

- YIELD
4 burgers (with 3-to-4-ounce patties)
- TIME
15 minutes, plus heating the grill

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Bryan Gardner for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Barrett Washburne.

The key to cooking a thin, modestly sized burger on the grill is to use the highest heat possible, and to cook the meat most of the way through on one side before flipping it and briefly cooking the second side. This technique allows you to get a nice dark crust on that first side without the risk of overcooking. To form thin patties that hold together on the grill, massage the ground beef briefly – which is a cardinal sin with many other styles of burgers, but a necessity here for cohesion. This allows you to flatten the patty out extra-thin and wide to account for shrinking as the meat cooks.

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INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 pound ground beef (at least 15 percent fat), or vegan ground beef alternative
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 soft burger buns, toasted in butter
- Toppings (such as shredded iceberg, sliced onion, tomato and pickles) and condiments (mayonnaise, ketchup or mustard), as desired
- 4 slices American cheese or other sliced cheese of your choice (optional)

Add to Your Grocery List

Ingredient Substitution Guide

PREPARATION

1 Divide the beef: Line a 13-by-18-inch rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Divide the ground beef into 4 even balls. Working with one ball at a time, massage the meat gently in your hands until it is cohesive and tacky, about 15 seconds. Next, using clean hands, roll each into a smooth ball about the size of a golf ball. Place the balls on the baking sheet, one ball in the center of each quadrant.

2 Form the patties: Lay a second sheet of parchment on top, then place a second rimmed baking sheet on top of the first. Press down very firmly on the baking sheet, pressing directly over each patty in turn, to spread each ball into a thin patty that is wide enough that it will extend at least a full inch around your burger buns on all sides. (If using a vegan beef alternative, form a patty

that is just large enough to extend 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch beyond the edges of the buns, as vegan beef alternatives do not shrink as much during cooking.) Refrigerate the patties until ready to cook.

3 Heat the grill: If cooking with charcoal (the preferred method, as charcoal gets hotter than gas), ignite a full chimney of coals. When the coals are mostly covered with gray ash, spread them out evenly under one side of the grill and allow the grill to heat with the lid off for 5 minutes. If cooking with gas, set the hottest burners to high heat, cover and let the grill heat for at least 15 minutes.

4 Season the burgers: When ready to cook, gently peel the top sheet of parchment off the burgers and season them generously with salt and pepper. Replace the top parchment, flip the parchment sheets with the burgers in between them over entirely, then peel off the other piece of parchment, which will now be on top. Season burgers generously with salt and pepper on the second side.

5 These burgers will cook very quickly, so prepare your buns with toppings and condiments as desired. (Placing any vegetables on the bottom bun makes the burger more stable and allows them to absorb juices that may drip from the patties.)

6 Cook the patties: Using your hands or a spatula, carefully lay the patties on the grill over the hottest part of the flame. If using charcoal, leave the lid open. If using gas, keep the lid closed as much as possible. Let cook, undisturbed, until the patties are well charred and juices start to pool on their top surfaces, about 1 minute.

7 Carefully flip the patties. (There will most likely be flare-ups; this is OK.) Add a slice of cheese, if using, to each, and continue to cook until the meat is just barely cooked through, about 15 seconds.

8 Transfer the patties to the buns, add any extra toppings or or condiments as desired, close, and serve immediately.