

# Cooking Beef ... with Ashley



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Happy Independence Day! Celebrating the freedom that we have been bestowed by our nation's ancestors and servicemen and women is awe inspiring and an incredible privilege. To all of our cattlemen and women who have served to protect our country's freedom- thank you. To the cattlemen and women who work tirelessly to raise a safe, wholesome, nutritious and delicious protein in order to feed the world- thank you.

When consumers said that they wanted a leaner steak, you obliged and selected for cattle with less external fat, yet adequate marbling. When consumers said that they wanted to know that their beef is raised safely and humanely, you were again accommodating and invested in the Beef Quality Assurance program. Such as the military defends our freedom as Americans, cattle producers have defended the beef industry as producers of a safe, wholesome and nutritious complete protein.

Beef is one of nature's best multivitamins, packed full of zinc, iron, protein, vitamin B12 and other essential nutrients. Beef is also the best tasting protein (in my opinion) and adds an unrivaled flavor to any meal. Ground beef is the most popular beef option purchased by consumers because it is versatile and affordable and delicious. Ground beef hamburgers are succulent and fun and have an amazing ability to transport your taste buds depending on your condiments. A cooking tip when handling ground beef, do not over mix your meat with any spices you may be adding- the beef will become increasingly dry and tough the more it is handled. So mix thoroughly, but handle sparingly.

For this recipe, I have taken a fa-



**BEEF:** It's What's  
For Dinner

## Cheesy Jalapeño Pepper-Stuffed Burgers

Total Recipe Time: 30 minutes      Makes 4 servings

### Ingredients:

1. 1 lb ground round
2. 2Tbsp mesquite steak seasoning or other preferred spice mix
3. 4 fresh jalapeno peppers (frozen stuffed poppers may be substituted)
4. ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese or 4 ounces cream cheese
5. ¼ cup chopped fresh plum tomato
6. 2 Tbsp sliced pitted ripe olives
7. Prepared thick-and-chunky salsa or salsa verde

### Instructions:

1. Cut the tops off of the jalapenos. Remove any ribs and seeds. Grill peppers on rack for 5-7 minutes until the skins are lightly blistered and the peppers have softened slightly. Remove the peppers from the grill; cool slightly. Stuff peppers with desired cheese. (If using frozen poppers, allow to thaw slightly before adding to ground beef.)
2. Combine ground beef and seasoning in large bowl, mixing lightly but thoroughly. Lightly shape into four thin patties. Place one stuffed pepper in center of each patty; wrap beef around pepper to enclose, sealing seams and forming ball. Flatten balls into patties about 4 to 5 inches across and 1 inch thick.
3. Place patties on grid over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill, covered, 15 to 16 minutes, until instant-read thermometer inserted horizontally into center registers 160°F.
4. Sprinkle evenly with tomato and olives. Serve with salsa, as desired.

Recipe adapted from the Beef Checkoff. Photo courtesy of the Beef Checkoff.

vorite of Southerners, jalapeno poppers or Armadillo eggs, depending on where you are from, and put them inside of a traditionally delicious hamburger. A gooey, cheesy interior with a peppery kick will elevate your burgers and surprise your favorite beef eaters. But always make sure you serve burgers that are safe and savory at 160 degrees.

The internal temperature of the beef should be at least 160 degrees when read on a meat thermometer. Make sure with this recipe that you are testing the temperature of the meat, not the cheese to ensure optimal food safety.

I wish you a Happy 4th of July and happy grilling season! Eat More Beef and God Bless America!