



# FLIP

## for delicious Cajun burgers

### Make mouthwatering patties by adding other meats, cheeses, onions or butters

BY HOLLY PRESTIDGE  
Richmond Times-Dispatch

It's burger time. Memorial Day marks the unofficial start of summer and the outdoor cooking season, so say goodbye to your oven and head for the grill with some ground beef.

But bring along some other stuff, too, and I'm not talking about the ketchup and mustard. I mean Cajun andouille or Italian sausages, chopped beef brisket, herb-garlic butter, caramelized onions, and blue or pepper jack cheeses.

Why? Because when it comes to mouthwatering burgers, the sky's the limit.

Take that sausage or brisket and mix it with your ground beef to add some extra heft and flavor to burgers.

Stuff the patties with the pepper jack cheese or your favorite cheese spread, or a blend of the caramelized onions and blue cheese, and give your weekend picnic guests a tasty surprise.

Or put a dollop of the flavored butter inside – just a little – and make that burger extra juicy.

#### COOKING TIP Use flavored butter

Flavored butters are easy to make and a great way to use your favorite herbs, such as dill, chives and parsley. Start with one stick of softened butter. Put it in a bowl and add to it 2 tablespoons of fresh, finely chopped herbs. Mix until combined and smooth, adding more herbs to taste if desired. Refrigerate the butter until firm.

When you're ready to cook your burgers, make a well in the center of the meat and add a firm pat of butter, then cover with more meat. Cook burgers and serve. If you prefer to use the butter as a topping, just add a pat on top of the hot burgers before serving.

And don't forget to grill the burger buns. Spread the tops and bottoms with a little butter or oil and maybe a dash of seasoning salt and put them alongside the burgers on the warming side of your grill for quick toasting.

Then, yes, you can add the ketchup and mustard if you want, but I'm betting you won't even need them.

The andouille sausage burger is one of Rob Wilhoite's favorites. He calls it his Cajun burger.

The Mechanicsville resident known to most folks as Capt. Rob runs a barbecue catering company as well as a few other ventures, including a charter-boat operation. When

it comes to making good burgers, he said, you have to start with the best ingredients.

For burgers, that means ground chuck.

"Hands-down, you gotta use 80/20," Wilhoite said one day last week as a few of the Cajun burgers sizzled on his grill. That refers to meat that's 80 percent lean and 20 percent fat.

"You gotta have that fat content for flavor," he said.

Many of us strive to eat better so we turn to leaner meats, such as 85/15 or even 93/7.

The way Wilhoite sees it, that's like eating fat-free cream cheese.

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MARK GORMUS/TIMES-DISPATCH

Mechanicsville resident Rob Wilhoite, known as Capt. Rob to most, says the best burgers are made with 80/20 ground chuck.

## It isn't just for kids

A childhood favorite, the milkshake, becomes a boozy, adults-only treat

Keep your summer interesting with amped-up shakes such as the purple velvet milkshake (right) and the toasted malt milkshake, which both incorporate alcohol.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BY MICHELLE LOCKE  
The Associated Press

Smooth, sweet, cold and just the ticket for contracting brain freeze on a hot summer day. There's a reason milkshakes are a staple of childhood.

But why should the kids have all the fun?

Sure, strawberry, chocolate and vanilla make fine beverages for summer. But for an after-dinner twist just for the grown-ups, how about stirring in a little

black raspberry liqueur or a dash of bourbon? Bartenders across the country are doing just that as they shake up the seasonal staple.

At Hill Country Barbecue Market in Washington, the maple bourbon milkshake pays homage to the retro diners and soda fountains of the 1950s. Served in the classic style with two straws in one large glass, this shake made for sharing combines a rich blend of bourbon with vanilla ice cream and maple syrup infused with vanilla beans. The whole

SHAKES, Page E2

How about a maple bourbon milkshake? Or an old-fashioned float made with prosecco or hard root beer? And a really wild take on the shake features foie gras ice cream and walnut liquor.

## Burgers

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"Why?" he asked. "You might as well be using chicken if you're gonna do that," he said about using anything leaner than 80/20.

But he did offer tips for beefing up a leaner burger, like adding just a little beef broth to the ground meat before cooking or a flavor enhancer such as Worcestershire sauce.

"Not enough to make it mushy," he said, "but just enough to put a little flavor into it."

Wilhoite also makes a burger with smoked beef brisket mixed with ground beef. He smokes his own brisket, but for everyone who doesn't, he suggests buying some at a favorite barbecue joint and freezing it until it's needed. He figures lots of us put pork into baked beans, "so why not just add it to the hamburger?"

When it comes to cooking burgers, it's all about the dimples, the heat and keeping your tongs or spatula to yourself.

(Note: Consider any utensil with prongs or spears as an enemy weapon. Burgers need to keep their juices while they're cooking, so don't pierce them.)

But dimples are OK. In fact, when making the patties, you want them to look like doughnuts but without the holes going all the way through the middle, said David Eisel, executive chef and director of culinary development for Bob Evans restaurants.

Ever had a burger that looked more like a meatball? You throw away half the bun because the meat sits right in the middle and all those yummy toppings keep falling off.

That happens, Eisel explained, because the meat shrinks when it cooks, but the top and bottom of the patty expand. So making big indentations in the middle means the burgers will cook flat and even.

He recommends having dual-zone temperatures in your grill if you can. Make one side very hot and sear the burgers quickly for two or three minutes on each side. Then move them to the other side, which is warm but not very hot, until they finish cooking.

He suggests seasoning burgers only on the outside, and start seasoning about 20 minutes before cooking. Cook burgers to an internal temperature of at least 160 degrees to eliminate risks of undercooked meat. That'll give you a medium-well burger.

As for ways to make your burgers really stand out, Eisel suggests things such as zesty Italian sausage with ground beef, or a stuffing of roasted poblano peppers – or flavored butter, which "just kind of melts into the meat."

And he echoes Wilhoite's sentiments on the

80/20 beef.

"Any less [fat] than that and you really limit your ability to get a juicy burger," Eisel said.

Wilhoite's Cajun burger includes the andouille-beef patty, in which he chops the sausage into small chunks or grinds it before adding to the beef. Then he tops the burger with fresh spring greens, thick slices of Monterey Jack cheese, a squirt of mayo and a couple of dashes – depending on heat tolerances – of his favorite hot sauce.

"It's all about multiple layers of flavor," he said about his burger creations.

Wilhoite said his rule for cooking anything – from burgers to his beloved Southern comfort dishes, such as chicken fried steak and macaroni and cheese – is to use quality ingredients that bring out the best flavors, even if that means they're not always the healthiest options.

"You're not going to eat like this every day," he said, citing the fattier meat as an example. "Sometimes it's just what makes it work."

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### Basic Barbecue Rub

**1 cup EACH:** white sugar, kosher salt, steak seasoning, dark chili powder

Mix well and store in an airtight container.

— Rob Wilhoite



MARK GORMUS/TIMES-DISPATCH

The Cajun burger is served with greens, thick-sliced cheese, mayo and hot sauce.

### Cajun Burger

Makes 4 burgers

**1 pound 80/20 ground chuck**  
**2 andouille sausage links, chopped small or ground**

**Cajun seasoning, mayonnaise, hot sauce, spring greens, Monterey Jack cheese for topping**

Combine the meats and form into 4 patties. Sprinkle with your favorite Cajun rub. Grill to an internal temperature of 165 degrees. Take off grill and serve with mayonnaise, hot sauce, spring greens and Monterey Jack cheese.

— Rob Wilhoite

### Beer Cheese Spread

This would be perfect to stuff inside a burger or even used as a topping. Depending on how many burgers you're making, you'll likely have a lot left over. Just use the rest as a dip for chips or crackers or store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Makes 12 servings

**1 pound sharp cheddar cheese, shredded**  
**1/2 small onion, finely chopped**  
**1 teaspoon minced garlic**

**1/4 teaspoon hot sauce**  
**1/2 teaspoon ground red pepper**  
**6 ounces amber beer, at room temperature**  
**Salt and pepper to taste**

Combine the first five ingredients and blend on low in a food processor. Gradually add the beer and mix on medium-high for 1 minute, or until creamy. Add salt and pepper to taste.

**For the burgers:** Make a hamburger patty and form a well in the center. Add 1 to 2 teaspoons or up to a tablespoon of the cheese spread in the center and cover with more beef. Cook burgers and serve.

— Adapted from Southern Living

### Smoked Brisket Burger

Makes 4 burgers

**1 pound 80/20 ground chuck**  
**1/3 pound smoked beef brisket, chopped**  
**Basic Barbecue Rub**

**Toppings: cheddar cheese, sweet onion slices, spring greens, your favorite barbecue sauce**

Mix the ground beef with the chopped brisket. Form into 4 patties. Apply a light coating of the barbecue rub to the patties. Grill to an internal temperature of 165 degrees. Take off grill and top with cheddar, sweet onion, greens and barbecue sauce.



BOB EVANS FARMS INC

**Chef David Eisel, who works for Bob Evans restaurants, suggests things such as zesty Italian sausage with ground beef, or a stuffing of roasted poblano peppers – or the flavored butter, which "just kind of melts into the meat."**

### Culinary Clues

Learn how to sear, roast and carve a rack of lamb with techniques from chef Dave Booth of University of Richmond's Center for Culinary Arts. TimesDispatch.com, search culinary clues.



### Dining Out

Burger Bach's fare is enhanced with inventive dipping sauces. Read Dana Craig's review in Thursday's Weekend section.

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