

Seasoning mix puts great flavor in hamburgers

See related story on Taste front.

- RANCH BURGERS**
- 1 1/2 pounds lean ground beef
 - 4 teaspoons Spicy Seasoning Mix (recipe follows)
 - 4 hamburger buns, split
 - Romaine lettuce
 - Sliced tomato
 - 1/4 cup creamy ranch dressing
 - 2 tablespoons canned fried onions

Shape ground beef into four 3/4-inch thick patties. Press seasoning mix evenly into both sides of patties.

Heat large, heavy skillet over medium heat until hot. Add patties and cook 12 to 15 minutes for medium doneness, turning once.

Line bottom half of each bun with lettuce and tomato slices; top with burgers. Spoon ranch dressing evenly over burgers; sprinkle with onion rings. Close sandwiches. Makes 4 servings.

- SPICY SEASONING MIX**
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves
 - 2 teaspoons sweet paprika
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
 - 1 teaspoon garlic powder
 - 1 teaspoon onion powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon ground red pepper
 - 1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper

Combine all ingredients. Store, covered, in airtight container. Shake before using to blend. Yield approximately 3 tablespoons. Recipes from Chef Al Gracia,

chef at the Mity Nice Grill in Chicago, for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

- ITALIANO BURGERS**
- 1 pound ground beef
 - 1/4 cup ricotta cheese
 - 1/2 cup shredded Italian cheese blend
 - 1/4 cup dry, seasoned (Italian) bread crumbs
 - 1 teaspoon garlic powder
 - 3/4 cup creamy Italian salad dressing, divided
 - 4 hoagie or crusty Italian rolls
 - 6 roma or plum tomatoes, divided
 - Salt and pepper (optional)

Preheat grill. Combine ground beef, cheese, bread crumbs and garlic powder. Shape meat mixture to fit buns after cooking. Grill approximately 13-15 minutes for medium doneness (160°F) or until no longer pink and juices run clear, turning once.

Split rolls lengthwise and spread with Italian salad dressing. Grill rolls for 1-3 minutes until lightly browned.

Place cooked burgers on rolls. Slice 2 tomatoes and place on top of the burgers. Drizzle remaining dressing over tomato slices and cover with top of roll.

Slice remaining tomatoes in quarters and arrange on plates next to burgers. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Serves 4. Recipe from Wendy Biegus of Livonia.

- MEDITERRANEAN TURKEY BURGERS**
- 1 pound ground turkey breast

- 1/2 cup bread crumbs
- 1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 6 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup sliced roasted red peppers
- 4 ounces part-skim mozzarella cheese, cut into 1 ounce slices

In a large bowl, thoroughly combine turkey, bread crumbs, spinach, onion, 4 tablespoons mustard, and salt. Shape mixture into 4 patties. Chill 30 minutes.

Grill burgers over medium heat for 8-10 minutes on each side, or until cooked through. Top each burger with 1 1/2 teaspoons mustard, 1 tablespoon red peppers, and 1 slice of cheese. Cover grill; cook until cheese is melted. Serve on rolls if desired.

Recipe from the American Institute for Cancer Research.

- FALAFEL BURGERS**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 1 cup diced onion
 - 1 tablespoon minced garlic
 - 1 jalapeno pepper or other green chile of choice, cored, seeded, and minced (or to taste)
 - 1 1/2 cups cooked or 1 (15 ounce) can chick peas, drained
 - 1 cup cooked white basmati rice or other long grain white rice
 - 1 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
 - 1 3/4 cups bread crumbs



AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CANCER RESEARCH

Picnic fare: Mediterranean Turkey Burgers offer vitamin-packed spinach and zesty onions right in the meat.

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Heat olive oil in a small skillet until sizzling. Cook the onion and garlic until the onion is wilted and the garlic is golden. Add the jalapeno and stir several times. Remove from heat and allow to cool.

Place the onion mixture, drained chick peas and rice in the container of a food processor. Pulse on and off several times until the mixture becomes a smooth puree. Transfer to a large bowl.

Add the lime juice and 1 cup of the bread crumbs. Season to taste with salt, black pepper, and red pepper. Mix with a large spoon, or even better with your hands, until all ingredients are thoroughly combined.

Shape into 3-inch patties 1/2-inch thick, adding extra bread crumbs if the patties don't hold their shape. They will be slightly sticky.

Prepare a grill or preheat the broiler. Place the patties on a vegetable grid. If broiling, place the patties on a broiler pan or large

cookie sheet lined with a lightly oiled piece of aluminum foil.

Grill or broil 3 to 5 inches from the heat, 4 to 7 minutes per side or until lightly browned. (When one side is done, turn the patties carefully with a spatula). Check often to prevent burning. Makes 7 to 8 patties, 3 to 4 servings.

Serve tucked into warmed pita pockets with shredded lettuce, tomato slices, onion slices, sprouts, and tahini mustard.

Recipe from "Vegetarian Burgers" by Bharti Kirchner (Harper-Perennial, copyright 1996).

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and sun-dried tomato sauces.

Rick Halberg of Farmington Hills is one of Michigan's outstanding chefs. Since graduating at the top of his class from the prestigious Culinary Institute of America in 1977, Halberg has held a succession of positions at several highly rated restaurants

including Tweeny's in Birmingham, and Holly Hotel before opening R.I.K.'s Total Cuisine Center in 1984 in Birmingham. Halberg's current project is Emily's Restaurant, which serves French-inspired Mediterranean cuisine in a converted small house, 505 N. Center, Northville.

See related column on Taste front.

BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE EMILY'S HOUSE SALAD DRESSING

- 1 cup balsamic vinegar
- 3 cups extra virgin olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1/4 cup saltine (Crisp sun-dried tomato paste)

- 1/8 cup lemon juice
- 2 anchovies
- 1/8 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon pesto
- 4 tablespoons A-1 sauce
- 2 large shallots

Blend all ingredients until smooth. Great with ripe tomatoes or a simple green salad.

PIPERADE

- 2 red onions, sliced
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 each: red, green and yellow peppers, cored and diced
- 6 Roma tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced
- 2 teaspoons each: fresh basil, oregano and mint

pinch of chili flakes
salt and pepper

Soften onions in olive oil with chili flakes, add peppers and soften, add tomatoes and herbs and cook down until most liquid is absorbed. Season with salt and pepper and cool. Use in omelets or serve with grilled fish.

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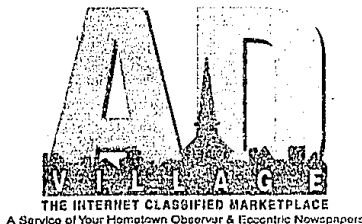
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