strange thing about this method is that it produces burgers which are more towards the medium-well, well done side of things and I am a medium-rare guy. Why do I like it so much? It has to be the crust! The other kind of strange thing is that the patties are not seasoned. Heresy you say? Well, I tried it with salt and pepper one time and it was just too much, but if that is your thing, by all means, give it a go. Be careful, however; you'll need less than you think.

Oh... sir? Just one more thing. This cook goes pretty fast, so you'll probably want to have whatever else you are eating with this done before you start cooking these.

Update 2020-05-02 (Saturday):

Tried these last night with sliced raw jalapenos in place of the Roma tomatoes, Wow! This is definitely a keeper. I'll get around to updating the pictures one of these days.

Update 2020-05-22 (Friday):

Bumped up the cook time from 30 seconds per side to 42 seconds per side and revamped the immediate post cook steps slightly to optimize cheese meltness.

INGREDIENTS

Qty.	Unit	Item
1	~1.3 lb	Package of 80/20 Ground Beef
AR	Slices	Kraft Deluxe American Cheese
AR	Rolls	Martin's Sandwich Potato Rolls
AR	-----	Vidalia Onion
AR	-----	Jalapenos Peppers
AR	-----	Kosher Dill Hamburger Pickles
6	grams	Ghee
AR	-----	PAM

The "1 lb" packages of ground beef generally come in at about 1.3 lbs, at least at the stores I go to. 80/20 is the right ratio of fat to meat as far as I can tell. After all, "fat is flavor"! Now, there is no real guarantee what cuts of beef you will be getting in ground "beef"; it will most likely be whatever scraps are left over from butchering the rest of the cow. If it is labeled ground "chuck", or some other cut, that should be the cut of meat contained therein. If you are lucky enough to have an honest to God butcher shop close by, you can most likely request them to ground whatever cut you want. If you have a really good meat department at your local grocery store, you might be able to request the same (It doesn't hurt to ask!). If you REALLY want to get serious, you can always ground your own. I have not gone down this road yet, but I really want to try it. I think first I will try a mix of short rib and chuck.

Now on to the cheese... The cheese purist may scoff at American cheese, but it is probably the best type of cheese for burgers. It just melts really well and gets all gooey without clumping or getting oily (I'm looking at you cheddar). And, quite honestly, I like the taste. At one point in the more distant past, I came to the realization that I really like the Kraft Deluxe. I think that surprised me a little at the time. I also think that this is also the reason that I did not like the salted versions of the burger; the cheese will actually have a fair amount of salt as it is. What if you want to use another type of cheese? By all means, do what you like! After all, it is your burger! I myself want to experiment with Gouda.

Now on to the rolls... Quite frankly, the Martin's Sandwich Potato rolls are PERFECT for smash burgers; just the right size, just the right taste, just the right texture. The Kaiser rolls I have tried are generally too big, don't have that slight sweetness, and are too crumbly (if that is a word). I have not tried fancier rolls yet, nor have I tried making my own. I hear the brioche rolls are pretty good.

Now on to the onion... I like the sweeter, more subdued flavor of Vidalia or sweet onions for this application. I think the stronger, more pungent onions will over power everything else. I also like the little bit of crunch the onion adds.

Now on to the tomatoes... Well, as you can see, I have bumped the Roma's in favor of jalapenos and it REALLY works well. Raw is the way to go as you get a nice texture component and still have that little bit of heat.

Now on to the pickles... This is the only other ingredient other than the ground beef which I believe is truly required. I don't know why (I never really used to like pickles on burgers), but for some reason it just works to the point of being integral. As far as brand, I like Mt. Olive, but have not really tried a bunch of varieties.

As for the ghee... I usually say if you don't have ghee, you can use a neutral high temperature oil such as grapeseed. The more I use ghee, however, the more I like it and what it brings to whatever I am cooking. It is pretty easy to make from regular ol' unsalted butter, so I highly recommend you give it a try.

Wow! That is the most extra discussion about the ingredients I have ever done

SPECIAL TOOLS

- Big 'o Grill Press (about 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.) [i]

PREPARATION

- 1) Rinse the jalapenos and pat dry
- 2) Slice the jalapenos crosswise (thin but not too thin) and put in a Tupperware container in the fridge until needed. **DO NOT REMOVE THE SEEDS!!!**
- 3) Rinse the onion and pat dry
- 4) Cut off the onion stem and root ends and remove the outer skin
- 5) Slice the onion (perpendicular to the root-to-stem axis), and put in a Tupperware container in the fridge until needed

- 6) Weigh out ground beef into 2 oz. balls. You should get about 10
- 7) Split leftover ground beef (should be less than 2 oz.) between the beef balls and re-shape as required
- 8) Put the burger balls in a Tupperware container in the fridge until needed
- 9) Heat cast iron pan on high for at least 5 minutes
- 10) Add the ghee to the pan and spread around so that it coats the pan
- 11) Spray grill press with PAM
- 12) Add two burger balls to the pan spaced so that they will not touch when smashed
- 13) Smash the balls with the grill press to fairly thin
- 14) Set timer for 42 seconds
- 15) Flip burgers
- 16) Set timer for 42 seconds
- 17) Remove burgers and put on a quarter sheet cooling rack in a quarter sheet pan
- 18) Put one slice of cheese on each burger and cover with a second quarter sheet pan. If you are not going to eat them almost immediately, put in your oven set to warm. If your oven's warm setting is TOO warm, open the oven door a crack
- 19) Is your cheese not melty enough when you are ready to assemble? Places the burgers under the broiler for a tick tock (or, if you have one, break out your SearzAll!)
- 20) Assemble the burger in the following order from bottom to top
 - a. Bun
 - b. Pickles
 - c. Burger patty with cheese
 - d. Sliced onion
 - e. Burger patty with cheese
 - f. Sliced jalapenos
 - g. Bun
- 21) Revel in what you have created and, of course, ENJOY!

NOTES

- I. If you do a search on "smash burgers", you'll probably find "heavy spatula" and "heavy dowel". I like my grill press. It works perfectly
- II. I don't have pic's of the burgers as they were cooking because the cook went too fast. Maybe next time I'll set up a video camera and get a screen capture from that
- III. The pic's still show the Roma's instead of the jalapenos. I'll get around to taking new pic's one of these days!

PICTURES [II, III]













