

# COOK'S ILLUSTRATED

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## BEST OLD-FASHIONED BURGERS

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*Makes 4 burgers. Published July 1, 2008. From Cook's Illustrated.*

Sirloin steak tips are also labeled “flap meat” by some butchers. Flank steak can be used in its place. This recipe yields juicy medium to medium-well burgers. It’s important to use very soft buns. If doubling the recipe, process the meat in three batches in step 2. Because the cooked burgers do not hold well, fry four burgers and serve them immediately before frying more. Or, cook them in two pans. Extra patties can be frozen for up to 2 weeks. Stack the patties, separated by parchment, and wrap them in three layers of plastic wrap. Thaw burgers in a single layer on a baking sheet at room temperature for 30 minutes before cooking.

### INGREDIENTS

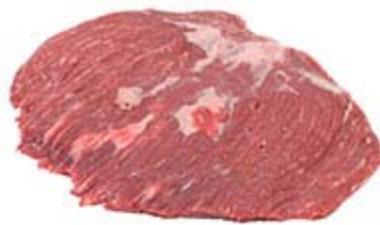
- 10** ounces sirloin steak tips , cut into 1-inch chunks (see note)
- 6** ounces beef short ribs (boneless), cut into 1-inch chunks  
Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 1** tablespoon unsalted butter
- 4** hamburger buns , soft (see note)
- 1/2** teaspoon vegetable oil
- 4** slices American cheese  
Thinly sliced onion
- 1** recipe Classic Burger Sauce (see related Serve With recipe)

### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Place beef chunks on baking sheet in single layer, leaving 1/2 inch of space around each chunk. Freeze meat until very firm and starting to harden around edges but still pliable, 15 to 25 minutes.
- 2.** Place half of meat in food processor and pulse until meat is coarsely ground, 10 to 15 one-second pulses, stopping and redistributing meat around bowl as necessary to ensure beef is evenly ground. Transfer meat to baking sheet, overturning bowl and without directly touching meat. Repeat grinding with remaining meat. Spread meat over sheet and inspect carefully, discarding any long strands of gristle or large chunks of hard meat or fat.
- 3.** Gently separate ground meat into 4 equal mounds. Without picking meat up, with your fingers gently shape each mound into loose patty 1/2 inch thick and 4 inches in diameter, leaving edges and surface ragged. Season top of each patty with salt and pepper. Using spatula, flip patties and season other side. Refrigerate while toasting buns.
- 4.** Melt 1/2 tablespoon butter in heavy-bottomed 12-inch skillet over medium heat until foaming. Add bun tops, cut-side down, and toast until light golden brown, about 2 minutes. Repeat with remaining butter and bun bottoms. Set buns aside and wipe out skillet with paper towels.
- 5.** Return skillet to high heat; add oil and heat until just smoking. Using spatula, transfer burgers to skillet and cook without moving for 3 minutes. Using spatula, flip burgers over and cook for 1 minute. Top each patty with slice of cheese and continue to cook until cheese is melted, about 1 minute longer.
- 6.** Transfer patties to bun bottoms and top with onion. Spread 2 teaspoons of burger sauce on each bun top. Cover burgers and serve immediately.

**SHOPPING**

Better Beef for a Better Burger Chuck is the usual choice for burgers. For the best flavor and tender juicy texture, we opted for two better cuts of beef: sirloin steak tips (right), which contribute big meaty taste, and well-marbled boneless short ribs (left), which lend the fat that keeps the burgers juicy. For best results, buy ribs with at least as much fat as the rib in the photo.

**Boneless Short Ribs****Sirloin Steak Tips****STEP-BY-STEP**

Keys to Loosely Packed Patties



**1. FREEZE** Chill meat in freezer, separating cubes by at least 1/2 inch, until firm but still pliable, 15 to 25 minutes. Pulse meat in food processor.



**2. SPREAD AND DIVIDE** Spread chopped meat over baking sheet and remove any large chunks or stringy connective tissue. Gently separate meat into 4 piles.



**3. SHAPE** Without lifting or compressing, gently form meat into thin patties with rough edges and textured surface.

**RECIPE TESTING**

Getting the Perfect Grind Underprocessed meat will lead to gristly bits in the finished burgers and patties that don't hold together. Overprocessed meat becomes rubbery and dense as it cooks. Perfectly ground meat contains pieces that are fine enough to ensure tenderness but coarse enough that the patty will stay loose.

**Underprocessed****Overprocessed****Ground to Perfection**

**TEST KITCHEN**

Cook's Country and Cook's Illustrated magazines and is the workday destination for more than three dozen test cooks, editors, and cookware specialists. Our mission is to test recipes until we understand how and why they work and arrive at the best version. We also test kitchen equipment and supermarket ingredients in search of brands that offer the best value and performance. You can watch us work by tuning in to America's Test Kitchen ([www.americastestkitchen.com](http://www.americastestkitchen.com)) on public television.