

Peppered Lamb Burgers with "Hot Tomato" Jam

BY JAMES MCNAIR JUNE 2009 BUILD A BETTER BURGER

Yield 4 burgers

Ingredients

"Hot Tomato" Jam

4 cups ripe tomatoes, peeled, cored, and roughly chopped (for best results, use a variety of tomatoes)

1/3 cup sugar

3 tablespoons finely minced fresh ginger

2 tablespoons unseasoned rice vinegar

1 hot pepper seeded (jalapeno, serrano, datil ect.) finely diced

3 tablespoons fresh basil, cut into chiffonade

Salt

Patties

1 1/3 pounds freshly ground lamb

2 tablespoons five-peppercorn blend, cracked or very coarsely ground

1 garlic clove, finely minced

2 tablespoons sesame oil

1/4 cup Merlot

Salt

Olive oil, for brushing on the grill rack

4 hamburger buns, split

4 red leaf lettuce leaves

Preparation

1. To make the jam, combine the tomatoes, sugar, ginger, vinegar, and hot pepper in a saucepan on slow simmer. Continue simmering, stirring occasionally and moving on and off the heat as necessary, until the mixture is reduced by half, about 40+ minutes.

Continue cooking until the mixture reaches a jam-like consistency, and then remove from the heat and set aside to cool. Stir the basil into the cooled mixture and season to taste with salt. Set aside.

2. Prepare a medium-hot fire in a charcoal grill with a cover, or preheat a gas grill to medium-high.

3. To make the patties, combine the lamb, peppercorn blend, garlic, sesame oil, and Merlot in a large bowl and season with salt. Handling the meat as little as possible to avoid compacting it, mix well. Divide the mixture into 4 equal portions and form the portions into patties to fit the buns.

4. Brush the grill rack with olive oil. Place the patties on the rack, cover, and cook, turning once, until done to preference, about 4 minutes on each side for medium-rare. During the last few minutes of cooking, place the buns, cut side down, on the outer edges of the rack to toast lightly.

5. To assemble the burgers, spread the cut sides of the buns with the tomato jam. On each bun bottom, place a lettuce leaf and a patty. Add the bun tops and serve.