

FOOD & NUTRITION

Burger Tips for Barbecue Success

Fire up the grill for family fun

Summer and fall - and the long weekends in-between - are ideal times to fire up the grill and bring the family together for some outdoor fun.

Burgers, the quintessential barbecue fare, are among America's all-time favorite foods. For variety, top them with unconventional fixings, such as avocado slices, arugula, salsa and fresh basil.

For the best taste and optimum freshness, connoisseurs recommend organic ground beef.

"USDA-certified organic ground beef is made from animals that have not been injected with synthetic hormones or antibiotics, and that eat food free of animal byproducts and grown without pesticides," said Michael Levine, president of Organic Prairie Family of Farms, one

of the nation's leading cooperatives of organic farmers and providers of organic meat.

Here are some burger-making tips from Organic Prairie:

- For the best flavor, use 85 percent lean ground beef. If you choose leaner meat, add a splash of tomato juice or Worcestershire sauce to increase flavor and moisture.

- Finely mince any garlic, onions or other vegetables that will be mixed into the meat. Larger chunks will make the burger fall apart on the grill.

- Wet clean hands prior to making the patties. The patties should be formed loosely, not packed or pressed, and should be about one-half-inch thick and slightly wider than the bun.



Greek Gourmet Burger (Makes 6 servings)

- 1 1/2 pounds Organic Prairie ground beef (thawed)
- 1 1/2 medium green onion (chopped)
- 1 cup fresh spinach (chopped)
- 1/4 cup tomato (chopped)
- 1/4 cup organic feta cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon dried dill
- 1/2 teaspoon basil
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt (to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper (ground)

In a large glass bowl, mix all ingredients. Cover and chill for 1 hour to allow flavors to mingle. Form into 6 patties. Cook over medium-high heat for 6 minutes on each side for medium doneness. Serve over seasonal greens.

Cajun Chicken Kebabs

- 1 tbs Schwartz Cajun Grill & Sizzle Seasoning
- 1 tbs tomato purée
- 1 tbs light soy sauce
- 1 tbs olive oil
- 227 g (8 oz) tin pineapple rings in juice, cut into chunks
- 450 g (1 lb) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1 courgette, cut into 8 pieces

Cajun Dip:

- 150 ml (1/4 pint) sour cream
- 3 tbs mayonnaise
- 1 tsp Schwartz Cajun Grill & Sizzle Seasoning

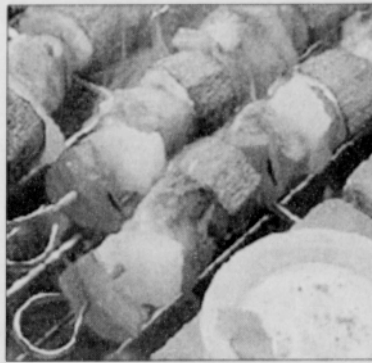
In a bowl, blend the Cajun Seasoning, tomato purée, soy sauce and oil together with the pineapple juice. Stir in the chicken. Cover and marinate for at least one hour in a refrigerator.

Thread the chicken, pepper, courgette and pineapple alternately onto 4 skewers.

Place under a pre-heated grill or on a barbecue for 15 to 20 minutes, turning occasionally, basting with any left over marinade.

Blend all the dip ingredients together in a small bowl and serve with the kebabs.

Makes 4 servings.

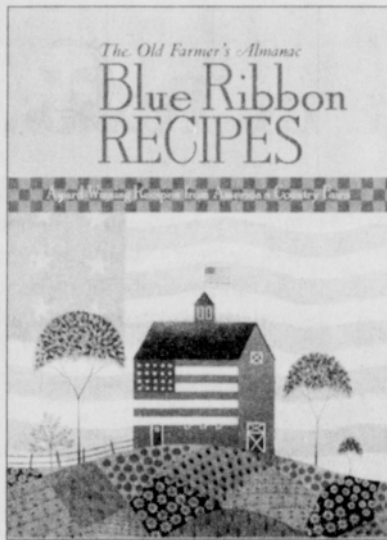


Blue Ribbon Recipes Featured in 'Farmer's Almanac'

This stuffed, crusty bread is the perfect complement, right out of the oven, for pasta dishes or soup. French Bread with Spinach-Cheese Stuffing is featured in "The Old Farmer's Almanac Blue Ribbon Recipes." This cookbook, bursting with award-winning recipes from country fairs across America, is available wherever books and magazines are sold or online at Almanac.com.

To make the dough, in a large bowl, combine the yeast, salt, water, sugar, and 5 cups of the flour. Knead the dough on a floured surface, adding flour until the dough is elastic but not too dry. Let rise in an oiled bowl until doubled in bulk, about 50 minutes. (The dough

French Bread with Spinach-Cheese Stuffing



Dough

- 1 package (1 tablespoon) dry yeast
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 cups warm water
- 5 to 6 cups flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- Cornmeal

Stuffing

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3/4 cup cooked, chopped spinach, squeezed dry
- Pinch of freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dill weed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 6 ounces Swiss cheese, shredded
- 1 egg, beaten
- Sesame seeds or poppy seeds (optional)

can be left to rise in the refrigerator overnight.) Knead again and divide into two oblong

loaves. Sprinkle an oiled baking sheet with cornmeal. Place

the loaves on the sheet. Let rise until doubled in bulk, about 50 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. To make the stuffing, melt the butter in a large skillet. Add the onion and sauté until tender. Add the spinach, pepper, dill weed, and salt. Add the cheese and cook until melted. Using a sharp knife, make a large slash in the top of each loaf and place the stuffing inside. Close the slash by pinching the dough. Brush the dough with the egg and sprinkle with sesame or poppy seeds (if using). Bake for 30 to 40 minutes, or until golden brown. (Makes 2 loaves)

The recipe was submitted to "The Old Farmer's Almanac Blue Ribbon Recipes" by Kevin Coleman of Catarina, Texas.

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