

Cook it Yourself: The Southern Gentleman

Chef: Rob Cassi



Restaurant: Airport Grille

Recipe: The Southern Gentleman Burger

My favorite burger recipe is one I did when I worked as a chef down south, called the Southern Gentleman. For this you'll need to make a burger, pimento cheese, and 'chow chow.' You'll also need some pepper cooked bacon and your favorite bun.

House Ground Burger

Good quality beef is always to key; the stuff they sell in the mega-marts is just not going to cut it. Go the extra mile and buy from your local butcher or farmer. They might even make their own grind in-house, in which case you can skip the first step. My favorite local source is Treaty Rock Farms in Little Compton. You'll need:

- 2 lbs. chuck
- 1/2 lb. brisket
- 1/2 lb. hanger steak

Grind in a Kitchen Aid meat grinder, or dice fine and pulse in a food processor, about 5-10 pulses depending. Do not over-

pulse, otherwise you will be creating a forced meat, like a hotdog. Form into 8 oz. patties and put them into the fridge to let rest.

Pimento Cheese

- 1 red pepper grilled, skinned & diced
- 1 cup of your favorite mayonnaise (preferable homemade, but Duke's will do)
- .5 lb. of soften cream cheese
- 1 dash of Tabasco
- 1 teaspoon of sugar
- 2 lbs. of shredded cheddar
- salt and white pepper to taste

First blend your mayonnaise and cream cheese until smooth, then add the rest of your ingredients to the mayo/cheese mixture. Cover and let sit in your fridge. This will make more than you need for the burgers, but once you try the pimento cheese you will always need it around.

Chow Chow (It's relish, don't be afraid of new names!)

- 2 green tomatoes, diced
- 1/2 jalapeno, diced very fine
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- salt and white pepper to taste

Heat a heavy bottom pan to med-high and add a tablespoon of oil. Add green tomatoes, jalapenos, and a pinch of salt; this will help the vegetables lose some of their liquid faster. Cook until the tomatoes look a little paler in color. Add in vinegar and sugar and reduce the heat to medium-low and allow to reduce. Once your mixture looks good (approximately 10-15 min), allow to cool in the fridge.

Assemble!



The Southern Gentleman

Now it's time to put it all together. You'll need to start with your favorite bun; mine comes from Pain Avignon Bakery in Cape Cod. You'll also need your favorite pepper bacon cooked. Nimon Ranch uncured is one I used for this burger a lot.

Grill your burger how you like it. With all the different cuts of beef used, I really don't recommend over medium. Right before it gets to the temperature you want, spread the pimento cheese on top and put a bowl over your burger to get it nice and melty. Take it off the grill and allow your burger to rest. Yes, rest. Food, especially meat, should never be eaten blazing hot because you will lose all the juiciness.

Give it about two minutes, which is just enough time so you can toast your buns and break the bacon up to fit on the bottom bun. Place your patties on top of the bacon and top with the chow chow, and enjoy!