

Courtesy of Krupana

MAINS Krupana

Pljeskavica (Balkan-style burger) from Chef Adi Komic of Krupana

By Sarra Sedghi · Rough Draft Atlanta, 5/14/2025

Ingredients

BURGER

- [ ] 5 oz ground beef
- [ ] 1/2 cup peppery slaw
- [ ] 1 slice American cheese
- [ ] 1 tbsp. kajmak (a creamy Balkan cheese you can find at Stella Mart in Lawrenceville)
- [ ] 2 tbsp. burger sauce
- [ ] Sliced raw yellow onion
- [ ] 4 slices of dill pickles
- [ ] Burger bun of choice

BURGER SAUCE

- [ ] 1/2 cup mayo
- [ ] 1/4 cup ketchup
- [ ] 1 tbsp yellow mustard
- [ ] 1 tsp Dijon mustard

Directions

BURGER DIRECTIONS

1. Set grill to 350 to 400 degrees.
2. Form 5 ounces of beef into a patty about 4.5 inches in diameter. Expect some shrinkage on the grill.
3. Place patty in refrigerator, unseasoned, allowing it to tighten while the grill heats up.
4. Once grill is ready, heavily salt burger and place it on the grill, moving and flipping periodically to ensure a little char.
5. Use a meat thermometer to gauge the patty's internal temperature. (Komic pulls his burgers when patties reach 140 degrees Fahrenheit, yielding a medium burger.)
6. One minute before pulling burger from grill, smear the kajmak across the patty and top it with a slice of American cheese. Let cheese melt, about one minute.
7. Remove patty from grill and let rest. The cheese will continue to melt.
8. Meanwhile, toast buns.

- [ ] 1 oz pickle juice
- [ ] Salt and pepper to taste

SLAW

- [ ] 1/4 cup shredded cabbage
- [ ] 1/2 cup red wine vinegar
- [ ] 1 tbsp pepper
- [ ] Salt to taste

9. Spread burger sauce on both buns.
10. Place peppery slaw on the bottom bun, then add cheesy patty, sliced raw onions, and pickles.
11. Top with a bun.

> Make the sauce: Mix all ingredients together. Set aside. Make the slaw: Mix all the ingredients together and set aside. Slaw should be heavily peppered.

The story

The grill-friendly take on pljeskavica from Chef Adi Komic of Bosnian comfort food pop-up Krupana is a cross between a Balkan hamburger and an American smashburger. “This burger has been a staple since day one [of the pop-up], but sometimes I’ll intentionally leave it off the menu just to force people to get something else,” Komic said. The term “pljeskavica” refers to the meat patty, which varies throughout the Balkan peninsula. In Bosnia, it’s typically made from beef seasoned with paprika and black pepper, but it can also be a mixture of beef and pork, lamb, or veal.Serbian pljeskavica, for example, usually includes a mixture of minced beef, pork, and lamb. The patty is topped with ajvar, a relish-like spread containing roasted sweet bell peppers and eggplant, garlic, oil, and vinegar, then kajmak, a tangy Balkan creamy cheese, and diced raw onions.

While pljeskavica is served on lepinja (flatbread), Komic opts for an American-style hamburger bun, particularly Martin’s potato rolls. Komic still tops his pljeskavica with traditional ingredients, including kajmak and onions, along with homemade burger sauce and a peppery slaw. “I’ve always thought that the American smashburger is just the pinnacle of burgers,” Komic said. “So this brings those two together.”

Check out the recipe for Komic’s take on pljeskavica (Balkan-style burger) below.

Family Meal by Rough Draft

Hungry for more? Get Family Meal, Rough Draft’s free dining newsletter, every Tuesday and Thursday: **roughdraftatlanta.com/family-meal**