

## Building a Better Cajun Burger

Denise Hall, Fit Fare - I have fond memories of the hamburgers my father would cook for me when I was a child in Louisiana. At that time hamburger meat was just called ground beef. One size fits all. Some markets had a choice between ground sirloin or ground chuck. No one knew or cared much about the fat content. Fat adds a lot of flavor and that was a good thing. Walk into any supermarket today and you are offered ground turkey breast, ground turkey, lean ground turkey, ground chicken and ground beef that is marked 75/25, 80/20, 85/15, 87/13, 90/10, 93/7, 95/5, and lately 97/3. So many numbers...

Those numbers refer to the amount of fat present in the meat. For example, 95/5 contains 5% fat. The ground turkey breast is just that, skinless turkey breast and is super lean. Items marked ground turkey or ground chicken usually have meat and skin ground together and can have as much fat as ground beef. Restaurants often use 70/30 ground beef. No wonder those burgers out taste so great.

When I cook burgers for my family I try to buy the leanest beef I can find or turkey breast. Since the fat content is low I have had to find ways to keep the meat moist and flavorful. The first item I add to my lean meat is olive or peanut oil. By replacing the saturated fat with monounsaturated fat I create a more heart healthy burger that stays moist. Next I add lots of garlic and peppers. To make the Cajun burgers I also added hot Italian sausage. My supermarket sells pork, chicken and turkey breast versions that are very lean. To complete the Cajun burger, I made a sauce with spicy mustard and mayonnaise. If you have kids, you will appreciate the fact that my 4 year old son (currently going through a growth phase) ate two of these burgers. They were just that good. Cajun Burgers makes 4 servings

### Burgers

3/4 lb lean beef (93/7 or leaner) or ground turkey breast  
 1/4 lb hot Italian sausage (lean pork, chicken or turkey), removed from casing  
 2 Tbsp olive or peanut oil  
 1/4 c red bell pepper, chopped  
 3 cloves garlic, chopped  
 1/2 tsp salt  
 few dashes Worcestershire sauce  
 whole wheat hamburger buns or English muffins  
 lettuce  
 tomato, sliced

2 Tbsp mayonnaise (I like low-fat Blue Plate brand)  
 2 Tbsp creole mustard (I like Zatarain's brand)  
 dash Worcestershire sauce

Preheat grill. Mix beef, sausage, oil, bell pepper, garlic, salt and Worcestershire together in a bowl. Shape into 4 patties. Cook 4-5 minutes on each side or until no longer pink inside.

While burgers are cooking make sauce by mixing mayonnaise, mustard and Worcestershire together in a small bowl. Set aside.

Serve burgers on buns with 1 tablespoon sauce, lettuce and tomatoes.