

Ja Rule is judging this year's Burger Bash: I chatted with him about what he most looks for in a great burger

A great burger starts with the right meat.



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Ja Rule is a judge at NYCWFF's Burger Bash (Amber & Opal)

Ja Rule is world-famous as a Grammy-nominated rap icon, but he's going to take on another role this October, as he will be judging the [Blue Moon Burger Bash](#) at the [Food Network New York City Wine & Food Festival](#).

Ja Rule will be joined by other judges that include Food Network host Sunny Anderson, Joshua Weissman, a professional cook and content creator, and content creator Olivia Tiedmann as they judge burgers from top chefs and restaurants, all competing to win the Burger Bash title.



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The @bluemoonbrewco Burger Bash 2.0 is almost here — and the burgers are bringing their A-game! 🍔🔥

Swipe through for a sneak peek of the juicy creations vying for the @patlafrieda People's Choice and Blue Moon Judges' Choice. From classic all-beef patties to outrageous loaded creations, each burger has a shot at glory... and maybe your vote.

Who will take the crown? 🏆

Tickets at the link in bio | Blue Moon Burger Bash presented by Pat LaFrieda Meats hosted by @rachaelray & @brooklynpeltzbeckham | Friday, October 17, 7:30 PM

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So, what does Ja Rule look for in a great burger? It's about quality and consideration every step of the build, starting with the meat.

You need quality meat.

The foundation of a great burger is going to be the beef. "I like good angus meat—it's the best cut of the cow or burgers and steaks," said Ja Rule, who furthered if you're sourcing from a trusted butcher like Pat LaFrieda, you're already setting yourself up for success. "I'm judging this year's [Blue Moon Burger Bash](#) at the [Food Network New York City Wine & Food Festival](#), for the first time, so I've had to enroll in burger university (aka talking to Pat) to get my knowledge up," said Rule.

2. Get your meat to the correct temperature.

Before grilling, let your patties sit out for about 10–15 minutes. "If the beef is too cold when it hits the grill, the outside cooks much faster than the inside, leaving you with uneven results. A little patience here makes for a more consistent burger," said Rule.

3. Keep seasoning simple but generous.

Ja Rule's secret ingredient is Lipton Onion Soup mix, which he mixes with a little pepper and a little garlic powder. "After that you're good to go!" he said.

The image shows an Instagram post from the account nycwff (111K followers). The main content is a promotional graphic for the 'Blue Moon Burger Bash 2.0'. The graphic features a large, detailed burger with a blue flame logo and the text 'BURGER BASH 2.0'. It lists the event as 'PRESENTED BY Pat LaFrieda MEAT PURVEYORS' and 'HOSTED BY BROOKLYN BECKHAM AND RACHAEL RAY' on 'OCTOBER 17, 7:30 PM'. Below the burger, it says 'MEET THE JUDGES OF NYC'S BIGGEST BURGER BATTLE' and lists the judges: JA RULE, SUNNY ANDERSON, BEN LEVENTHAL, ANA NAVARRO, OLIVIA TIEDEMANN, and JOSHUA WEISSMAN. The event is part of the 'NYC WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL' presented by Invesco QQQ. At the bottom of the graphic, it says 'TICKETS AT NYCWFF.ORG'. The Instagram post includes a caption from nycwff: 'The judges are in—and the burgers are ready! Burger Bash 2.0, presented by @patlafrieda Meats and hosted by @brooklynpeltzbeckham and @rachaelay, is heating up the waterfront on Friday, October 17. This year's celebrity and culinary judges: @jarule, Sunny Anderson, @ananaroff, @joshuaweissman, @benleventhal, @oliviatiad. Take a bite, cast your vote and see if your pick stacks up against the pros. Fans decide the @bluemoonbrewco's People's Choice, while the judges hand out the Chef's Choice. Grab your tickets now and be part of the action! #NYCWFF | October 17 | @invesco QQQ Festival Campus in the @theseaportnyc'.

4. Don't press the burger.

"It's tempting to press down on the patty with your spatula to hear that sizzling sound, but that just forces out all the flavorful juices," said Rule. "Let the burger cook undisturbed. It will brown and char beautifully without any extra help."

5. When you flip, flip with purpose

You don't need to constantly flip the burger — once or twice is enough. "Give it a few minutes per side depending on your preferred doneness. Too many flips can prevent a good crust from forming and make cooking less efficient," said Rule.

6. Take care when melting the cheese.

When it's time for cheese, place the slice on the patty and cover the grill for about 30 seconds. "This creates a little oven effect, helping the cheese melt evenly and drape over the burger perfectly," said Rule. Whether it's American for classic creaminess, cheddar for sharpness, or blue for boldness, let it melt fully before serving.

7. Don't forget to let the burger rest.

Once your burger comes off the grill, give it a couple of minutes to rest. "This allows the juices to redistribute throughout the patty so you don't lose them all on the first bite. Think of it as the finishing touch to all your hard work," said Rule

8. The right bun pulls everything together

A toasted bun makes all the difference. "Brioche, potato rolls, or sesame seed buns work well, as long as they're sturdy enough to hold the burger without falling apart," said Rule. "Layer your toppings in a way that complements, not overpowers, the beef — fresh lettuce, tomato, pickles, and a good sauce will do the trick. My favorite is pickles only!" said Rule.

9. Serve with care

Remember that presentation matters. "Place the burger on a clean plate, add fries or a simple side, and bring it to the table with a sense of pride. A burger done right is comfort food at its best, and serving it thoughtfully makes the experience even better," said Ryle.

10. Create the ideal pairing.

A great burger is enough by itself, but you can really enhance the experience with the right drink. "My Amber & Opal botanical whiskey is made with honey, which will complement the sweetness and juiciness of the angus burger," said Rule. "It doesn't get much better than that, but it's also about who you share it all with. Sit back, take that first bite slowly, and enjoy the combination of flavors and textures. Good food and classic drinks are always better when it's tied to good memories."