

Smash Burger Success

There is a method to the madness of smash burgers, and not everybody does it right. Just because it's thin doesn't mean it's a smash burger! It is possible to make delectable smash burgers at home. It all starts with quality ingredients, attention to detail, and the proper technique.

Ground chuck is a great all-purpose meat choice for burgers. The magic ratio? An 80/20 percentage of meat to fat. Fat is flavor and juiciness; anything leaner will make the burgers dry.

Smash burgers are ground beef smashed flat over a searingly hot flat grill, resulting in a crispy, craggy-edged, asymmetric, and cooked-through patty. When the burgers are smashed down on a super-hot grill, the burger patty absorbs the fat, as there is nowhere else for it to go, meaning you're essentially cooking your burger in its own beefy juices. The high heat and pressure yield the amazingly dark, crisp-crust, flavor-packed patty that are the hallmarks of a true smash burger.

If you don't have a flat-top grill, you can make smash burgers at home using a griddle or cast-iron skillet. You will also need a burger press or a large, stiff metal spatula to flatten the meat.

Divide the beef into equal portions, but don't press them into rounded burger patties. You don't mix the ground meat and form it into a patty, as you would with a traditional burger. You want a loosely packed burger ball so it smashes easier. The best way to form loose balls is to scoop the meat into a small measuring cup.

Place the balls on a platter; then place burgers in the fridge or freezer while you start heating the pan.

Turn on the exhaust fan. Lightly oil a flat grill, cast-iron skillet, or griddle, and heat it over medium-high heat until it begins to smoke. It is essential that the pan be very hot and smoking. When the griddle surface is hot enough, place the ground beef balls onto it.

Put the burgers on the skillet one at a time. Place a piece of parchment paper on top of the ball of meat, and use a burger press or a large spatula to firmly press the meat into thin, well-flattened patties about 1/4 inch thick before adding and pressing the next one. This keeps the meat from sticking to the spatula. If you don't have parchment paper, non-stick cooking spray also works as an alternative! After smashing the burgers, remove the paper. Smashing the meat is what creates the burgers' signature crispy edges. Once you smash the burgers, do not re-smash!

Sprinkle each burger on top with salt and pepper. You can also add your favorite seasoning spice blend or seasoning salt.

Cook burgers for 2 to 5 minutes or until the bottom side is cooked and crisp. Resist the urge to peek to check for caramelization; it could interrupt the caramelization process. Then, flip the burgers and continue cooking for an additional 1-2 minutes or until they are cooked through. Don't cook either side too long, or you'll end up with tough burgers. If you think you won't have enough meat per burger, remember that it's customary to double up on the patties because they're so thin.

The thin patties cook quickly, so be sure to get your toasted buns and favorite burger toppings ready before they hit the heat.

Crispy, irresistible, and easy are the only ways to describe smashburgers. With those lacy, crispy edges, there's so much to love about smash burgers. These burgers are ones you'll come back to again and again as a new family favorite!