

CNN  
5.24.13



# eatocracy

# eatocracy

main news bite sip



Holy cow! The world's best burger

SHOW CAPTION

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 >

May 24th, 2013  
10:00 AM ET

Top 10 burgers around the country

10:00 AM ET

[Twitter](#)[Digg](#)[Facebook](#)[del.icio.us](#)[reddit](#)[StumbleUpon](#)[MySpace](#) Top 10 burgers around the country

*Kate Krader (@kkrader on Twitter) is Food & Wine's restaurant editor. When she tells us where to find our culinary heart's desire, we listen up.*

As the weather warms up, burger eating is pretty much mandatory. If you're not working a grill, you'll probably be standing near someone wielding some patties and a metal spatula. But, I generally look to the professionals for my burgers. I asked the top burger judge I know, Josh Ozersky, for his top 10 burgers around the country. (For a list of the 25 best burgers around the country, look out for *Food & Wine* magazine's August issue, which features picks from Josh, among others.)

A little about Josh: He's the author of the phenomenal book, "[The Hamburger: A History](#)." His website, [Ozersky.tv](#), frequently includes entries like "The Burger That Made Me Whole."

And he only likes hamburgers with squishy, unseeded white buns and American cheese.

Take it away, Mr. Ozersky.

#### **Pie 'N Burger (Pasadena, California)**

To me, this tiny, family-owned diner produces the consummate old-school, small-scale, traditionally orthodox hamburger: salted, griddled beef, capped with American cheese and nestled on a squishy white bun. The fact that it is located in the same city in which the cheeseburger was reputedly invented weighs heavily on me as well.

#### **Company Burger (New Orleans, Louisiana)**

Company has the highest and noblest aspirations of any burger restaurant I know, and comes closest to attaining them. The young chef learned to make the legendary burger at [Atlanta's Holeman & Finch](#) and transported it to New Orleans, where he is constantly tinkering with it and trying to make it better. Like [New York City's Shake Shack](#), which I also admire immensely, it represents the best instincts of high modern gastronomy, grappling with something humble and traditional.

#### **Brindle Room (New York City)**

The best hamburger in America, in my professional opinion, is served at a small, unassuming restaurant in New York City's East Village called the Brindle Room. Compact, flat, aggressively seasoned, seared in the flares and flames of an old cast-iron pan and composed entirely of dry-aged rib eye deckle, its simplicity and suppleness and beefy, crusty oomph put it in a class by itself. And, of course, like all great burgers, it is highlighted, rather than hidden, by its white, seedless, enriched bun.

#### **The Fat Cat, Bill's Bar and Burger (New York City)**

Two crispy, greasy patties of rich [Pat LaFrieda meat](#), cheesed, topped with caramelized onions and butter and served on a toasted English muffin: This sandwich isn't technically a burger, and nobody goes to Bill's for authenticity or atmosphere, but I don't care. It's the only burger in America I like that doesn't come on an enriched bun.

#### **Keller's Drive-In (Dallas, Texas)**

The quintessential old-school drive-in restaurant, Keller's serves a thin, flat, wonderfully flavorful patty on a poppy seed white bun. I'm not sure why it's so good, if the truth be told, maybe there is some MSG in there somewhere? Don't say it's the atmosphere, though. This burger would be a great in a Trailways bus bathroom.

#### **Schoop's (Multiple Indiana and Illinois locations)**

Schoop's takes the best part of the hamburger - the salty, brown crust - and essentially serves it by itself. This is a radical reimagining of the hamburger; it's like a chicken that's all thighs, or a brisket that is all burnt ends. I wish I were there right now.

#### **Mar'sel (Palos Verdes, California)**

I was completely opposed to this upscale California gourmet burger until I took one bite of it, at which point I became totally in support of it, and found myself doubting my own identity. It was that good.

#### **Au Cheval (Chicago, Illinois)**

This wildly hyped burger is so rare, in that it: (A) conforms to what a hamburger is meant to be (griddled, salted, four ounces, squishy bun), and (B) lives up to the hype. I prefer it with the copious mustardy dressing on the side, as one pinky smear on the bun is all anyone needs, but it's a genuine fabulous burger. I love that they start with preformed patties.

#### **Husk (Charleston, South Carolina)**

Husk's double cheeseburger is just fabulous. The meat, [like everything else there](#), is made from local animals and has its own unique character. But the American cheese bonds it with our great hamburger union.

#### **The Little Owl (New York City)**

There's not much to say about the [Little Owl's bacon cheeseburger \(pictured above and recipe below\)](#), except that it is perfect in every way. It's not too big, and it's not too round, and it's not oversalted or seasoned (although a whiff of curry and Old Bay add a piquant X factor). My first bacon cheeseburger wife was Veselka, also in New York, but I left it for the Little Owl, to which I have been married for years.

*Courtesy Joey Campanaro*  
*Serves 4*

Ingredients

- 1 pound ground beef brisket
- 1 pound ground short rib
- 4 slices American cheese
- 8 slices precooked bacon
- 4 homemade buns
- Lettuce
- Tomato, sliced
- Purple onion, sliced
- Pickles
- Ketchup (suggested brand: [Sir Kensington's](#))
- 1 1/2 tablespoons madras curry powder
- 1 1/2 tablespoons cayenne pepper
- Salt
- Pepper

#### Cooking Directions

1. In a small bowl, mix curry powder, cayenne, 1/2 tablespoon cracked black pepper and 1 1/2 tablespoons sea salt until combined; set aside.
2. Preheat a grill or grill pan over medium high heat.
3. In a large mixing bowl, mix brisket and short rib until blended; season with salt and pepper. Separate into four balls and flatten into 3/4-inch thick patties. Season both sides of each patty with spice mixture.
4. Place patties on hot grill or grill pan, cooking for approximately three minutes per side for medium-rare, four minutes per side for medium; top burgers with 2 slices bacon and cover with cheese during the last minute of cooking. Grill buns, turning over once with tongs, until toasted. Cover the burger with the top bun.
5. Layer bottom bun with lettuce, tomatoes, pickles and red onion before adding the burger and top bun from the grill. Serve immediately.
6. Serve ketchup and extra pickles on the side for those who want it.

#### More from *Food & Wine*:

[Best Burgers in the U.S.](#)

[America's Most Over-the-Top Burgers](#)

[America's Best BBQ Cities](#)

[Ultimate Burger Recipes](#)

[Summer Grilling Recipes](#)

*Do you agree with this list? Post your favorite burger joint in the comments below.*

© 2011 American Express Publishing Corporation. All rights reserved.

**FOOD&WINE**

Posted by: [Kate Krader](#) -- Special to CNN

Filed under: [Bite](#) • [Burgers](#) • [Content Partner](#) • [Food and Wine](#) • [Grilling](#) • [Sandwiches](#) • T1