

Crumbling, Dry, Hamburgers? Try “Hip Shot” Burgers

By Chuckwagon

Have you ever wondered why the burgers down at “Al’s Malt Shop” always keep their shape as well as their juices? And just where does that particular special flavor come from? Whenever many people make a burger at home, it crumbles and shrinks and the juices remain upon the griddle as the burger is removed from the heat. The secret for making the best burgers is the addition of the natural “binding” power of soy protein concentrate. The product is natural and, as its name implies, it is simply concentrated soy bean protein. Soy protein binds comminuted (ground) meat together, and for that reason, it helps in retaining its natural juices. This of course, keeps it from shrinking.

It has one shortcoming only - the meat becomes a little more difficult to “sear” or brown while cooking. However, adding a little powdered dextrose or corn syrup solids, adding their own flavors as well, easily solves this problem. Please note these products are also “natural” and used in most commercial sausage kitchens today. Don’t be hesitant to use these products in your cooking as they are completely safe and contain no additives, preservatives, or foreign chemicals. Powdered dextrose is only 70% sweet as sugar and its weight forces itself into the cells of the meat more readily than other types of sugars, for complete distribution.

Years ago, the best burgers were charred outside and barely pink inside. People would then - and still do – judge the “doneness” of a burger by its color. That “technology” is old stuff and went out with Betty Boop and running-boards! Today, we must protect our guests against possible salmonella, listeria, e-coli, and a host of other bacteria, by cooking the burgers until their inside temperatures register 150 F. or thereabouts, allowing the “carryover” to finish bringing it up to a preferred temperature – regardless of the color or char on the outside. Burgers are “medium” at this point. A professional always uses a thermometer. The “baby-dial” is perfect for grilling burgers. The combination of beef and pork along with the listed ingredients make a burger most folks rave about. Why not give them a try. Here’s a good recipe for tasty non-shrinkin’ burgers that hold their juices and won’t fall apart on you:

Chuckwagon’s “Hip Shot” Hamburgers

- 2 lbs. pork shoulder
- 3 lbs beef chuck
- 1 tblspn. powdered dextrose
- 3 tblspns. soy protein concentrate
- 1-½ tblspns. un-iodized salt
- 1 tblspn. freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 tspn. coriander
- 1/2 tspn. nutmeg
- 1/2 cup ice cold whole milk

Trim the shoulder and chuck and cut it into inch squares. Grind the nearly-frozen meat with its fat through a 3/8" plate. Mix all the other ingredients into the meat and distribute them thoroughly as you develop the actin and myocin. When pulled apart, the meat should be slightly sticky with soft peaks. Be careful not to over-mix the meat.

Form 1/2 pound patties, flattening them evenly with a rolling pin. If you prefer burgers “griddle-fried in smoke”, simply place your portable griddle (or cast iron black skillet) on top of the grilling bars of your gas or charcoal grill using plenty of dampened hickory or other hardwood to provide the smudge. Try apple, mesquite, alder, and oak. Don’t even think about pressing the patties down while they’re cooking! Put them on the griddle and allow them to sear before turning them over. You should only have to turn them once.

Best Wishes,
Chuckwagon