

Chef Spotlight: Interview with Andy D'Amico

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A Rare (Or Well Done) Find

The name of the restaurant is 5 Napkin Burger and no, it's not a hyperbole. Chef Andy D'Amico's elevated burgers drip with juice from the nest Angus chuck after the first bite. One napkin. Then, considering they're topped with everything from spicy tomato sauce and vinegar peppers on the Italian Turkey to house-made guacamole and pepper jack cheese on the Avocado Ranch, there's napkin's two through five.

Most restaurants start with an idea, then build a menu, then the rest follows. Not here. Chef Andy created the original 5 Napkin Burger and knew it was worthy of its own post in the New York City restaurant scene. He now has four Manhattan locations and an outpost in Boston, all serving his beautiful 10 oz. creation among a roster of others. We view the period between Memorial Day, July Fourth, and Labor Day as burger season—the perfect opportunity to hear from Chef Andy on how he developed his signature recipe, guidelines for how to enjoy it, and why 5 Napkin is different from other burger joints in the city.

Ten ounces of fresh ground beef, Gruyere cheese, caramelized onions, and rosemary aioli – that's the Original 5 Napkin burger. Those are some elevated ingredients! How'd you develop the recipe?

The 5 Napkin Burger was created for our French restaurant Nice Matin. I felt the burger needed to live up to the name, so I decided to use 10 ounces of fresh ground chuck. I wanted a French cheese that would impart a distinctive flavor but not overpower, so I chose a French Gruyere (Comte). Caramelized onions added sweetness and texture, but I still needed a sauce, preferably French. I happened to be featuring a rosemary aioli on a lamb dish; I tried that and it was a winning combo.



Burgers are a staple of summer, but in the city grilling isn't always easy. Which menu item is most reminiscent of one you'd serve up at a backyard BBQ?

When I want to show off. The 5 Napkin Burger is the go-to and not at all challenging to pull off on a charcoal grill outdoors. My other go-to is a classic 6 oz. patty of ground chuck topped with American cheese on a soft bun with lettuce, bread & butter pickles, tomato, and our 5N sauce – ketchup, mayo, mustard based.

What do you suggest pairing with it to drink?

I like my burgers pink and my wine pink. There's plenty of great rosé to drink during barbecue

season. Drinking wine instead of beer leaves room for two burgers.

Was there a burger concoction that maybe missed the mark with diners, and what's one that had an unexpected positive response?

We featured a "Beantown Burger" in Boston (2011) with smoked gouda, roasted tomato, Boston baked beans, and relish. I thought it was a natural, the Bostonians did not.

This past March we featured The Blarney Burger. I blended corned beef in with the ground chuck, topped it with imported Irish cheddar, a fried hash brown, slaw, and Guinness mustard sauce: a surprise hit.

Oozing with ketchup; topped with pickles; even sans bun. There's countless ways to eat a burger, but do you have a "no-no" when it comes to personal preference? Or, on the other hand, a new idea for people to try?

I'm pretty traditional when it comes to eating burgers. I always start by tasting without a bun. I'm fond of our house recipe potato bun, so that's next up. I also like to eat burgers over one of our salads. I believe Ramen noodles should be used for soup, not as rolls.



Leave us with this: why are we coming to 5 Napkin over other burger spots in NYC?

5 Napkin Burger is the only premium burger restaurant where you can get a chef-created, cooked-to-temperature, 10oz. gourmet burger with artisanal toppings, stacked high on a plate, made with all-natural Aspen Ridge angus chuck delivered fresh every morning, on a potato bun delivered twice daily, with hand-cut French fries, a hand-crafted cocktail, a fine glass of wine, or a craft beer flight, delivered to your table by a warm, hospitable person in a beautiful and comfortable setting.

