

The All-American Burger

Wine Pairing: Zinfandel

INGREDIENTS:

Pickled Cucumber Salad:

- 1 Cup rice vinegar
- 1 Cup cold water
- 3 Teaspoons sugar
- ¼ Teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ Teaspoon dried crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 Teaspoon mustard seeds
- 3 Mini cucumbers
- 1 Small sweet onion

Pimento Cheese Remoulade:

- 1 Cup mayonnaise
- ¼ Cup pimento spread, at room temperature
- 5 Cornichons
- 2 Teaspoons capers
- 2 Teaspoons fresh basil, finely chopped
- 1 Teaspoon creole mustard
- ½ Teaspoon hot sauce
- 1 Teaspoon garlic in a jar, minced and drained

Fried Tomatoes:

- 2 Large green tomatoes that are starting to turn red, sliced ½ -inch
- 1 Cup all-purpose flour
- 2 Whole eggs
- 2 Teaspoons water
- 1 ½ Cups plain panko bread crumbs
- 1 Cup cornmeal
- 1 Teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 Teaspoon onion powder
- 1 Teaspoon black pepper
- 5 Cups canola oil for frying
- 1 Teaspoon kosher salt

Patties:

- 2 Pounds ground beef, 80 percent lean, 20 percent fat
- 2 Teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 Teaspoon black pepper

Miscellaneous:

- Canola oil for brushing the grill
- Mandolin rack to cool fried tomatoes
- 5 Ounce empty tuna can
- Cooking spray

INSTRUCTIONS:

To Make the Pickled Cucumber and Onion Salad:

1. Combine vinegar, water, sugar, salt, dried pepper flakes, and mustard seeds in a small bowl
2. Slice cucumbers and onions on a mandolin
3. Add vegetables to pickling mixture and marinate for 30 minutes
4. Drain and set aside

To Make the Pimento Cheese Remoulade:

5. Combine mayonnaise and pimento spread in a medium bowl and thoroughly mix
6. Mince cornichons and capers and add to mixture
7. Chop basil and add to mixture
8. Add mustard, hot sauce, and garlic to remoulade, and again mix thoroughly
9. Refrigerate until ready to use

To Make the Fried Tomatoes:

10. You will need to set up a dredging station:
 - a. Place flour in a shallow dish
 - b. In another shallow dish, whisk eggs and water
 - c. In a third dish, combine panko, cornmeal, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper and mix thoroughly
11. Coat sliced tomatoes in the flour mixture and shake off any excess
12. Dip floured tomatoes in egg mixture, one at a time, and again allow excess to drip off
13. Place sliced tomatoes into panko/cornmeal mixture and gently press so more bread crumb mixture adheres to the tomatoes. Again, shake off any excess coating.
14. Place a large sauté pan on the grill rack over hot coals
15. Add canola oil and allow it to get hot, but not smoking hot (350 degrees)
16. Gently lower breaded tomato slices into oil and fry until both sides are crispy and golden brown, approximately 2 minutes on each side
17. Place finished fried tomatoes on cooling rack for optimum crispness
18. Salt tomatoes while they are hot

To Make the Patties:

19. Gently divide meat into 6 equal portions and place in a clean, empty 5-ounce tuna can that has been sprayed with cooking spray. There will be a little extra meat in the can, simply smooth the meat out to fit the diameter of the can. (Using a can as a mold ensures picture perfect burgers for a more eye-catching presentation).
20. Release meat from can, slightly flatten the burger, and tighten the edges of the burger
21. Apply salt and pepper evenly to both sides of the patties
22. Place burgers on a very hot grill
23. Sear on both sides and cook until they are medium-rare, approximately 2 ½ minutes to 3 ½ minutes on each side
24. During the last few minutes of cooking, place the buns, cut side down, on the outer edges of the rack to toast lightly

To Assemble the Burgers:

25. Top each toasted bottom bun with pimento cheese remoulade
26. Add drained cucumber and onion salad
27. The grilled burger follows and is crowned with a slice of fried tomato
28. The top toasted bun completes the making of the All-American Burger
29. Serve immediately