

What's Cooking at CAB

by the culinary staff at Certified Angus Beef LLC

Umami ... the ultimate flavor crave

Sweet. Sour. Bitter. Salty. Those are the categories we assign to the foods we eat. Some prefer one over the other. Some require layers of all of those flavors. But there's another category, referred to as the fifth flavor, and it's much more unique and elusive: umami. Umami is a savory sensation that excites the palate. Experts describe umami as a pleasant "brothy" or "meaty" taste with a long-lasting, mouthwatering and coating sensation over the tongue.

Definition

What does that mean? Umami-rich foods tickle your taste buds. It's that elusive flavor that causes nostalgia when you eat. It's the

taste on your tongue that prompts you to exclaim, "Yum!"

Umami has a mild but lasting aftertaste that is difficult to describe. It induces salivation and a sensation of furriness on the tongue, stimulating the throat, the roof and the back of the mouth.

So how can you enjoy umami-rich foods? Eat more fish, cured meats, tomatoes, spinach, fermented foods, aged cheeses, and fish sauce or soy sauce.

One of our favorite "indulgent" entrées is a black-and-blue burger from a local restaurant. The combination of the salty, beefy burger with the sharp, pungent tang of blue cheese and crisp, sour pickles, topped with sweet tomato ketchup and a sauce you can't quite replicate satisfies the umami cravings.

Almost all of your taste buds can detect umami. Take a look at your favorite foods and you may discover they're rich in that mysterious taste, too.

Try one of these recipes to experience amazing flavor.



Korean Sesame Burger

Ingredients

- 2 lb. CAB® ground beef (80/20)
- 3 Tbs. sriracha sauce
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 2 Tbs. rice vinegar
- 2 tsp. soy sauce or fish sauce
- 2 tsp. cumin
- ½ cup diced scallions
- 2 Tbs. sesame seeds
- 6 sesame-seed burger buns

Instructions:

1. In a small mixing bowl, combine sriracha, brown sugar, rice vinegar, soy sauce and cumin.
2. By hand, combine ground beef, scallions, sesame seeds and spice mixture. Form into six patties and grill over medium heat until internal temperature is 160° F.
3. Suggested toppings: shaved cucumbers, shaved Napa cabbage, bean sprouts, fresh cilantro, sour cream.



Sweet-and-sour Beef Lo Mein

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. CAB® top round steak, cut into small strips
- 1 (8-oz.) can pineapple chunks with juice
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper
- 12 oz. egg noodles or Chinese-style, thin egg noodles
- 1 tsp. sesame oil
- ⅔ cup chopped green pepper
- 8 oz. fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 2 (10-oz.) jars prepared sweet-and-sour sauce
- 2 Tbs. sesame seeds, toasted
- Green onion for garnish (optional)

Instructions:

1. Drain juice from pineapple and combine juice with soy sauce and crushed red pepper. Marinate beef strips in pineapple mixture in refrigerator 1½ to 2 hours. Discard marinade.
2. Prepare noodles according to package directions. Set aside.
3. Heat sesame oil in large, nonstick skillet; brown beef over medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Add pepper and mushrooms; sauté 3-5 minutes. Add noodles and pineapple.
4. Stir in sweet-and-sour sauce and sesame seeds. Heat 2-3 minutes until hot throughout, stirring constantly; do not boil. Top with green onions. Serve immediately.

