

Explore New England



PHOTOS BY DAVID LYON FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

KINGS OF THE GRILL

The glorious hamburger has spun many copies. Even made of falafel or tuna, tasty burgers rule.

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We take it for granted, but the hamburger may be America's supreme culinary achievement. It's certainly the first thing that friends visiting from Europe want to eat. That's not to say that Europeans can't be snobbish about our hand-held edible icon. We're still smarting from a 1985 exhibition on cultural identity at London's Victoria and Albert Museum. The curators

chose the hamburger to epitomize the United States. "Mass-produced, cheap, efficient, but essentially juvenile," they noted. We prefer the term "casual." Moreover, the hamburger has grown up a lot in the last 26 years, becoming the US equivalent of a steak-frites on some of the classiest menus. The format of grilled patty on a bun has proven so versatile that chefs push the envelope with such variants as tuna and even

falafel. We won't pick a food fight by claiming these 10 spots are the best in New England, but each one makes a burger well worth the trip.

STANLEY'S FAMOUS HAMBURGERS, Central Falls, R.I. Polish immigrant Stanley F. Kryla opened his hamburger joint in 1932. The Stanleyburger, as he called it, remains a modest patty of freshly ground beef served on a soft bun with grilled onions and tangy sweet pickles. It can be gussied up with tomato, mushroom, bacon, cheese, or pepper, but the original remains a standard. Grab a seat at the counter and watch the grill cook at work. 535 Dexter St., 401-726-9689, www.stanleyshamburgers.com, \$1.99-\$5.49

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- 1.** Farmers Diner in Quechee, Vt., has won a locavore reputation for its ingredients, including its signature burger;
- 2.** a clam cake burger in Arundel, Maine;
- 3.** Piemonte burger in Worcester;
- 4.** a simple burger in Farmington, Conn.;
- 5.** Bistro Burger in Portland, Maine;
- 6.** tomato jam on the regular burger in Newport, R.I.;
- 7.** the tuna burger in South Boston;
- 8.** Jersey Shore burger in Cambridge;
- 9.** classic burger in Central Falls, R.I.;
- 10.** falafel burger in Newport, R.I.;
- 11.** Rocky burger in Newmarket, N.H.