



COME & GET IT

Get Beefed Up For Summer. Forget the gym. Don't even think about that treadmill. If you really want to get "beefed up" before summer rolls around, now is the perfect time: May is officially National Hamburger Month. Thirty-one days devoted to those beloved protein patties? It's a delicious concept, and one that has caught on with meat lovers everywhere. >>

GET BEEFED UP *continued*

Whether you like your burgers medium or prefer them on the rare side, your love for all-things beef is being celebrated on a national scale (and adopted by restaurant chains, who often offer discounts throughout the month). There's no better way to welcome the summer than to bite into a burger and embrace its greasy grandeur. After all, burgers on the grill are synonymous with this time of year.

An immensely popular staple in America's food industry, beef is packed with the stuff you need to keep your body healthy and functional. According to a National Cattlemen's Beef Association statistic, one-third of all Americans have eaten a hamburger or some form of ground beef in the past 24 hours. That makes sense, considering it's a great way to get some of your daily nutrients. Did you know that beef is the number three food source of iron behind fortified cereal and grains? Or that a three-ounce serving of lean beef is an excellent source of B-Complex Vitamins, Phosphorous, Protein and Zinc? That's a lot to chew on!

This summer, while your own buns are getting toasty in the sun, don't forget the burgers. The mouth-watering recipe below comes courtesy of the National Cattlemen's Beef Board.

Ranch Burgers

- 1-1/2 lbs lean ground beef
- 2 tsp sweet paprika
- 2 tsp dried thyme leaves, crushed
- 1-1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp ground red pepper
- 6 hamburger buns, split
- 6 leaves Romaine lettuce
- 6 tomato slices
- 1/4 cup prepared light creamy ranch dressing
- 2 Tbsp canned French fried onions

Combine all spices in an airtight container and shake to blend.

Shape ground beef into 6 patties. Press 3/4 teaspoon of the spice mix evenly into both sides of each patty. Store remaining spice mix in airtight container for future use.

Grill to a final internal temperature of 160 degrees F. Line bottom of each bun with lettuce and tomato. Top with burger and spoon ranch dressing evenly over burgers. Sprinkle with French-fried onions and close sandwiches.

Makes 6 servings. Each serving has 440 calories, 26 grams of fat, 25 grams carbohydrate and 25 percent of the daily iron recommendation

— Nicholas Addison Thomas

**HOME GROWN****Gardening In Small Places**

Limited space doesn't mean limited options

Many folks think that a garden can only be grown by those lucky enough to have large yards. Not true. Whether you have a mid-sized patio or a tiny apartment balcony, there are creative ways for all of us to reap the benefits of a garden. By using different types of containers, window boxes or hanging baskets, and choosing plants that will thrive in small spaces, you can create your own garden paradise.

Make a wish list. Think of it as a grocery list for your garden. First, you should assess your garden space and determine just how much you have to work with. Can your porch handle a respectable row of lilies? Is there enough room in your small yard for a stretch of tomatoes? Once you've determined how much room you have to play with, write down what you'll need to accomplish your garden goals. You'll want to start with the smaller items that will add some flair to your garden space and then graduate to the bigger items like garden ornaments and other decorative items. By purchasing these outdoor accessories in moderation, you can ensure that you're staying within your financial means.

When it comes to gardening, your only limitation is your imagination. That's especially true when you want to establish gardens in small places. The good news is: You don't need a lot of land to grow fresh vegetables or beautiful flowers. Believe it or not, many vegetables are a perfect fit for container gardening and can adapt to growing in a pot. If you're opting for vegetables instead of flowers, consider planting carrots, radishes, tomatoes