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## There's nothing not to like about this healthy burger

 BY ALISON LADMAN  
FOR THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dads love grilling. Dads love burgers. Trouble is, good burgers don't always love Dad back.

That's because great burgers often start with fatty ground beef. All that fat keeps the burgers juicy and flavorful as they grill. And then of course there is the temptation to pile on toppings and condiments, like heaps of melting cheese and thick spreads of mayonnaise.

We decided to show our love this Father's Day by offering up a delicious burger that also happens to be healthy.

To keep our burger lean, we went with a 95 percent lean ground beef. You also could go for ground turkey, chicken or pork, but read the packages carefully; many ground meats aren't as lean as you might think they are.

Since we removed most of the fat from our burger's meat, we needed to add moisture. We did this by incorporating vegetables. I know, groan! Vegetables don't belong in burgers.

But really, this is a vegetable you would have put on the burger anyway — caramelized onions. They add tons of flavor, moisture and virtually no calories. You also can make the onions well in advance so they're all ready to go when you want to make burgers. They even freeze well if you want to make a giant batch.

To top off the burger, we skipped the cheese and went with a quick homemade barbecue sauce. Best of all, you can make the sauce right on the grill; just bring a little saucepan out with you and do all the cooking in the same spot. You'll want to make the sauce first so that you know it's ready to go when the burgers are.

### CARAMELIZED ONION BARBECUE BURGERS

**Start to finish: 30 minutes**
**Servings: 4 regular burgers or 8 sliders**

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 large sweet onions, sliced
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 pound 96 percent lean ground beef
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 4 standard or 8 slider whole-grain burger buns



AP PHOTO

### What's not to like about a healthy Caramelized Onion Barbecue Burger?

In a large skillet over medium, heat the olive oil. Add the onions and saute until deep brown, about 20 to 25 minutes. If the skillet gets too dry, add 1 to 2 teaspoons of water as needed. Stir in the balsamic vinegar and allow to cool.

Heat the grill to medium-high.

In a medium bowl, gently stir together the cooled onions, ground beef, salt and black pepper. Form the mixture into 4 or 8 patties, pressing a slight indent into the center of each.

In a small saucepan, combine the cumin, cayenne and smoked paprika. In a small bowl, stir together the garlic powder, honey, tomato paste, mustard, cider vinegar and soy sauce. Bring everything out to the grill.

Place the saucepan with the spices directly on the grill. Stir until fragrant and toasted, about 1 minute. Add the tomato-honey mixture to the spices and stir until simmering, about 5 minutes. Use caution, the handle of the saucepan will get very hot. Move the saucepan to the back of the grill or off to the side.

Add the burgers to the grill and cook for 4 to 6 minutes per side for medium-well. Spoon the sauce over the burgers and serve on multigrain or whole-wheat buns.

For this and other recipes that have appeared in the Kenosha News, go to KenoshaNews.com. Click on "Extras" and then on "Recipe Search." Recipes are available for all dishes that have appeared on the Kenosha News food pages since January 2010.



# BRING HOME THE BACON

Delicious breakfast side has diners craving more, and more, and more ...

BY MARI SCHUH QUAM | KENOSHA NEWS CORRESPONDENT

I scream, you scream, we all scream for...bacon?

When Burger King unveiled its new bacon ice cream sundae last month to select locations across the country, some folks said yum while others, like Jeff Soronen, said yuck.



Jeff Soronen

"There's a time and a place for everything, and bacon doesn't belong on a dessert," Soronen said while enjoying a few tasty strips at The Coffee Pot diner in downtown Kenosha.

Soronen prefers his bacon smack dab on a plate, the old school way. Every week, the Kenosha resident gobbles up about two pounds of the crispy, salted pork product, eating it for breakfast, in BLT's and for those evenings when he

feels like eating breakfast foods for dinner.

If there's a plate of bacon nearby, watch out, because it won't be there for long. Soronen says he's blessed with a high metabolism and good health, and believes that at the end of the day, moderation is the key.

"As long as you're not a glutton about it, you're fine," he said. "Long live bacon."

Bacon reigns as The Coffee Pot's number one side dish—the longtime neighborhood diner cooks up about 45 pounds a week, according to co-owner Janis Barnhill. The summer is virtually a celebration of bacon, with patrons gnawing through 75 pounds a week.

"Bacon is kind of the rage," Barnhill says.

Restaurants across the country keep finding more ways for customers to sink their teeth into the savory processed meat, from appetizer plates like bacon-wrapped breadsticks to dessert items like chocolate-covered bacon. Never mind the food police — it seems that bacon mania might be here to stay.

Chris Schwartz, manager at Franks' Diner in downtown Kenosha, says the uses for bacon really are endless, noting that customers could add bacon to most anything on the menu at Franks.

"Bacon is the trend for foodies," Schwartz says.

What is it about bacon that makes it so irresistible? Maybe it's the salty, smoky flavor. Or perhaps it's the meaty, crispy texture. In any case, once you start, it's hard to stop, says Julie Zorn, co-owner of The Coffee Pot.

"Bacon is like potato chips. You can't eat just one," Zorn says.

True, many people can't stop at just one piece, including Kyle Free, who often consumes up to a dozen strips a day.

Free's main source for the popular cured meat is Franks' Diner, where the carnivorous 23-year-old works part-time. Of the nearly 50 orders of bacon the tiny but busy diner serves daily, invariably a couple of them will be mixed up



Kyle Free

orders. Workers are free to eat these, and Free says he is always first in line.

Free has long enjoyed bacon. Growing up with two brothers, you might think he had to fight for his share. Not the case. Luckily for Free, everyone else in his family preferred sausage, so there was always extra bacon for him to munch on.

Nowadays, his favorite bacon combo is a toasted peanut butter, banana and bacon sandwich.

"If there's a chance I can put bacon on something, I'll do it," he said.



## Bacon Mania

 BY MARI SCHUH QUAM  
KENOSHA NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Bacon lovers, don't despair. You don't need to part with your beloved meat after mealtime. Why not make a fashion statement with bacon? After all, everything is better with bacon. From cradle to grave, surround yourself with bacon-themed and bacon-scented novelties. Here's a sampling:

- baby clothes
- plush toys
- board games
- gift wrap
- air freshener
- perfume
- candles
- soap
- shoes, socks, belts
- ties, wallets
- adhesive bandages
- iPhone case
- toothpaste
- lip balm
- lollipops
- popcorn
- vodka
- bacon coffin



MARI SCHUH QUAM PHOTOS

Julio Perez cooks up bacon during a busy Saturday morning at The Coffee Pot in downtown Kenosha.


**Gateway Gourmet**

Susanna Elrod

## Get youngsters involved in the kitchen

Cooking as a creative, nurturing process begins early in many of us. Allowing little ones to cook opens up a whole new world to them, providing them an opportunity to be creative and curious at the same time.

Please encourage the little ones in your life to participate in the kitchen. Do it, of course, within reason — knives, hot stoves, pots and pans can injure if you're careless. However, there are many steps to making a dish in which children can participate and be creative and engage in the cooking process.

Here's a way to use the fresh vegetables of the season and allow children to pick the veggies they want — and, hopefully, will want to eat. It's a light and healthy recipe that children will love helping you to make. And, once they pick the ingredients and it's made, you can call it their signature dish — such as Sofia's Veggie Pasta.

The key ingredients used in this recipe are the garlic, olive oil and pasta. The other ones I've listed below with asterisks can all be swapped out for vegetables chosen by the children. Some alternates to the four I've listed are shredded carrots, peas, French green beans, broccoli, roasted red peppers and sun-dried tomatoes.

Whichever veggie needs to be cooked longest should be put into the pan first, after the garlic has been cooked. A final option would be to put in a half-cup white wine at the end of cooking — making sure, of course, to sauté it for at least two additional minutes to cook off the alcohol.

Ask the children which pasta shape they want to use, and toss the mixture with the cooked pasta.

A grilled chicken breast would go great with the pasta dish.

Enjoy!

### PASTA WITH FRESH VEGETABLES

- 1 pound pasta
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped garlic
- \*1 medium onion, diced medium
- \*1 small zucchini sliced into rounds
- \*2 Roma tomatoes, diced small
- \*1 cup fresh baby spinach
- 8 fresh basil leaves, rolled and sliced
- Parmesan cheese

\*You can substitute the vegetable you wish for these four. Mix and match — use what the children will eat and have fun!

1. Cook the pasta according to the package. Any shape or form will work — use whatever the children like best.

2. Drain pasta.

3. In a 12-inch, heated sauté pan, add 1 cup olive oil and the chopped garlic. Cook, making sure that the garlic does not brown. (Garlic cooked to the color brown is bitter.)

4. Add the onion, zucchini, tomatoes, baby spinach and basil leaves. Heat and toss together until onions and zucchini are tender. Do not over-sauté.

5. Toss pasta with sautéed vegetables and serve with freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

**The Gateway Gourmet, Susanna Elrod, is lead instructor in the culinary arts program at Gateway Technical College. If you have a food question for her or you want her to cover a certain topic or dish in her column, send an e-mail to colony1@gtc.edu.**