

food by tania leah haas

The guru of barbecue

Family, food and fire are the passions fuelling Ted Reader, a master of the grill with a famously creative repertoire

Grilled scallop sliders



INGREDIENTS makes 8 as an appetizer or 4 as a main

MANGO AVOCADO SALSA

- 1 ripe mango, peeled and seeded and the flesh diced in ¼-inch pieces
- 1 ripe avocado, peeled, pitted and the flesh diced in ¼-inch pieces
- ½ cup white onion, finely diced
- 2 tbsp lime juice
- 2 tbsp orange juice
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely diced

big splash Southern Comfort salt and freshly ground black pepper

MUSTARD HONEY DRIZZLE

- 1 tbsp old-fashioned grain mustard

- ¼ cup honey
- 1 tbsp orange juice

THE BURGER

- Napoleon injector (or other syringe-like food injector)
- 8 jumbo ice-cold fresh sea scallops (sized under 6 per lb if you can find them)
- ½ cup butter, melted
- ¼ cup Southern Comfort
- 8 Ritz Crackers
- 8 slices prosciutto

MANGO AVOCADO SALSA

makes about 3 cups In a bowl, combine mango, avocado, white onion, lime and orange juice, honey, olive oil, cilantro, green onions and jalapeno pepper. Season to taste with a big splash of Southern Comfort, salt and freshly ground black pepper. Cover and refrigerate until needed.

MUSTARD HONEY DRIZZLE

In a small bowl or cup, stir together the mustard,

honey and orange juice. Set aside.

THE BURGER

- 1 Pat scallops dry with paper towels. Set aside, refrigerated.
- 2 In a small pot, over medium heat, melt the butter with the Southern Comfort.
- 3 Suck up the melted butter mixture into the Napoleon injector. Inject each scallop with a little butter-Southern Comfort mixture and place on parchment paper-lined plate. Cover and place in the freezer for 10 minutes to chill. Reserve any leftover butter mixture for basting.
- 4 Preheat grill to medium-high, 450° F to 550° F.
- 5 Remove burgers from freezer. Season burgers with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
- 6 Grill burgers for 2 to 3 minutes per side, until just cooked through, the flesh is opaque and the outside lightly charred.
- 7 Assemble your burgers! Stack Ritz Cracker, prosciutto, grilled scallop and Mango Avocado Salsa. Drizzle with Mustard Honey Drizzle.



One glance at Ted Reader's backyard makes it clear he has two passions: his brood and his barbecues. Brightly coloured children's tricycles and tractors rest against trees and dozens of grills line the opposing fence.

"I worked a long time in a lot of hot kitchens – now I want to enjoy life. And it starts at home," says Ted, who welcomed *Hello! Canada* to his Toronto residence and discussed his devotion to his kids and charcoal.

While the gregarious 46-year-old is the award-winning author of more than a dozen cookbooks, most Canadians know him as the TV personality with the shock of black hair and mischievous grin. His culinary mastery and fearlessness around fire has earned him the title as Canada's "Barbecue Guru" – and earlier this month he made a bid for Guinness World Records by preparing the biggest-ever hamburger. (Proceeds from the event went to his favourite charity, Camp Bucko, an Ontario camp for child burn victims.)

Speaking of starting at home, many recipes from his latest book, *Napoleon's Everyday Gourmet Burgers*, were tested in his pine tree-lined yard, which is part grilling laboratory, part home office. And he doesn't wait until the snow melts to fire up the barbecue: the entire yard is covered by a 500-square-foot fireproof



Prime rib burger

INGREDIENTS serves 8

HORSERADISH COMPOUND BUTTER

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 3 tbsp freshly grated horseradish or prepared horseradish
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- ½ tsp black pepper, coarsely ground salt, to taste

THE BURGER

- meat grinder
- 2 lb boneless prime rib of beef
- 1 medium onion, minced
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp salt
- 1½ tsp black pepper, coarse ground
- 2 tsp hot mustard powder
- 2 tsp burger seasoning (ideally Ted's Better Butter Burger Seasoning, from cookbook)
- 6 burger buns
- ½ cup butter, melted

Cut the prime rib of beef into 1- to 2-inch chunks. Lay chunks evenly on a parchment paper-lined cookie sheet and place in freezer. Freeze meat for 10 to 15 minutes, until the meat is very cold.

HORSERADISH COMPOUND BUTTER

In a bowl, combine butter, horseradish, parsley and black pepper. Season to taste with salt. Set aside.

THE BURGER

- 1 With a hand or electric meat grinder, grind meat using the larger grind plate. Change grind plate to smaller-sized one and grind meat a second time.
- 2 Add onion and garlic to grinder and pass through. Add salt, pepper, mustard and burger seasoning to meat mixture.
- 3 Form into 8 equal-sized 6-oz patties. (A flatter burger will cook more evenly and faster than a ball-like burger.)
- 4 Preheat grill to medium-high, 450° F to 550° F.
- 5 Grill burgers for 4 to 5 minutes per side for medium-well doneness.
- 6 Brush buns with melted butter and grill, cut-side down, until crisp and golden brown.
- 7 Assemble your burgers! Serve on grill-toasted buttered buns and garnish with Horseradish Compound Butter.

tent in the winter. Ted calls it his "private oasis."

"I've seen fox and different birds. It's my own little world. What better office is there?" says Ted, eyeing his outdoor smoker and tandoori oven.

Growing up in Paris, Ont., nights at the grill were few and far between for Ted. But on special occasions, his father would transform a wheelbarrow and a metal kitchen shelf into a makeshift barbecue.

"Three-pound steaks would be marinated in wine or beer for a couple of days and then cooked over charcoal," he recalls. "I think my barbecue obsession stems from those experiences. I wanted to work with food and that became evident when I was young."

As a child, Ted would scribble down recipes while watching early TV chefs like Julia Child and the Galloping Gourmet. He'd then serve those meals to his parents and two older brothers.

Today, Ted preaches the appeal of gourmet grilling to global devotees, plying his metal spatula on shows including *Live! With Regis and Kelly* and *Canada AM*.



Cupcake burger

INGREDIENTS makes 12

1 9-inch pan of brownies (homemade, or use similar store-bought quantity)

THE CUPCAKE

1 muffin tin
1 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp cream of tartar
1/2 tsp salt
3/4 cup milk
1/4 cup sour cream
1/2 cup butter, softened
3/8 cup sugar
1 egg
1 egg yolk

THE CUSTARD

1/2 cup cornstarch
6 tbsp sugar
2 cups milk
4 egg yolks
1 vanilla bean

THE FILLING

1 pint fresh strawberries, sliced
1 tbsp sugar
+ 3/4 cup softened butter
1 lb yellow and green food colouring

THE CUPCAKE

1 In a bowl, sift together the flour, baking soda, cream of tartar and salt.
2 In another bowl, whisk the milk and sour cream.
3 Cream together the room-temperature butter and sugar. Blend in egg and egg yolk.
4 Add sour cream-milk mixture and blend until mixed.
5 Add in dry ingredients and stir until smooth.
6 Preheat grill to medium, 350-450° F.
7 Fill greased muffin cups 3/4 full with muffin mixture.
8 Grill-bake over indirect heat for 20 to 25 minutes, until fully baked and a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.
9 Remove from grill and allow cupcakes to cool at room temperature. Unmould and place in an airtight container to keep nice and moist.



The humble hamburger is transformed into accessible gourmet fare with the help of Ted Reader's *Napoleon's Everyday Gourmet Burgers*. From turkey to lamb to seafood – and with options that suit fine china as well as

paper plates – this cookbook is far more versatile than its title might suggest. (There's even a section on dessert burgers.) Also included are tips on choosing the perfect cut of meat, how to make your own seasonings and creative ways to garnish your creations. Over 100 mouth-watering recipes, each accompanied by an equally inviting photo, will make you the barbecue guru of your own backyard.

Still, his family remains his most important audience. A young daughter and son keep Ted and his wife of 21 years, a lawyer, very busy. (He prefers to keep his family's names private.) The toddlers have already shown a penchant for fine ingredients and fire-cooked foods.

"At the grocery store, they are always asking questions about food. Like, 'Why is that carrot yellow and not orange?' Just the other day my little boy came out while I was cleaning grills, and said, 'Daddy, I think everybody should have a barbecue in their backyard,'" laughs Ted.

Fast food is prohibited in the Reader household, and traditional dishes are often made with a twist, such as peanut butter and asparagus sandwiches. Keeping little hands away from hot surfaces is also strictly enforced – an obvious concern given the backyard's shared role as playground and cookout site.

Now, with the thermostat heating up along with the charcoal, Ted is ready to usher in the summer and create some new family memories. "The big term now is 'staycation.' I want you to stay in your backyard," says Ted. "If you can enjoy what's at home, enjoy your food, friends and family, those are the most important things." **H**

THE CUSTARD

1 In a bowl, mix the cornstarch and the sugar. Add 1/2 cup of the milk to the mix and add egg yolks.
2 Bring the rest of the milk and the vanilla bean to a boil. Whisk in the cornstarch-egg yolk mixture and bring to a low boil while whisking constantly.
3 Strain into a bowl, cover with plastic wrap and cool completely.

THE FILLING

1 In a bowl, gently mix strawberries and 1 tbsp sugar.
2 Cream the rest of the sugar and the butter with mixer until light and fluffy.
3 Divide mix into two. In one batch, add a drop or two of yellow food colouring and mix to combine. In the second batch, add a drop or two of green food colouring and mix to combine.
4 Assemble your burgers! Cut brownies with a 2- or 3-inch cookie cutter. Cut a muffin in half through the middle. Spread a layer of yellow icing on the cut side of the muffin bottom. Top with a spoonful of thick custard. Top with a brownie. Top with a layer of green icing. Add muffin top. Repeat with remaining muffins and serve immediately.