

Easy-to-prepare meals and accompanying drinks

# Lamb Burgers In Pitta Pockets

BY RACHEL WALKER



Rachel Walker is a food writer for numerous national publications. Visit [rachel-walker.co.uk](http://rachel-walker.co.uk) for more details

THIS RECIPE IS THE ANTITHESIS to towering restaurant burgers, which need to be deconstructed before they fit in your mouth. Mini burgers enclosed in pockets of pitta bread are easy to eat at a barbecue and can be stuffed with lots of garnish.

Buy the best quality mince you can afford and try not to flip the burgers too wildly during cooking. Hold your nerve and only flip the patties once so they stay in tact!

## Serves 4

- 500g lamb mince
- 50g breadcrumbs
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and sliced
- 1tbsp cumin seeds, ground
- 1–2 courgettes, cut on the diagonal
- 1tbsp olive oil
- 150g halloumi, sliced
- 6tbsps plain yogurt
- 8–12 fresh mint leaves, finely sliced
- 4 handheld pitta breads, halved

1. Put the lamb mince in a mixing bowl and add the breadcrumbs, chilli and cumin. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper, and use your hands to mix everything together until it's well combined—but don't overwork or mash it.
2. Split the mince mixture into eight pieces and shape



into small patties. If needed, all this can be done in advance and refrigerated for up to 24 hours.

3. To cook the burgers on a barbecue, lightly brush them with oil. Put them on a grill over a bed of white-hot coals, and cook them for 6–8 minutes in total, flipping halfway through cooking.

4. To cook the burgers in the kitchen, preheat the oven to 200C. Put the burgers in a hot griddle pan, or under the grill, for two minutes on either side, until the top and bottom turn brown and crisp. Then place them in the oven for a further 6–8 minutes, until the patties are cooked through.

5. Meanwhile, place the sliced courgette and halloumi on a hot griddle pan or under the grill, and cook for 2–3 minutes on each side, until they are lined with strips of char. Set aside on a plate.

6. Mix together the yogurt and mint in a dish, then season. Finally, toast the pitta bread and slice in half.

7. Slot a mini patty into each half of the pitta, then splash on some of the mint-yogurt dressing. Squeeze in the halloumi and courgette round the side—plus any other garnishes you fancy!

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM & ZOE HILL

## TIP...

If you ever have ends of stale, leftover bread then blitz it into breadcrumbs and freeze in a sandwich bag. They have such a big surface area, they defrost quickly.

Don't miss our ten delicious vegetarian burger recipes at [readersdigest.co.uk/veggie-burgers](http://readersdigest.co.uk/veggie-burgers)



# Think Pink!

IT'S LONG BEEN THE CASE that sartorial fashions change from season to season: soft pastels then dark denim, coral then neons. What's more recent is the way that the cycle has trickled into the drinks industry. Last summer bright-orange glasses were charged with aperol spritz, negroni and campari on the rocks. This season, orange is on its way out and drinks are turning blush pink instead.

"Pink Gin" was first drunk by the Royal Navy back in the 19th century. The savage cocktail, believed to help seasickness, mixed Plymouth gin with a dash of angostura bitters, which gave it a pink hue. Fever Tree's latest launch of Aromatic Tonic (Waitrose, £1.69)—tonic water infused with South American angostura bark—means that the mixer carries the colours and flavour of the bitters, giving the drink a more palatable, 21st-century twist.

It's not the only way to give a G&T a twist of pink, thanks to the proliferation of pink gins hitting the market. The Bitter Truth (Harvey Nichols, £48) is mixed with similar aromatic bitters, while Pinkster (Ocado, £35) is infused with raspberries, and Edgerton Original Pink Gin (Fortnum & Mason, £32.90) takes its colour

from pomegranate extract. San Franciscan cocktail "The Greyhound" is also cropping up on bar menus, using pink grapefruit as a mixer for traditional, clear gin.

For those who prefer a session drink, Cranes is a young company behind hot-pink cranberry cider (Ocado, £1.99), and for soft alternatives, cold-press teas is an enduring trend. I always find that hibiscus iced tea is the perfect thirst quencher for a hot summer's day (Hibiscus Tea, The Kent & Sussex Tea & Coffee Co, £1.95).



## Pink Cocktails

### Hibiscus Iced Tea

- 1 litre water
- 15g dried hibiscus flowers
- 50ml sugar syrup
- 1 lime, cut into six wedges

Pour the water into a large jug. Add the dried hibiscus flowers and steep overnight in the fridge. Strain to remove the dried flowers and sweeten with the sugar syrup. Fill tall glasses with ice cubes, top up with cold-brew hibiscus tea and garnish with lime wedges.



### Ultimate Pink G&T

- 50ml Plymouth gin
- Fever Tree Aromatic Tonic
- Strip of lemon zest

Fill a tall glass with ice cubes, pour in the gin and top up with Fever Tree Aromatic Tonic. Run the pith side of the lemon-zest strip around the rim of the glass, then pop it into the drink.



### Greyhound

- 50ml gin or vodka
- Pink grapefruit juice
- Sprig of rosemary

Fill a tumbler with ice cubes, pour in the gin or vodka and top up with grapefruit juice. Garnish with a sprig of fresh rosemary and serve.



### BOOK



**Superfood Family Classics** by Jamie Oliver, £22. Enhance your repertoire of healthy—and very tasty—dishes.

### BARGAIN



**Small glass bowls, Tiger stores, £1.** Cheap and cheerful, these are great for salads and sides at summer barbecues.

### BLOW OUT



**Yellow glass pitcher and set of six tumblers, Sophie Conran, £30.** A jug is always handy when dining al fresco.