

# 'Best burger ever' contains beef short ribs, steak tips

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When you're dealing with the king of persnickety cooking, you expect a little hassle for your food. You also expect big-time payoff.

The good news? Christopher Kimball, the man behind the pleasantly obsessive-compulsive wing of the food world — "Cook's Illustrated" and "Cook's Country" magazines — delivers on both counts. In fact, for a burger as good as Kimball offered up for the AP's 20 Burgers of Summer series, I'd suffer twice the hassle.

No pre-ground beef is harmed in the making of these burgers. Kimball starts with sirloin steak tips and boneless beef short ribs, which are chilled until firm in the freezer, then coarsely ground in a food processor. This produces burgers that are tender, meaty and incredibly moist.

Hands down, they are the best hamburger I have ever eaten. Ever.

"This style of burger is nothing like most modern burgers," Kimball says. "It is rich, thin, craggy, crusty, salty and comes with an incredible sauce. Instead of a soft-ball of meat, you are getting a modest layer of intensely flavored beef and a classic roadhouse burger sauce."

True to form, you earn that goodness with a fussy method for making it. The meat is barely handled, and never gets packed into a patty. The process is more of a gentle shaping of the chopped meat, which is on a tray, not in your hands.

The raw burgers (and the cooked ones, for that matter) are delicate, so it's important to follow Kimball's method carefully. And he adds that the cooked burgers don't hold well. So if you're doubling the recipe, cook the burgers in batches and serve them immediately before frying the next batch.

## Old Fashioned Burgers with Classic Sauce

**Start to finish: 1 hour 15 minutes**  
**Servings: 4**  
**2 tablespoons mayonnaise**  
**1 tablespoon ketchup**



AP Photo/LARRY CROWE

Chris Kimball's Old-fashioned Burger with Classic Sauce uses coarsely ground sirloin steak and boneless beef short ribs.

- 1/2 teaspoon sweet pickle relish
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon white vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 10 ounces sirloin steak tips, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 6 ounces boneless beef short ribs, cut into 1-inch chunks
- Kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, divided
- 4 soft hamburger buns
- 1/2 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 4 slices American cheese

### Thinly sliced onion

To prepare the classic sauce, in a small bowl whisk together the mayonnaise, ketchup, relish, sugar, vinegar and black pepper. Set aside.

To prepare the burgers, place the steak and rib chunks on a baking sheet in a single layer, leaving one half inch of space around each chunk. Freeze the meat until very firm and starting to harden around edges but still pliable, 15 to 25 minutes.

Place half of the meat in a food

## Galley

processor and pulse until it is coarsely ground, 10 to 15 quick pulses, stopping and redistributing the meat around bowl as necessary to ensure the beef is evenly ground. Transfer the meat to the baking sheet, overturning the bowl and without directly touching meat. Repeat grinding with remaining meat.

Spread the meat over the sheet and inspect carefully, discarding any long strands of gristle or large chunks of hard meat or fat.

Gently separate the ground meat into four equal mounds. Without picking up the meat, use your fingers to gently shape each mound into a loose patty one half inch thick and four inches in diameter, leaving the edges and surface ragged. Season the top of each patty with salt and pepper. Using a spatula, flip the patties and season the other side. Refrigerate.

In a heavy-bottomed 12-inch skillet over medium, melt one-half tablespoon of the butter until foaming. Add the bun tops, cut-side down, and toast until light golden brown, about two minutes. Repeat with remaining butter and bun bottoms. Set buns aside and wipe out the skillet with paper towels.

Return the skillet to high heat. Add the oil and heat until just smoking. Using a spatula, transfer the burgers to the skillet and cook without moving for three minutes. Flip the burgers over and cook for one minute. Top each patty with a slice of cheese and continue to cook until the cheese is melted, about one minute longer.

Transfer the patties to the bun bottoms and top with onion. Spread two teaspoons of burger sauce on each bun top. Cover burgers and serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving (values are rounded to the nearest whole number): 611 calories; 379 calories from fat; 42 g fat (17 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 98 mg cholesterol; 27 g carbohydrate; 29 g protein; 1 g fiber; 1096 mg sodium.

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