

Epic Stuffed Burgers

Burgers are amazing. However, stuffed hamburgers are an incredible upgrade from the standard burger!

Most stuffed burger recipes start with ground meat, seasonings, and sometimes an egg to bind the meat so the stuffed hamburgers don't fall apart during cooking. I will give you the tools and tips to make wonderful stuffed burgers at home, including the temps you need to sear them to tasty, juicy perfection.

Choose the right meat! I recommend ground chuck or ground sirloin beef, which is about 20 percent fat. Less fat makes a drier, less juicy burger. Purchase a coarse grind. Finely ground meat can become soft and mushy, making the patties hard to work with and more likely to fall apart. Don't handle the meat too much. The heat from your hands melts the fat, making the patty too dense.

Stuffed burgers are a blank canvas. You can fill stuffed burgers with a variety of ingredients. The most simple option is to use shredded cheese for the filling. Shredded cheese has more exposed surface area and will melt faster than sliced hard cheeses. Try using mozzarella, blue cheese, feta cheese, and cheddar. You will need about 2 tablespoons of cheese per burger.

Other ingredients can be added to the filling, such as fresh or dried herbs, spices, chopped olives, green onions, chiles, roasted red peppers, bell peppers, mushrooms, or dried fruits. Completely cook raw ingredients like onions, peppers, or mushrooms before stuffing your burgers. Use about 2 tablespoons of filling per hamburger.

One of the only challenges to making stuffed hamburgers is making each patty the right size. Thin patties have real advantages. First, you have a higher seared surface-to-meat ratio. Also, if you stuff a thick burger, it can overcook when the stuffing melts and cooks. Follow these simple tips to achieve the perfect stuffed burger size:

- Place the mixture on a cutting board or work surface after mixing the meat mixture for your stuffed hamburger patties. Shape the meat mixture into a large, flat rectangle.
- Score the rectangle crosswise into four equal sections using a knife.
- Cut lengthwise down the middle, making eight equal-sized portions of meat.

Next, use your hands to lightly but firmly press each portion into a thin 4-inch patty. Place 2 tablespoons of the desired filling in the center of four patties, spreading the filling to within ½-inch of the edges. If the filling goes to the edge of the patty, it will not seal correctly and will likely run out the side of the burger as it cooks. Place the remaining patties on top, pressing edges together to seal well.

The trick with cooking stuffed burgers is to get a great sear while maintaining a perfectly cooked, juicy interior. For this, you need high heat. Consider using a grill or a cast iron pan to cook the burgers. If you use a stainless steel or aluminum pan, coat it with a thin layer of vegetable oil. The USDA warns that a hamburger should have a minimum internal temperature of 160°F. Check the temperature of the burgers in several spots before you remove them from

heat. Because the stuffing has been in contact with raw meat, it is just as important to heat it to the same temperature. Remove burgers from the grill or skillet and allow them to rest for about 5 minutes before assembling and serving.

Serve the stuffed burger patties in buns. Hoagie rolls, traditional burger buns, pretzel buns, lettuce wraps, and more are great companions to a gourmet stuffed patty. Add complementary toppings and condiments to the burgers if you wish.

After using this burger technique, you'll be making stuffed burgers for the family all the time. I hope you're ready for some seriously awesome cookouts and summer BBQs.