



HAND-CUT BURGER

No grinder? No problem. My friend Michael Black, a San Francisco sushi chef, once told me that the only burger worth eating is the one you cut by hand. A hand-cut burger is a nice option for a smaller group, or a sophisticated dinner party where you can sing the praises of beef tallow. This recipe magically turns a single steak into dinner for four.

- 1 (1 1/2-pound) boneless rib-eye steak (preferably dry-aged)
- 2 cups unsalted butter or rendered beef tallow, plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 white onion, cut crosswise into 1/2-inch rings
- 1 (5-ounce) piece horseradish (2 to 3 inches), finely grated
- 2 tablespoons buttermilk
- Kosher salt
- 4 Pain de Mie Buns or 8 slices soft slab bread
- 16 to 24 dill pickle slices

SERVES 4

Chill the steak in the freezer until firm to the touch but not frozen, 15 to 20 minutes. Cut the steak into 1/4-inch-thick slices, then slice into 1/4-inch-thick strips, and then into 1/4-inch cubes. Remove the sinew and connective tissue but keep the fat.

Divide the beef into four equal balls. Put a sheet of plastic wrap over a 4-inch ring mold on a cutting board or other hard surface. Put a ball in the middle of the mold and gently press down with the palm of your hand, forming a patty that is 4 inches wide. Pop it out with the plastic wrap. Put the patties on a large dish or small baking sheet and refrigerate until ready to cook.

Melt 2 cups of the butter in a pot over medium heat. (Why yes, that is a lot of butter, but it's used to fully submerge the onion while it cooks; you will not eat 2 cups of butter in this burger.) Add the onion, turn the heat to low, and gently cook at a bare simmer until the onion is tender, about 20 minutes. The onion should be cooked but still al dente, so there's some texture and a slight hit of sharpness yet not enough that you'll taste onion the rest of the day. Remove the onion from the butter and drain on a paper towel.

While the onion cooks, make a horseradish sauce. In a bowl, mix the grated horseradish with the buttermilk and a pinch of salt. Stir to combine and refrigerate until ready to use.



Before you begin cooking the burgers, get the buns toasting. Heat a cast-iron skillet or similar surface over medium-low heat. Slice the buns in half horizontally. Smear the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter on the buns and place, butter side down, on the hot surface, working in batches if necessary. Toast until golden brown, 6 to 8 minutes, adjusting the heat if necessary. You want to do your best to time their completion to the burger cooking.

While the buns toast, cook the patties. Heat a cast-iron skillet or grill over high heat. Use a spatula to handle the patty—it will be loose, so be careful. Salt both sides of each patty and put them on the hot skillet. Cook on one side, about 1 minute, then flip the patties and cook until rare, another minute.

Place a patty on a bottom bun and top with some pickles and onions. Slather 1 1/2 teaspoons horseradish sauce on the top bun and cap it off. Repeat.

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A photograph featuring a burger in the foreground, a large cleaver-style knife leaning against it, and a large piece of raw meat in the background. The entire scene is set against a vibrant red background. The burger is topped with a slice of white onion, pickles, and a thick patty. The knife is positioned vertically, with its blade resting on the burger. The meat in the background is a large, thick cut with visible marbling.

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