

Title:

Build A Better Burger® With 16 Ingredients Or Less

Word Count:

663

Summary:

Can you build a better burger with 16 ingredients or less?

Keywords:

Build A Better Burger® With 16 Ingredients Or Less

Article Body:

Simplicity may be the key to earning \$50,000 this year. For the 16th anniversary of Sutter Home Build a Better Burger Contest and Cook-Off®, the search for America's best burger, judges are looking for entries to include a maximum of 16 ingredients.

"In the past, there has been no limit on the number of ingredients," says head judge James McNair. "We're simplifying the contest by paring down the number of items used."

McNair suggests that contestants reinvent their favorite burger with new and different toppings or show off their ethnic background by incorporating traditional ingredients from their country of origin.

From shiitake mushroom ketchup, Cuban pickle salsa and banana duck chutney to tzatziki with feta, Creole honey mustard and chermoula mayonnaise, winning burgers have included a range of exotic flavors from around the world.

So, the question remains, can you build a better burger with 16 ingredients or less? McNair says yes. In the past 15 years, four grand prize winners used 16 ingredients or less to create their unique burgers. Last year's \$50,000 winner, Barry Rosenstein of Elmhurst, Ill., used a record 35 ingredients to build his Sweet and Spicy Red Fez Burgers.

"All of the judges were very impressed with the taste and presentation of Barry's burgers, but the length of his recipe was a bit daunting for the average person to re-create," says Jeffrey Starr, culinary director and executive chef for Sutter Home Winery and Build a Better Burger. "For 2006, we want burgers that are creative, yet accessible to everyday cooks."

McNair recommends reading "Build a Better Burger," published by Ten Speed Press last year, to see all of the previous winning recipes through 2004 and get tips on cooking burgers on the grill.

Build a Better Burger accepts entries from May 15, 2006 to August 21, 2006. For complete contest entry rules, visit buildabetterburger.com or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Build a Better Burger, Sutter Home Winery, P.O. Box 248, St. Helena, CA, 94574-0248. Build a Better Burger is not open to residents of California or Utah. Ten finalists will be flown to the Napa Valley to compete in a burger grilling cook-off on September 30, which will be judged by a renowned panel of chefs.

Build a Better Burger is sponsored by Sutter Home Family Vineyards, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the California Avocado Commission, Colavita Olive Oil, Barbeques Galore, Grey Poupon, Snyder's of Hanover and Kettle Chips.

Napa Valley Basil-Smoked Burgers

Makes 6

PESTO MAYONNAISE

2/3 cup mayonnaise

2 tablespoons prepared basil pesto

PATTIES

2 pounds ground sirloin

1/4 cup Zinfandel

1/4 cup minced fresh basil

1/4 cup minced red onion

1/4 cup fresh Italian bread crumbs

8 sun-dried tomatoes packed in olive oil, finely chopped

2 teaspoons garlic salt

Vegetable oil, for brushing on the grill rack

8 large fresh basil sprigs, moistened with water

6 large seeded sandwich rolls, split

6 slices Monterey Jack cheese

6 red leaf lettuce leaves

6 (1/4-inch-thick) large tomato slices

6 paper-thin red onion slices, separated into rings

6 fresh basil sprigs

Prepare a medium-hot fire in a charcoal grill with a cover, or preheat a gas grill to medium-high.

Combine the mayonnaise and pesto in a small bowl and mix well. Cover and refrigerate until needed.

To make the patties, combine the sirloin, Zinfandel, basil, onion, bread crumbs, sun-dried tomatoes and garlic salt in a large bowl. Handling the meat as little as possible, mix well. Divide the mixture into 6 equal portions and form them into patties to fit the rolls.

When the grill is ready, brush the rack with vegetable oil. Toss basil sprigs directly onto the fire. Place patties on the rack; cover and cook 5 to 7 minutes on each side. During the last few minutes of cooking, place rolls, cut side down, on the outer edges of the rack to toast lightly. Top each patty with a cheese slice. Cook 1 minute.

Spread the mayonnaise over the cut sides of the rolls. On each roll bottom, place a lettuce leaf, a patty, a tomato slice, an onion slice and a basil sprig. Add the roll tops and serve.

With 16 ingredients, this burger took the grand prize in 1990.