

Recipe: Wite Kastle Klones

Entry by adam | June 02, 2005 | [Link](#) | [👍](#)



[SKIP THE EXPOSITION AND GO RIGHT TO THE RECIPE.]



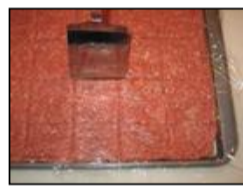
As you may have noticed, A Hamburger Today looooves White Castle. Unfortunately, none of us lives close enough to a Castle to enjoy a sackful of Slyders on a regular basis. Heck, Hamburglar Hadley, based in Los Angeles, is 1,800 miles from the nearest "eating house." Seeing as how many of our readers live outside the chain's limited area of coverage, we thought we'd experiment with a copycat recipe that can be made at home. I like to call these homemade sliders "Wite Kastle Klones."

After Googling "White Castle" copycat recipe and perusing the results, I decided to go with [this one](#), despite the fact that it calls for 3 oz. of strained-beef baby food. (Yuck!)

The first step was assembling the ingredients (right), the hardest part of which was choosing an appropriate pickle chip—some were too thick for such a tiny burger, but I finally found an acceptable product. The weirdest ingredient in this recipe is strained-beef baby food; I followed the recipe as-is but will probably omit this component in future versions. I can't imagine it makes *that* much of a difference, and it just seems nasty. While you'd think finding buns for the sliders would be difficult, I knew from my trip to [The Burger Joint](#) that [Martin's Potato Rolls](#) would work perfectly. If you can't find these, try cutting hot-dog buns in thirds.



Alright, let's cut to the chase. Making hamburgers is pretty straightforward, and these just have a few added twists, namely mixing the beef with beef stock and the, ahem, baby food. Do this in a large bowl. It makes a sort of mushy mixture, but that's OK; it helps when you spread the beef out in a thin slab (above and right; click images to enlarge). I used a 10-by-14-inch rimmed baking sheet, which seemed to be the perfect size. Line the sheet with plastic wrap before transferring the beef mixture to it; this will help prevent sticking and aid in the spreading process. Use a spatula initially to flatten the meat (above left); then cover it with an additional sheet of plastic wrap, and use a rolling pin (above center) or your hands to spread the beef across the entire sheet (above right). Remove the top layer of plastic wrap, and use the spatula to make squares (right).



Cover your scored patty slab, and transfer it to the freezer for about 30 minutes so the beef firms up; this makes it easier to perforate the patties later. Perforation allows the steam to rise up through the burger and cook it quickly. In reality, though, you can probably skip this step. White Castle uses this method so they don't have to flip the burgers. I ended up flipping mine, thus obviating the need for holes. If you want to do this, however, a McDonald's (!) straw works well; its width is the perfect size to make the five holes à la Whitey's.

This step is not optional: Re-cover the meat with plastic wrap, and freeze it solid. There's no good way to separate the squares without doing so. After the patties are frozen, take them out of the freezer, remove the plastic wrap, and carefully break them apart; it helps to re-score with a sharp knife before doing so.



Meanwhile, place the dried chopped onions in a small bowl, and add the hot water. Use a ratio of 2 parts water to 1 part onion. Allow the onions to soak for 10 minutes. Then gather the buns, pickle chips, cheese (if using), and the condiments of your choice. Heat your skillet or grill pan (cast iron ones work best) over medium-high heat. Add the onions to the skillet, making sure the water coats its bottom; if not, add a little more until it does. Add as many patties as you can easily manage. Steam-fry them about 2 minutes per side.

The result is eerily similar to the Castle's Slyders, with the same oniony, pickly, salty taste. And the smell lingers in my apartment even as I type this hours afterward. At this point, you're probably asking yourself two questions. Is there anything the cook would do differently next time? Yes. I will omit the baby food, skip the perforation, and cut the patties into 3-inch squares as the 2.5-inch squares I used this time shrank too much (see photos, below, which show patties at beginning and end of cooking). Is all the effort worth it? For me, it's more about the novelty of making these ill' suckers at home than anything. Otherwise, it's a lot of futzing to do when you can more easily shape a larger patty and skip all the freezing and forming of mini squares—or when the nearest White Castle is a 15-minute train ride away.



WITE KASTLE KLONES

[Makes about 20 two-and-a-half-inch square patties or 12 three-inch patties]

Ingredients

- 1 lb. ground chuck
- 2/3 cup beef broth
- 2.5 oz. jar strained-beef baby food (you could probably omit)
- 1 1/4 cups dried chopped onions (about 3 1/3 oz.) *
- 2 1/2 cups hot water (or more if needed)
- 20 small dinner rolls (or 7 hot dog buns cut in thirds)
- Cheese and condiments (optional)

Instructions

- Line a 10-by-14-inch rimmed baking sheet with plastic wrap. Mix beef, beef stock, and baby food in a large bowl. Transfer mixture to lined baking sheet, and use a spatula to flatten. Place second sheet of plastic wrap over meat, and use rolling pin or hands to further flatten meat so it covers entire surface of pan.
- Remove top layer of plastic wrap, and use spatula to score flattened beef into 2.5-inch squares. Reapply wrap, and place pan in freezer until meat is frozen solid.
- Place dried onion in a small bowl, and add the hot water; let stand at least 10 minutes. Meanwhile, take frozen beef from freezer, and remove from plastic wrap. Re-score it with a sharp knife, and gently break patties apart.
- Heat a large skillet (cast iron works best) or grill pan over medium-high heat. Add 1/4 of onion-and-water mixture to skillet. When water begins to steam (which should happen almost instantly), place 5 patties on top of onions. Cook, mixing up once, to desired doneness. (Cooking time will depend on whether your patties are still frozen solid or have thawed a bit.) After flipping, place a bun top on each patty.
- Remove patties and buns, with a helping of onion, from skillet. Add bun bottoms, and any cheese or condiments as desired.
- Repeat with remaining ingredients.

* Use the cheap-o dried chopped onions, either the Spice Classics brand or Badia; McCormick spices are too pricey for such a use.