

Beef Burgers (Indoors)

Doneness

Medium: center around ~150–155°F (warm pink).

Medium-well to well: 155–160°F or higher (little or no pink).

Check in the thickest part of the patty when you think they're close.

Pans and heat levels

To keep smoke down, use the oven (no stovetop smoke at all) or cook on a **medium** burner in a nonstick or enameled cast iron pan.

Oven	Use for burgers: Bake on a rack set over a sheet pan. Heat: 375–400°F. Notes: No smoke from the stovetop; you won't get a crust unless you give the burgers a quick finish in a pan.
Nonstick pan or griddle	Use for burgers: Stovetop cooking (pan) or electric griddle. Heat: Medium on burner; griddle 350–375°F. Notes: Stays relatively smoke-free; high heat can damage the coating and create more smoke.
Enameled cast iron	Use for burgers: Stovetop or shallow frying. Heat: Medium. Notes: Holds heat evenly and gives you a controlled sear without as much smoke.
Cast iron	Use for burgers: Stovetop. Heat: Medium or medium-high. Notes: High heat produces a lot of smoke, so stick to medium if the alarm is a concern.
Stovetop grill (flat or ridged)	Use for burgers: Optional sear. Heat: Medium. Notes: The ridged side lets fat drip and smoke more; the flat side is easier to manage.

A reliable low-smoke approach: thaw the patties, then bake them on a rack over a sheet pan until done (around 375–400°F). If you want a bit of crust, finish them in a nonstick or enameled cast iron pan over **medium** heat for 1–2 minutes per side.

Burger Types

Thaw the patties in the fridge for at least *1 hour* before cooking. Season with salt and black pepper on the **surface only**, right before they go in the pan. Working salt into the meat makes the texture tight and bouncy, so avoid that. *Times below assume typical 4–6 oz patties; use a thermometer and cook to your target temp—thicker patties need longer.*

Ground chuck (butcher)

Fat and behavior: Usually ~80/20; juicy but more shrink.
Seasoning: S&P on surface.
Handling: Shape gently and dimple the center.
Temp and time: Stovetop medium or medium-high: 3–4 min per side. Oven: 375–400°F, ~10–14 min to 155°F.
Cooking: No oil nonstick/griddle; oil in cast iron optional. Flip once; don't press.

Ground premium (butcher)

Fat and behavior: Often leaner (85/15–90/10).
Seasoning: S&P on surface.
Handling: Handle very gently; overworking shows up quickly.
Temp and time: Stovetop medium: 3–4 min per side. Oven: 375°F, ~12–16 min.
Cooking: No oil nonstick/griddle; oil or butter in cast iron. Lower heat than chuck; let rest after cooking.

Cheap frozen chuck patties

Fat and behavior: Higher fat, sometimes extra water or binders.
Seasoning: S&P; a touch of garlic or onion powder if they taste bland.
Handling: Thaw in the fridge when you can; if cooking from frozen, go low and slow.
Temp and time: Thawed: medium stovetop 3–4 min per side, or oven 375–400°F ~10–14 min. Frozen: oven 375°F ~16–22 min, then optional pan finish 1–2 min per side.
Cooking: No oil nonstick/griddle; oil in cast iron optional. They'll shrink more; oven plus quick pan finish works well.

Premium lean frozen

Fat and behavior: Lean and easy to dry out.
Seasoning: S&P only.
Handling: Thaw in the fridge and handle as little as possible.
Temp and time: Stovetop medium-low to medium: 3–4 min per side. Oven: 375°F, ~12–16 min.
Cooking: No oil nonstick/griddle; oil or butter in cast iron. No pressing, then rest; a little mayo or butter on the bun helps.

Premium Angus frozen

Fat and behavior: Often 80/20 with good balance.
Seasoning: S&P on surface.
Handling: Thaw in the fridge when you can.
Temp and time: Same as butcher chuck: stovetop 3–4 min per side or oven 375–400°F ~10–14 min.
Cooking: No oil nonstick/griddle; oil in cast iron optional. Medium heat, one flip, then rest.

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Universal rules (all types)

Do	Don't
Season the surface with salt and pepper right before cooking	Work salt or heavy spice blends into the meat
Shape patties gently and dimple the center	Squeeze or overwork the meat
Flip once and avoid pressing	Smash the patties or flip repeatedly
Let burgers rest 2–3 minutes after cooking when you	Slice into them right away
Use a bit more heat for fattier meat and lower heat for lean	Crank the same high heat for every type