

# Beef burgers: recommendations for safe eating

Beef burgers are made up of 100% beef muscle. They are a great favourite of the French and have a positive image with 83%<sup>1</sup> of the population for reasons of practicality, price, taste and nutritional properties (rich in protein, source of iron and B vitamins). Here are some safety recommendations on how to prepare and eat beef burgers.

## Beef burgers, cooking according to personal preference

Beef burgers can be eaten raw, in a “steak tartare” preparation, or cooked. **For young children, particularly under 3 years** and as a safety precaution up to 15 years), **the elderly (over 65 years) and pregnant women**, considered as sensitive populations, the health authorities recommend that beef burgers should be **cooked thoroughly**, whether they are frozen or chilled (also referred to as “refrigerated”). For other consumers, burgers can be served “rare”, “medium” or “well-done”, according to personal preference.

### Beef burgers “Well-done”



**Brown in the centre.**  
Core temperature 70°C and higher



**Beef burgers  
“Rare”**  
Core temperature  
around 50-55°C



**Beef burgers  
“Medium”**  
Core temperature  
around 60°-65°C

A “well-done” burger means the degree of cooking has reached a core temperature of 70°C or higher: **after cooking, the centre of the meat should be a grey-brown colour**; under no circumstances should it be red or pink. This grey-brown colour shows that the proteins in the centre have been cooked, it also means that any possible bacteria, such as *Escherichia coli*<sup>2</sup> or salmonella, will be destroyed. A burger which has been cooked thoroughly to the centre can be eaten by everyone.

**In practice** For example under the grill (260°C), a **frozen 100 gramme burger will be thoroughly cooked after 13 minutes** and after being turned over 3 times at regular intervals. In the same conditions, a **chilled (also referred to as “refrigerated”) burger will be thoroughly cooked after 8 minutes.**

Source: AFSSA, the impact of cooking practices on microbial risks in food (2009).



## Practical information on beef burgers, this concerns everyone

Upstream, the professionals in the meat sector implement extensive preventive microbiological hygiene and safety measures<sup>3</sup> (e.g.: observing the cold chain, cleaning and disinfecting equipment, etc.). In turn, the consumer must adopt simple but essential hygiene rules from the moment of purchasing the burger up to its preparation and consumption.

### Frozen beef burgers

### Refrigerated/chilled beef burgers

#### PURCHASE



Transport the meat in an isotherm bag as quickly as possible from the place of purchase to the home.

#### PRESERVATION METHOD

**In the freezer at -18°C**, in its original packaging. Observe the "Best Before" date.

#### PRESERVATION METHOD

• In the coldest part of the fridge (See fridge technical instructions) **between 0°C and 4°C**.

Remember to check the fridge temperature regularly with a thermometer designed for this purpose.

• In its original packaging (container or butcher's paper).

• **The time between purchase and cooking depends on the packaging:**

- Butcher's paper: eat on day of purchase.
- In a container: observe the "Use Before" date indicated on the label. Eat on day of opening.

#### PREPARATION METHOD



##### **Defrosting in microwave:**

observe the defrosting time indicated in the microwave technical instructions. Cook immediately after defrosting.

**Without defrosting:** Cook immediately after removing from freezer. In this case, the cooking time for a "well-done" burger will be longer than after defrosting.

Other possibility: defrost for 12 hours in the coldest part of the fridge, between 0°C and 4°C. Defrost in the original packaging or in food wrap film. Cook on the day of defrosting.



*Never defrost at ambient temperature!*

#### PREPARATION METHOD



Cook directly after removing from fridge.

**Find out more:** "Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC): How are we protected?" (CIV, 2012). [www.civ-viande.org](http://www.civ-viande.org)

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