

# How to Make Juicier Hamburgers

*by Pamela Fay*

In 2001, Daniel Boulud, who was named James Beard Outstanding Chef of the Year, offered a \$27 hamburger at his casual bistro in New York City. It was made with ground sirloin, braised short ribs, foie gras and truffles. Since that time, gourmet burgers have become increasingly popular. Yet, despite this proliferation, the typical homemade hamburger is still rather lowly by the demanding culinary standards of top chefs. It has become even lowlier with the use of diet-friendly, but dry, low-fat ground beef. There are tricks, however, that can make your hamburgers as juicy as those smeared with fatty duck liver.

## **Add Water**

Although you can make your burgers juicier by adding fat, moisture is actually water. Save calories by simply adding cold water to regular ground beef. Water, added after you mix in salt, keeps the meat plump and juicy while it cooks. Season two pounds of 80 percent lean ground beef with salt, pepper and onion powder. Stir in 2/3 cup of cold water by hand until all of the liquid has been absorbed. Form the ground beef into six patties and cook in a skillet or over a hot grill as usual.

## **Add Veggies**

Extra lean ground beef is perfect for low-fat dieters. However, when the fat is removed, you're left with a dry hamburger. You can increase the moisture with very little impact on calories by adding moisture-rich vegetables. Finely chop a medium onion and 1/2 a red bell pepper. Combine with two pounds of 94 percent lean ground beef. Add a tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce to boost the flavor. Alternatively, you can mix in shredded carrots, zucchini or mushrooms.

## **Add Bacon**

Bacon is a particularly fatty meat. If you plan to add bacon to your hamburger anyway, use it to wrap the patty prior to cooking. Bacon is a particularly fatty meat and as you grill or broil your burger, the fat will drip down into the ground beef making it juicy and full of flavor. Cook the bacon partially before wrapping two slices around each burger and securing it with toothpicks. Broil in a preheated cast iron skillet and you will keep all of the bacon fat. Warning: This is not diet friendly.

## **Add Blueberries**

Blueberries are well known for their antioxidant properties. They also add moisture to ground beef without significantly altering the taste. Your hamburgers will be healthier, as well. Use 1/2 cup per pound of lean ground beef. Combine your favorite burger seasonings such as salt, pepper, garlic and Worcestershire sauce and puree with the blueberries. Also add 1/2 cup or more of rolled oats or breadcrumbs to prevent the burgers from breaking on the grill. You can also try this recipe with other fruits such as cherries or dried plums.

## **References**

“Time” magazine; Flipping for Burgers; Joel Stein; January 2008  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1706770,00.html>

Food Network; Bo Burger; Paula Deen  
<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/paula-deen/bo-burger-recipe/index.html>

Mike Rousell.com; Lean Ground Beef Tastes Like Leather (How to Fix This)  
<http://mikeroussell.com/lean-ground-beef-tastes-like-leather-how-to-fix-this/>

“Washington Post”; Burger of the Future? Add Blueberries; August 2003  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A16861-2003Aug3>