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THE BURGERPEDIA

The relative simplicity of a minced (ground) protein patty sandwiched on a bun lends itself to infinite variations. Lest this modest handbook swell into a 12-volume encyclopedia, we've pared back the list of types of burger to a handy compendium of the most common burger styles and regional variations – followed by a blow-by-blow account of the burger building blocks, the core ingredients that make a burger a burger.

TYPES OF BURGER

Fast Food Burger

You know it when you see it, right? A thin patty, sticky American cheese and commodity toppings like iceberg lettuce, diced onion and brined pickles, ketchup and mustard on a tender white-flour bun speckled with sesame seeds. What it lacks in ingredient quality, it more than makes up for in speed and price, not to mention greasy, sentimental comfort.



Smash Burger

In the century-old burger style that took the world by storm in the early 2020s, fresh minced (ground) beef is whacked on a super-hot griddle until it forms an irregularly shaped patty that gets very crispy at the edges. The origins of smash burgers at American diners in the early 1900s owed to the propensity of their cooks to make the most out of a limited amount of beef. The smash's more recent ascent has mainly to do with flavour: smashing little beef balls into the griddle creates a wider surface area in contact with the heat, thereby increasing the extent of the Maillard reaction, the process of browning that occurs whenever a mixture of proteins, amino acids and sugars are heated. In plain terms, this magical process is what gives caramelized food its intense, savoury flavour.

MISO BACON BURGER

FIND IT AT: BLACK BEAR BURGER
FOUNDED: LONDON, ENGLAND
NUMBER OF RESTAURANTS: 8



Husband-and-wife team Liz and Stew Down got the idea to start a burger joint after spending two years working ski seasons in Whistler, Canada. Once back in the UK, they moved to London and set up a food stall at Broadway Market, where they sold their burgers on Saturdays, starting in 2016. Their popularity quickly soared, and by 2019 they opened their first sit-down restaurant in Brixton Market. The brand has since grown to eight locations, which are all independently run.

Stew Down's passion for quality, humanely sourced beef runs deep: his family runs a small beef farm in Devon. It's only fitting, then, that Black Bear's burgers start with native British, grass-fed cattle. The Miso Bacon Burger, which was crowned the UK's best burger in 2025 by the National Burger Awards, is no different, starting with two 45-day-aged beef patties. Each juicy burger patty is topped with melty cheese, crispy local bacon smoked with oak and chestnut wood, a golden swipe of miso-butter mayo, and onions on a sesame seed bun. It's a messy, umami-rich love letter to British farming – as intended.



TOP DOG

FIND IT AT: EL PERRO NEGRO
FOUNDED: GLASGOW, SCOTLAND
NUMBER OF RESTAURANTS: 2



El Perro Negro is the brainchild of chef Nick Watkins, who started it as a widely successful pop-up in Glasgow in 2015. Alongside business partners Peter McKenna and Ivan Stein, Watkins debuted El Perro Negro's first bricks-and-mortar location in 2018. It soon amassed a cult following, regularly topping reader polls and blogs as Glasgow's darling burger joint. In 2019, the crew entered El Perro Negro's signature Top Dog burger in the UK's National Burger Awards and won. They repeated this feat in 2021, the same year El Perro Negro debuted at Bonnie & Wild's Scottish Marketplace in Edinburgh.

The two-time award-winning Top Dog Burger starts with grass-fed beef sourced from small UK farms. While each patty of 140g (5 ounces) dry-aged beef cooks on the grill, rich bone marrow and Roquefort butter are carefully melted into it before the indulgent creation gets topped with crispy double bacon, caramelized onions and a blob of black truffle mayo. Not for the faint of heart or tight of waistband, it's pure, carnivorous decadence.





LA

SMASHBURGUESA

FIND IT AT: BAR TOTI
FOUNDED: AUSTIN, TEXAS
NUMBER OF RESTAURANTS: 1



Executive chef Fermín Núñez started his culinary journey by opening contemporary Mexican restaurant Suerte in Texas' capital city in 2018, following with the Mexican seafood restaurant Este in 2022. Notably, both come recommended by the Michelin Guide. Bar Toti is the youngest of the trio, opening in 2023 on the same plot as Este, where it shares a half-acre garden for fresh produce. A small but mighty neighbourhood bistro, Bar Toti slings dishes inspired by Spain, France and Mexico, including plenty of top-notch vegetable items.

Then again, we're all here for the burger, and this tapas bar-inspired creation is one for the books, indeed. La Smashburguesa stacks two patties with griddled ham, white American cheese, smoky chipotle mayonnaise and sweet-and-sour escabeche relish. Like all the tangy, sweet, smoky, pickled, salty, funky components of tapas that you can hold in two hands.

DOUBLE SMASH BURGER

The key to a great smash burger is that signature, crunchy halo of caramelization, so get your griddle screaming hot before adding the beef balls. Don't overcrowd the patties in the pan.

Time: 20 mins

Effort level: Low

- 680g (1lb 8oz) minced blade steak (ground chuck), ideally 15–20% fat
- 8 American cheese slices
- 4 seeded brioche burger buns
- 20g (4 tsp) butter
- 4 gherkins, plus 1 tsp of pickle juice

Burger sauce

- 4 tbsp mayonnaise
- 2 tsp ketchup
- 2 tsp American mustard
- ¼ tsp smoked paprika

Method

Start by mixing the mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard and paprika with a teaspoon of pickle juice, then set it aside until later.

Next, divide the beef into 8 equal balls, approximately 85g (3oz) each. Be careful not to roll too tightly; this will make the burgers tough.

Heat a flat griddle or heavy-based frying pan (skillet) to a high heat. Once searing hot, place as many balls that will fit, bearing in mind they will spread out a lot. Immediately, flatten the balls into their smash burger shape. To do this, cover the ball of beef in a square of grease-proof paper (waxed paper), then press down hard on the centre of the burger using a burger press – the bottom of a small saucepan will work just as well! Liberally season the burgers with salt at this stage.

Allow the patties to really caramelize on one side, before flipping them over. Once flipped, top each burger with a slice of cheese and let it melt. Meanwhile, slice open and butter the burger buns. Toast the buttered side of the buns on the griddle. Spread sauce in each bun, then add 2 patties to each and top with sliced gherkins.

