

Great Grilling

Boring Burgers No More: Make Everyday Grilling Gourmet

(NAPSA)—From the backyard barbecue to the tables of some of the finest restaurants across the country, the burger is a “hot” item on menus and at mealtime. This season, Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts instructors are putting a new spin on the traditional burger. Grilling up a burger doesn’t have to be limited to lettuce and tomato any more.

“With 85 percent of Americans saying they eat burgers once a month or more, we know that they can enjoy putting a twist on an old favorite,” said Chef Edward Leonard, certified master chef and Le Cordon Bleu executive chef. “Our goal is to make it easy to experiment with new ingredients that can make ordinary into extraordinary. When it comes to creating your own, don’t be afraid to mix it up and combine a variety of ingredients that appeal to you.”

Before you head out to the grill, browse the farmers’ market or grocery store to get inspiration from fresh produce. If you are looking for something spicy, try adding fresh jalapeños or cayenne pepper to your patties. If you like sweet and salty combinations, grill up some pineapple and add teriyaki sauce.

“The toppings and seasoning of a burger play a big role in the overall taste,” said Chef Leonard, “but if they aren’t grilled properly, chances are it won’t turn out well.” Preparing burgers for the grill can be a critical step to ensure they turn out juicy and delicious. When selecting meat, purchase the freshest meat to achieve the best taste. Before placing burgers on the grill, heat it up and brush the grates with olive oil. This will prevent the burgers from



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When looking for a delicious dish to grill, chefs suggest trying lamb for a twist on burgers.

sticking. When grilling the patties, do not press down with a spatula. This squeezes the juices out and can result in a dry burger.

Once the burgers are cooked, the real fun begins. Chef Leonard suggests creating a Mediterranean lamb burger to wow your guests.

“For those who have a passion for cooking and want to create more mouthwatering food, I suggest checking out the Le Cordon Bleu Chef’s Series,” said Chef Leonard. “Our 16 campuses across the country hold monthly, hands-on classes where food enthusiasts can experience a class with a professional instructor.”

Mediterranean Lamb Sliders

Relish Ingredients

- 1 cup coarsely chopped red bell peppers that have been grilled or broiled until charred and then skinned and seeded
- 1 finely chopped sweet Walla Walla onion

- ½ cup coarsely chopped, pitted, kalamata olives
- ½ cup coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley the juice of one lemon
- 1 tsp thyme leaves
- 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves finely minced garlic

Slider Ingredients

- 1½ lb. lean ground lamb
- 1 tsp chopped fresh rosemary
- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- ½ tsp crushed red pepper
- 2 Tbsp finely minced garlic salt and cracked pepper to taste
- ½ cup crumbled feta

Heat grill to medium-high heat. Prepare the relish: In a small serving bowl, stir together the peppers, onion, thyme, olives, parsley, lemon juice, olive oil and garlic.

Prepare the burgers: In a large bowl, gently mix together the lamb, parsley, red pepper, rosemary, garlic, salt and black pepper. Form into 8 mini burgers, flatten to about ¾ inch thick, and gently press your thumb in the center of each to help cook evenly.

Grill or panfry the burgers carefully for about 3 to 4 minutes per side for medium-rare. A few minutes before they are done, top with feta and finish cooking to melt. Note: The fat in lamb can cause flare-ups. Serve on lightly grilled soft mini buns, topped with the relish.

Makes 8 mini burgers.

To learn more about Le Cordon Bleu, visit www.chefs.edu.