

BEHIND THE SCENES AT A
HIGH-STAKES BSO AUDITION

THE CHILDREN CAUGHT IN OUR
BROKEN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

ALMOST A PSYCHOPATH: ARE YOU
LIVING WITH A PREDATOR?

BY GRACE TALUSAN

Boston



BEST BURGERS

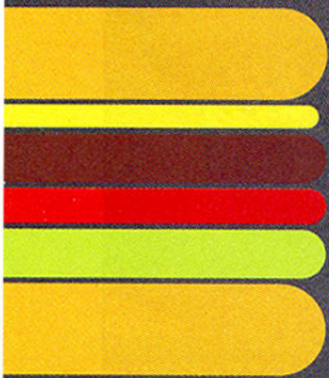
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BURGER
B O N A N Z A



→ OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, BOSTON HAS WITNESSED AN EXPLOSION OF GREAT NEW SPOTS DEDICATED TO THAT KING OF CASUAL EATS, THE HAMBURGER. FROM LAID-BACK JOINTS THAT KEEP IT SIMPLE—JUICY PATTIES ON A GOOD BUN—TO UPSCALE EATERIES THAT SERVE UP FANCIFIED TAKES ON THE HUMBLE CLASSIC, THIS CITY HAS GONE WILD FOR BURGERS.

BY LEAH MENNIES
PHOTOGRAPHS BY SAM KAPLAN





HOW TO MAKE YOUR BURGER MORE AWESOME

STEP UP YOUR BBQ GAME WITH THESE EXPERT-APPROVED INGREDIENTS.

PATTY

- 1 BRISKET POINT CUT
- 2 BEEF FORESHANK
- 3 CHUCK ARM

Michael Dulock of the forthcoming M. F. Dulock butcher shop in Somerville prefers a 65/35 meat-to-fat ratio. "This is my go-to burger mix, and probably explains my high cholesterol," he says. To make it extra-rich and smoky, Dulock suggests throwing some bacon ends into the blend, as well.

- 4 PORK SHOULDER/PORK FAT

"Pork shoulder is what we love in burgers," says Matt Jennings, chef-owner of Farmstead and La Laiterie in Providence. "It doesn't have a very strong flavor, so it's versatile and it tends to take on the flavor of the ingredients that you put with it."

- 5 COLD, CUBED BUTTER

Craigie on Main's Tony Maws suggests adding this to your meat blend for a succulent patty.

TOPPINGS

- 6 BIG ED'S CHEESE
- 7 GORE-DAWN-ZOLA

Rich, creamy, and mellow, Big Ed's, a Gouda-style cheese from Wisconsin, is "an incredible melter," Jennings says. If you're looking for more-intense flavor, go for the Gore-Dawn-Zola, a raw cows'-milk blue from Highgate Center, Vermont.

- 8 CARAMELIZED ONIONS

The intensely savory elements of a burger need balancing, so Dulock relies on caramelized onions "to add some sweetness, while at the same time having enough flavor to complement the meat."

- 9 HOWARD'S GREEN-TOMATO PICCALILLI

"It gives you a little bit of sweet-sour, and a bit of spice," says Seth Morrison, chef at the Gallows. "My dad introduced it to me when I was a kid."

BUN

- 10 THOMAS' ENGLISH MUFFINS

This sturdy breakfast staple gets the vote of both Maws and the Russell House Tavern's Michael Scelfo (see page 58). "They are a tad crunchy on the edges, while providing the pockets to absorb juice and flavor," Scelfo says.

SEASONING

- 11 GRILL MATES MONTREAL STEAK SEASONING

For a great sear and a flavor-packed patty, sprinkle this blend of salt, garlic, red pepper, black pepper, and paprika onto the meat before grilling, says Jose Gamez, sous chef at the Four Seasons' Bristol Lounge.

- 12 SALT AND PEPPER

"Generously season, and use what most restaurants do for meats: kosher salt and butcher's-grind black pepper," says Sam Monsour, chef at JM Curley in Downtown Crossing.

BURGERS BY THE NUMBERS

10

Patties used for the Eagles Deli challenge burger, which features 5 pounds of beef, 20 pieces of bacon, 20 pieces of American cheese, 5 pounds of fries, one deli pickle, and one fountain soda.

3

People who have completed the Eagles Deli challenge.

0

Times Adam Richman (of *Man vs. Food* fame) completed the challenge. (He tried and failed.)

43

Fastest time, in minutes, that the Eagles Deli challenge was completed. The champ also ate an extra pound of meat—just because.

COOKING TIPS

FROM THE PROS

→ GO FOR A LOOSE GRIND

When ordering your beef, ask for lots of space (read: air pockets) between the grains of meat. "Then when the fat melts, it hangs out in there and stays nice and juicy," Morrison says. Grinding your own? Use a 3/8-inch blade.

→ LEAVE IT ALONE, ALREADY!

"A lot of people toss the raw meat back and forth until a non-crumbling, glue-like ball is formed. This is bad," Monsour says. "Minimal manipulation may [make it] seem like the burger will fall apart, but it won't."

→ LET THE PATTY COME TO ROOM TEMPERATURE BEFORE COOKING

"It will yield a more evenly cooked burger, and you will avoid the flare-ups that come with grilling while you wait for the center of the burger to be cooked," Maws says.

→ TRY AN INDOOR METHOD

Morrison prefers a Lodge-brand cast-iron skillet. "All of those juices and fat remain in the pan, which keeps the burger nice and moist," he says.

→ KEEP YOUR COOKTOP HOT

"This is the only way to get a great sear on your burger," Gamez says. "The process ensures you get a nice charred outside and juicy middle."

→ STEP AWAY FROM THE SPATULA

"I'm always telling young cooks to leave it alone on the grill," Scelfo says, "and if I catch you pressing it or capping it, it won't be pretty."

→ DON'T SERVE IT RIGHT AWAY

"Remember to give your burger five minutes to rest after you have cooked it before garnishing with your toppings or even putting it on a bun," Gamez says. This allows the juices to stay where they belong—inside the patty.