

Hamburger invention

The development of foods is a process that often gets overlooked. Foods we consider to be part of our every day lives, and have never had to live without, often got their starts from innovative people coming up with new ways to eat familiar foods. Take, for example, the invention of the hamburger.

{mosgoogle left 4788305716} A hamburger is a popular kind of sandwich. It is most commonly made with a beef patty that is fried, grilled, steamed or broiled. The patty is served between a bun with condiments such as salads and sauce between the bun as well. Hamburger also refers to the meat itself – which is ground beef.

There are many different theories as to how and where the first hamburger invention took place. The ground meat used to make hamburgers is traced back to the Mongols. Much like the hamburger of today, the Mongols's version started as a convenient way to eat on the go. The Mongol cavalry often traveled long distances and sometimes did not dismount their horses for days. Because they needed food that could be eaten easily with one hand and without dismounting, they placed meat patties under their saddles. While riding, the meat would get tenderized. The meat was then eaten raw.

When the Mongols invaded Moscow, they brought with them this type of meat. The Russian's renamed the meat ‘steak tartare’. This is because the Mongols were called Tartars. Over the years the dish was adapted and modified with raw eggs and chopped onions.

In the 1600's, ships from Hamburg, Germany began visiting the Russian ports. The Russian dish of steak tartare was taken back to Germany and called ‘tartare steak’.

In the late 1800's, sailors who had visited Hamburg started calling the meat ‘Hamburg steak’. The hamburger invention process took a significant leap when food stalls in New York City offered this dish in the hopes of attracting German sailors. Immigrants from Germany to the United States also brought along Hamburg steak. The reason why Hamburg steak was so popular was because the German's flavored low-grade minced beef, therefore making it affordable to the lower classes as well.

The meat was then cooked to form a filet, and eventually came to be known as ‘Hamburger’.

Nowadays the word ‘hamburger’ can be used to describe the sandwich or the meat patty itself. While Hamburg in Germany is given credit for the type of meat used in hamburgers, there are many claims as to where the first modern hamburger originated. One such claim of the hamburger invention is in Wisconsin. It is said that in 1885 Charlie Nagreen tried to sell fried meatballs at a county fair. Because people found them hard to eat, he flattened them and served them as a sandwich.

Another claim was made by a man by the name of Louis Lunch. He claimed that he invented this meal in Connecticut in the 1890's, as a quick meal for businessmen and office workers. His hamburger invention, however, was made with toasted bread and not a round bun.

During the first World War, the hamburger's popularity plummeted in the United States, largely due to anti-German attitudes. The hamburger was also given the alternate name of ‘salisbury steak’ during that period. The modern day fast food hamburger became popular when Ray Croc bought the McDonald's chain and opened his first franchise in the mid-1950's. The term ‘burger’ now refers to a round bun with any type of filling, be it chicken, fish or vegetarian. A hamburger with cheese is commonly known as a ‘cheeseburger’.

Like many food items that we take as a given, the hamburger's invention process was a long and gradual process, with people using ideas they learned from others and adapting to their own particular purposes. From a rudimentary convenience food to today's quickly-prepared fast food meal, the invention of the hamburger demonstrates the adaptability of foods, and the innovation that goes into improving them.