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STORE HOURS: Monday – Saturday 10 am – 7 pm, Closed Sundays
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*Recipes excerpted from **Burger Bar** by Hubert Keller with Penelope Wisner. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ. Copyright 2009. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.*

We named this burger after the casino card game. We make it with Black Angus beef, Jack cheese, and a black condiment, tapenade, to underscore the name. But the flavor combination is more than just show business. The rich, salty pungency of the olive paste adds complexity to the burger's flavors.

Black Jack Burgers (Serves 4)

2 pounds coarsely ground chuck, chilled
2 tablespoons olive oil plus 1 teaspoon
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 slices (about 6 ounces) Monterey Jack cheese
4 ciabatta buns
About 1/2 cup Tapenade (see below)
4 large leaves butter lettuce
1 medium, ripe tomato, thinly sliced

Handling lightly to keep the texture light and juicy, divide the meat into 4 evenly sized, thick patties. The burgers can be shaped and refrigerated, covered, for several hours or overnight.

When ready to cook, heat the olive oil in a large skillet or grill pan over medium-high heat until very hot, or build a medium-hot fire in a barbecue. Generously season the meat on both sides with salt and pepper.

Cook the burgers in the skillet, turning once or twice, for 7 to 10 minutes for medium-rare. Do not press down on the patties. With a large spoon, baste the burgers several times with the fat in the pan. (You can also preheat the oven to 450°F and cook the burgers on top of the stove until they are brown on both sides, and then finish them in the oven.) To grill the burgers, oil the grate, arrange the patties on it, and cover. Cook as above.

For the last minute or two of cooking, drape a slice of cheese over each burger to melt. Then remove them to a warm platter, keep warm, and let rest for several minutes before serving.

While the burgers cook, toast the buns in a toaster oven or under the broiler, about 5 inches from the heat, until lightly toasted. Or toast them on the outer perimeter of the grill rack.

To build the burgers, spread each of the bun bottoms with about a tablespoon of tapenade. Top with a lettuce leaf, and then with overlapping layers of tomato. Add the burgers, and then a generous dollop of tapenade. Cover with the bun tops. Serve immediately.



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Black Jack Burgers, (continued)

Tapenade

Tapenade, an intensely flavored puree of black olives, anchovies, and seasonings, has a natural affinity for meat, especially beef and lamb. It adds deep, rich, slightly pungent flavors.

Build your own: In the south of France in summertime, tapenade is smeared on crusty bread and served with plates of charcuterie meats and pate. Try the tapenade with lamb burgers and buffalo burgers. Leftovers are wonderful to have on hand for a quick snack or as a sandwich with goat cheese.

Makes about 1-1/2 cups

1-1/3 cups pitted brine-cured black olives, such as Kalamata
4 oil-packed anchovy fillets, drained (optional)
2 tablespoons capers, drained
2 tablespoons olive oil
3 large garlic cloves, peeled
Leaves from 10 sprigs fresh flat-leaf parsley or basil or a mix of both
Leaves from 2 or 3 sprigs fresh thyme
2 teaspoons cognac or brandy
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
Pinch of freshly ground black pepper

Put the olives, anchovies, capers, olive oil, garlic, parsley, thyme, cognac, mustard, lemon juice, and pepper in a food processor or blender. Process, stopping to scrape the sides occasionally, until you have a fairly smooth puree. No salt is needed because the anchovies and olives are fairly salty. Transfer the tapenade to a container and set aside until needed. The tapenade keeps, covered and refrigerated, for up to a week.