

Grillers flip over lean pork burgers

It's a match made in heaven — barbecue and burger. But any relationship can use a little spice now and then, and the freshest spin on the burger scene is the pork burger.

Pork offers a leaner, tasteful alternative to the ordinary hamburger. The best choice for pork burgers is pork that is about 80 percent lean. By blending well with a wide variety of herbs and condiments, it provides the foundation for a dramatic change of pace from the everyday grind of the humdrum hamburger.

It's easiest to get ground pork from the butcher. "Ask for ground pork from the shoulder butt or picnic," said Anne Roberts, director of marketing and education for Michigan Pork Producers Association. "This will be about 80 percent lean. If you want an exceedingly lean burger, ask for pork ground from the loin."

It's also possible to grind pork at home using a food processor or meat grinder. If using a food processor, cut boneless pork into pork cubes and grind cubes using the processor blade. A few off-on turns do the trick.

Ground pork should be treated with the same care as other ground meat: purchase only as much as you plan to use during the next day or two. Wrap and

freeze meat you won't use within a couple of days.

When you're ready to cook, handle the meat as little as possible to keep it tender. "Over-mixing burgers — made of any type of meat — tends to toughen them," said Roberts.

The Other Burger should be cooked to a "medium" degree of doneness. Don't overcook. Make sure the pork burger comes off the grill while still juicy. An internal temperature of 160 degrees is recommended.

It should take about 10 minutes over hot coals to cook a 1/2-inch thick pork burger, turning once.

One grilling tip — don't press your spatula down on the burger while it's on the grill. "You'll lose juice and could start unwanted flames," said Roberts.

Here are some flavorful options for the Other Burger.

THE BASIC OTHER BURGER

- 1 pound unseasoned ground pork
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Gently mix together ground

pork and seasonings, shape into 4 burgers about 1/2-inch in thickness. Place over moderately hot coals in a kettle-style grill, lower hood and grill for 6 minutes; turn



MICHIGAN PORK PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

Burgers: For a leaner, tasteful alternative to ordinary burgers, try the "other burger" pork.

and finish grilling 4-5 minutes. Serve immediately, on sandwich buns if desired.

Eastern Burger (for a taste of the Orient)

To Basic Other Burger mix, add 2 teaspoons soy sauce, 2 tablespoons dry sherry and 1 tablespoon grated ginger root.

Veggie Burger (for a zesty, garden blend)

To Basic Other Burger mix, add 3 drops hot pepper sauce, 1 grated carrot, and 3 tablespoons chopped parsley.

Apple Burger.

To Basic Other Burger mix, add 1/4 teaspoon grated nutmeg, 1 teaspoon grated coriander, 1 medium

tart apple (grated) and 1 crushed garlic clove.

South of the Border Burger — serve with corn bread or flour tortillas.

To Basic Other Burger mix, add 1/4 teaspoon each ground cumin, oregano, seasoned salt and crushed red chilies.

Italian — To Basic Other Burger mix, add one crushed garlic clove, one teaspoon crushed fennel seed and 2 teaspoons red wine, 2 teaspoons olive oil.

Indian — try serving with pita bread.

To Basic Other Burger mix add 2 tablespoons plain yogurt, 1

crushed garlic clove and 1/4 teaspoon each ground coriander, cumin and red pepper.

Link-up with sausage

AP — Though today we tend to think of sausage as simply another meat choice, the first sausages had resourceful beginnings. They were created by Old World "wurstmachers" to make the most of every morsel of meat on a carcass.

The kind of meat used and the unique seasoning blend are what give each sausage its identity. During sausage making, sausage may be cooked, cured, smoked and dried. Or, it can be left uncooked and sold fresh. It helps to know what processing method was used for a sausage so you'll know what, if any, further cooking is needed.

■ **Fresh (Uncooked):** This sausage is made from fresh meat, period. Fresh bratwurst is a good example. Since fresh sausage is neither cooked nor cured, cook it thoroughly before eating.

■ **Uncooked and Smoked:** Made with fresh or cured meat, this sausage is smoked but not cooked. Smoked pork sausage is often sold uncooked. As the descriptive name implies, this type of sausage must be thoroughly cooked before serving.

■ **Cooked:** Here's a sausage made from fresh meat that is cured during processing and fully cooked. Although these sausages are ready to eat, some are heated before serving. Brunschweiler is made from cooked sausage.

■ **Cooked and Smoked:** These sausages are made from fresh meat that is cured, smoked and fully cooked. The all-American hot dog fits into this category. Serve these ready-to-eat sausages cold or hot.

■ **Dry and Semi-dry:** Ready for

eating, dry and semidry sausages are made from fresh meat that is cured and dried during processing and sometimes smoked. Most dry sausage are salamis (a category of highly seasoned sausages having a characteristic fermented flavor). Most semidry sausages are of the summer sausage type (initially seasoned sausage with good storage qualities). These sausages are ideal for sandwiches and eating cold.

Choosing Sausage

Never before have there been so many different kinds of sausage available in grocery stores. You'll find fresh sausage available in the bulk, link or patty shape. Other sausages come in links, rings, chunks or slices. Brown-and-serve sausage comes in link or patty form. When selecting unwrapped sausage from the deli, make sure there are no off-odors and that the casing is dry and free of mold.

If you buy sausage in vacuum-sealed packages, check for meat that is fresh and moist. Look for a freshness date on the package and buy the sausage with the latest date.

Storing Sausage

Be sure to check labels for storing directions. Generally, you should store sausage in airtight wrap in the refrigerator. Although some dry sausages don't need refrigeration, they should be kept in a cool place. Once a dry sausage is cut, refrigerate it. Freezing sausage may cause flavor changes. However, if necessary, you can freeze sausage for a short period of time.

Red beans and rice, fine anytime

AP — "The Tabasco Brand Cookbook" is a collection of recipes for breakfast and brunch, main dishes, soups and sauces, side dishes and vegetables using the hot pepper sauce as an ingredient. Each dish is rated for hotness.

Red beans and rice (which rates high on the cookbook's heat scale) has evolved into a traditional Monday dish in New Orleans, but it's fine anytime with fried chicken, pork chops, ham, or sausage.

RED BEANS AND RICE ON MONDAY

- 1 pound dried red beans, picked over
- 8 cups cold water
- 1 1/4 pound lean salt pork, bacon, or ham, diced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and minced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/4 teaspoons Tabasco pep-

per sauce

4 cups hot cooked rice

In a large saucepan combine the dried beans and the water, cover, and soak overnight. Add the pork, bacon, or ham and bring to a simmer. Cook, covered, for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a medium skillet, heat the oil and saute the onion and garlic for 3 minutes or until golden. Add the mixture to the beans along with the parsley, salt and pepper sauce. Cover and simmer 1/4 to 1/2 hours longer, or until the beans are tender enough to mash one easily

with a fork. Add hot water as needed to keep the beans covered, and stir occasionally. When the beans are finished they will have soaked up most of the liquid. Serve over hot cooked rice. Makes 8 servings.

Recipe from "The Tabasco Brand Cookbook" By Paul Melthenny with Barbara Hunter. Potter, \$14.

Nutrition hotline

Call the toll-free Nutrition Hotline of the American Institute for Cancer Research 1-(800) 843-4114 for free, personalized answers to nutrition questions from a registered dietitian. The hotline oper-

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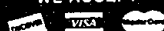


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