

Boot Jack's "Barb Wire Bangers" (English Bangers Sausages)

Historically, the English have fried this sage-flavored sausage for breakfast. As the moisture inside a casing heats up and turns to steam, it often bursts the casing - thus the name "banger". The great taste of sage with ginger has made this sausage one of the most popular in the world. Served with mashed potatoes, the English favorite becomes "Bangers & Mash".

A "bootjack" is a pivoted plank of wood with a leather-lined notched "V" cut into one end where a cowboy places the heel of each boot to easily remove his footwear at the end of a hard day. Years ago, a drifter came to our ranch from western Canada and it had been rumored that his face appeared upon various wanted posters there. We didn't ask, and he didn't explain. We instantly liked the personable man as he proved himself to be an experienced and reliable ranch hand, and an outstanding cook.

"Bootjack" tucked his pant legs inside his boots, buttoned his shirt collar, parted his slicked-down hair in the middle, and everyone teased him about the style that had gone out with the stagecoach to Tucson... that is, until he began making his wonderful English Bangers. Whenever the other ranch hands began combing their hair, buttoning their collars, and tuckin' in their pant cuffs, they could depend on Boot Jack's "Barb Wire Bangers" for breakfast, knowing that his secrets of great English sausages would never go out of style.

Bootjack's favorite ol' sourdough tricks included cooking them in a medium-hot black-iron skillet in melted butter for half a minute, adding a half cup of water, covering them while they braised-steamed, and then finished turning them only once. Serving them with freshly mashed potatoes, ol' Bootjack would often listen to the cooking sausages for something he called "necessary and imperative" – the telltale "bang" when the skillet had been heated just right. The ol' cow-cusser never used a fork to stick them; he preferred to turn them using "industrial-strength" chopsticks about eighteen inches long!

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- 3 lbs. pork butt (ground)
- 2 lbs. beef chuck (ground)
- 2 tblspns. un-iodized salt
- 2 tspns. rubbed sage
- 1 tspn. white pepper (ground)
- ½ tspn. ground ginger
- ½ tspn. mace
- 3 oz. rusk (toasted bread crumbs)
- 1 cup water

Chill the meat to 32 degrees then grind it through a ¼" plate. Mix all ingredients well. Some folks prefer to use pork stock in place of the water in this recipe. This breakfast sausage is traditionally stuffed into 32 m.m. hog casings. However, patties are tasty topped with a fried egg and served with a piece of toast.

Best Wishes,
Chuckwagon