

Pesto Italiano Burger

By Anthony Ricci

This recipe makes 2 servings.
Each serving yielding 1 Burger.

Ingredients:

- 2 Brioche hamburger rolls or 2 regular hamburger rolls
- 1/2 LB of ground beef
- 1 fresh whole eggplant
- 1 fresh green pepper
- 2 1/2 cups of freshly grated parmesan cheese
- 2 cups of fresh chopped basil, stems removed and leaves washed
- 3 tbsp of garlic powder
- 1 clove of garlic minced
- 4 cups of Extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 of red onion minced
- 1 Jalapeno pepper, seeds removed and minced
- 4 pieces of lettuce
- 4 slices of provolone cheese

Pesto Spread

1. Combine the Basil leaves, minced garlic, 2 cups of extra virgin olive oil, 1/2 minced red onion, parmesan cheese.
2. Blend in the food processor until smooth. Pour mixture into a clean bowl, cover and refrigerate until ready to use for the next step.

Burger

1. Preheat griddle or grill, making sure to add oil to help from sticking.
2. In a large mixing bowl, hand mix 1/2 LB of ground beef, 1/2 cup of extra virgin olive oil, 3 tbsp of garlic powder, minced jalapeno pepper, 3 tbsp of pesto mixture. Blend everything together preferably with hands to get an even mix.
3. On a cutting board, sprinkle a few drops of olive oil just to lightly coat it. Place ground beef mixture onto cutting board. Create 2 hamburger patties as close to 1/4 LB of meat each. Once the patties are ready to go put them aside on a separate plate.
4. Slice the pepper down to strips, 3/4 of an inch thick. Make the strips small enough to fit on top of the burger. Put them aside.
5. Take the eggplant and slice two 1/2 inch slices. Put them aside.
6. In a small mixing bowl use your final cup of extra virgin olive oil. Add the sliced green pepper and eggplant into the mixing bowl. Gently coat all of the vegetables with olive oil. Place the green pepper and egg plant on the hot griddle or grill. Be sure to flip the eggplant over and check for doneness. The eggplant should become soft but not mushy. Both sides of eggplant should get a brown color and feel done.
7. Cook the burgers after eggplant and green peppers have finished. Medium to medium well is ideal but it is your preference. Flip burgers over to ensure both sides are evenly done and are at the correct temperature.
8. Take your provolone cheese and place 2 slices on each Burger. Remove burgers once cheese melts and put aside.
9. Place the buns with the inside facing down, onto the hot grill and just lightly toast them.
10. Spread pesto on lower half of bun, add 2 pieces of lettuce to each, add the burger with cheese, eggplant on top, then the green peppers. Finishing by placing the top of the bun on the burger.

OPTIONAL: You may place a spoonful of pesto on the burger before adding the eggplant, to give it more of a kick!