


Boredom-Busting Burgers and Dogs

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 by **Brette Sember**

Is your grill groaning from the endless parade of kid fodder — hot dogs and hamburgers inhaled to the exclusion of just about everything else? What are you going to feed them next time you grill something fabulous and they turn up their noses and holler "Ew, gross!"? They may not realize it, but your kids are probably as tired of eating the same old grill fare as you are of cooking it.



If you or your kids are tired of the usual kids' meal on a bun, there are alternatives that children will enjoy are fun, a little silly and offer new yet traditional flavors for them to enjoy (in other words, nothing "gross"). The following recipes are perfect for a child's outdoor party, a family picnic, an adult gathering where the children feel bored and left out or any night your family cooks on the grill and needs something creative. Fire up the grill and watch them chow these meals down!

Stuffed Hamburgers (or Grilled Meatloaf)

Mix cheese, ketchup, herbs, onion, Worcestershire sauce and anything else (such as chopped mushroom peppers and other seasonings your kids deem palatable) you want into the hamburger, add some bread shape into patties and grill.

Hamdogs and Hotburgers

Shape the hamburger into logs before grilling and serve on hot dog rolls. Slice up hot dogs and serve the hamburger rolls. Provide toppings such as ketchup, mustard, relish, cheese and pickles.

Bag O'Beans

Fill foil bags with baked beans and hot dog chunks. Grill and eat right out of the bag with a spoon.

Grill-I Beans

Fill foil bags with chili made with hamburger or ground turkey and grill. Eat it right out of the bag. Provide shredded cheese as a topping.

Gobbleburgers

Use ground turkey instead of hamburger and add cheese or seasonings to liven it up.

Breakfast Buns

Grill breakfast sausages and line them up on hot dog rolls for dinner. Try topping them with some scram for a grilled breakfast.

Inside-Out Burgers

Grill two thin hamburgers. Place one half of a roll between them and serve. It may be messy, so use a foil wrap for any toppings desired.

Dog Fingers

Grill some chicken fingers and serve them on a hot dog roll with blue cheese, honey or barbecue sauce toppings.

Grillballs

Make meatballs for the grill (large enough that they won't slip through the grates) and serve on hot dog roll with spaghetti sauce instead of ketchup, and some Parmesan cheese sprinkled on top.

Taco Dogs

Serve hot dogs on taco shells or roll them up in soft tortillas with Mexican toppings, such as chopped tomatoes, cheese, salsa, sour cream or taco sauce.

Cheese Surprises

Place a cube of cheese in the center of the hamburger and completely cover it with hamburger meat, then grill. When kids bite into it they'll find a melted cheese surprise. Add a small piece of cooked bacon for some crunch.

Wrap-Arounders

Wrap bacon around hot dogs, using toothpicks to secure the bacon. Be careful when grilling since the bacon can drip and cause flare-ups. Remove the toothpicks before serving on hot dog rolls or wrapped in pita bread.

Dog Kebab

Alternate chunks of hot dog with vegetables on a skewer. Remove from the skewer when done and serve on hot dog roll or with pita bread.

Use these ideas to spur your own imagination and that of your children. With a little thought, you can come up with endless variations on grilled dishes for children to enjoy while the adults are relaxing and savoring their own delicious meals. Involve the children in both thinking up and making their own entrees. Remember, they're more likely to eat what they help to make themselves.

Brette McWhorter Sember is the author of four books and lives in western New York State where she and her husband frequently try to come up with interesting food their two children might actually eat.

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