

A Short History of the Cheeseburger [A2]

È una combinazione talmente perfetta da far pensare che sia sempre esistita. Ma... a chi sarà venuto in mente di appoggiare una fetta di formaggio sopra un hamburger, per poi metterli dentro a un panino?



Audacious, indulgent and [affordable](#), the cheeseburger is as American as [pickup trucks](#) and daytime TV. Reports suggest that Americans eat nearly fifty billion burgers each year — about one hundred and fifty-four burgers per year per person. That makes it the most popular snack food in the United States. But [whose idea was it to pair](#) cheese with [beef](#) in a [bun](#)? We cannot know for sure, but we do know that it was over a century ago in America.

DELICIOUS EXPERIMENT

The first hamburger appeared in the late 19th century, although whether it was in Hamburg, Germany or in Hamburg, New York remains in dispute. The origins of the first cheeseburger are also [contested](#). According to some food historians, its invention can be [traced](#) to California in the mid-1920s, where sixteen-year-old Lionel Sternberger worked at the Rite Spot, his father's sandwich shop in Pasadena. Lionel liked to experiment with different tastes

and ingredients and one day decided to slap a thin slice of cheese onto a hamburger he was cooking. He tried it, he liked it — and so did his dad — and that, it is said, was how the cheeseburger was born.

HOT DEBATE

However, the Sternbergers named their invention ‘cheese hamburger’, not ‘cheeseburger’, while O’Dell’s, a Los Angeles-based restaurant, featured an actual “cheeseburger” in its 1928 menu. Some historians, therefore, consider this to be the origin of the cheeseburger. Then, Kaelin’s Restaurant in Louisville, Kentucky also claimed to have invented the cheeseburger in 1934. And one year later, Louis Ballast, of the Humpty Dumpty Drive-In in Denver, Colorado trademarked the name ‘cheeseburger’. Whoever cooked it up first, its popularity spread very quickly and cheeseburgers were soon incorporated into the menus of most burger restaurants.

VEGAN VARIETIES

Traditionally, the slice of cheese is added to the hamburger patty while it is still cooking, to melt it. Then, the meat and melted cheese is placed inside a bread bun, and topped with lettuce, tomato, onion, pickles, mayonnaise, ketchup and mustard. Nowadays, many restaurants around the world have adapted the cheeseburger to local preferences, offering extra ingredients like bacon, guacamole, egg, mushrooms, peppers, aioli — you name it. Moreover, cheeseburgers are now so popular worldwide that there are vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free and kosher versions.

Glossary

- **tried** = provare
- **so did** = idem (lett. fece lo stesso)
- **topped** = ricoprire
- **beef** = carne di manzo
- **contested** = disputare
- **thin** = sottile
- **onto** = su, sopra
- **slice** = fetta
- **trademarked** = registrare un marchio
- **to melt** = fondere
- **you name it** = chi più ne ha più ne metta
- **therefore** = pertanto
- **Whoever** = chiunque
- **spread** = diffondersi
- **hamburger patty** = polpetta di hamburger
- **pickup trucks** = camionette
- **bun** = panino
- **traced** = rintracciare, risalire
- **to slap** = buttar sopra (lett. schiaffare)
- **Moreover** = inoltre
- **pickles** = sottaceti, cetriolini
- **affordable** = economica
- **whose idea was it** = di chi fu l'idea?
- **to pair** = abbinare
- **claimed** = asserire, rivendicare