Hamburgers are an American favorite, but the origins of this meal’s common ingredients are as diverse as the U.S. population. The meat patties were first served in Hamburg, Germany, and appeared on menus in New York City as early as the 1870s thanks to German immigrants.

The not so American Hamburger

Each map shows the origins of common ingredients found in the dish.

Where did each ingredient originate?

- **BUN**
  - The bun is primarily wheat flour, combined with vegetable oil, sugar, yeast, egg, salt, water, and yeast.

- **PATTY**
  - The patty is primarily ground beef, with additions such as onion, breadcrumbs, egg, garlic, salt, pepper, and sauces.

- **MUSTARD**
  - Mustard is made of vinegar, ground mustard seed, and spices.

- **MAYONNAISE**
  - Mayonnaise is made from vegetable oil, egg, and lemon juice (all ingredients shown).

- **KETCHUP**
  - Ketchup is made of tomatoes, sugar, vinegar, onions, and garlic (all ingredients shown).

- **LETTUCE**

- **TOMATO**

- **ONION**

- **CHEESE**
  - Cheese used on hamburgers is most often made from cow milk.

- **FRENCH FRIES**
  - French fries are made from potatoes, vegetable oil, and salt.

Origins of hamburger ingredients

Darker regions on the map indicate where more ingredients found in hamburgers originate.

Not a single ingredient commonly found in this iconic American dish originates in the United States.

Contribution to calories

- **WEST ASIA**
  - 37.4%

- **ANDEAN SOUTH AMERICA**
  - 15.6%

- **EAST ASIA**
  - 15.1%

- **MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA**
  - 14.5%

- **SOUTH ASIA**
  - 11.3%

- **SOUTH EAST ASIA**
  - 5.0%

- **OTHER**
  - 1.0%

Sources: Origins of Ingredients: Khoury et al. (2016) Proc Roy Soc B 283(1832): 20160792. Highlighted areas are world geographic regions where the plants and animals in food ingredients were domesticated.

Calories: USDA Food Composition Databases (2018), www.nutritionix.com

Graphic: Álvaro Valiño, Kelsey Nowakowski and Colin Khoury