

MEAT & POTATOES

Honest Burgers



The first box of homemade Honest burgers

GREAT BRITISH BURGERS

From day one, we wanted to make the best British burgers on any menu, anywhere. And for that, we knew we had to find great British beef. So we spent a long time getting to know the best butchers in London.

And now we're butchers too.

We've opened our own butchery so we can make the burgers we'd always dreamed of. Our way. From scratch.

MEAT

MADE THE CUT

A great burger starts with great beef. Our beef comes from small farms in the Scottish Highlands. The cows are native breeds (Britain has some of the best in the world), they live outside and they eat grass.

We've always made our burgers from chuck and rib cap (the fatty bit that's skimmed off a rib eye steak). It's more expensive, but it makes our burgers juicier and chunkier, with a 'good bite'. It means you can actually taste the beef – really great beef – not just meat. And that's exactly how it should be.

Rib cap being cut by hand



EST. BRIXTON 2011



Tom's burger delivery bicycle

We knew the cuts of beef we wanted to use from day one. But a lot of butchers we spoke to in the early days didn't want to know. We were young. We had a small restaurant in Brixton Village. And no-one else made burgers like ours. So butcher after butcher sent us on our way.

We didn't give up. Finally, we met Tim, a butcher in Marylebone who got it. So every day, Tom would cycle four miles from our first Honest in Brixton to the butchers. Then he'd cycle back with a cooler bag of beef on his back.

Cycling eight miles a day wasn't the easiest way, but it was worth it. Tom's no longer our bicycle courier, but we're still determined to do things our way – even if that's the hard way – to make a better burger.

CHOP CHOP CHOP

Here's a quick burger-making master class: most burgers are minced – at least twice, often more. The meat gets broken down, but a lot of good stuff gets lost in the mush (and a lot of bad stuff stays in too).

Not here. At our butchery we chop our beef, not mince it to oblivion. Chopping holds the flavour in and keeps the meat coarse (not mushy) and really tender. So our burgers cut like butter, but stay together.

SALT & PEPPER

If you've got great meat, salt and pepper's all you need.

A lot of restaurants 'pre-season' their burgers. It's the usual saves-time-and-makes-everything-taste-the-same story.

But it also means the salt has longer to break down the beef, which makes for a rubbery burger.

Not on our grill. Our chefs season every burger as it cooks.

POTATOES

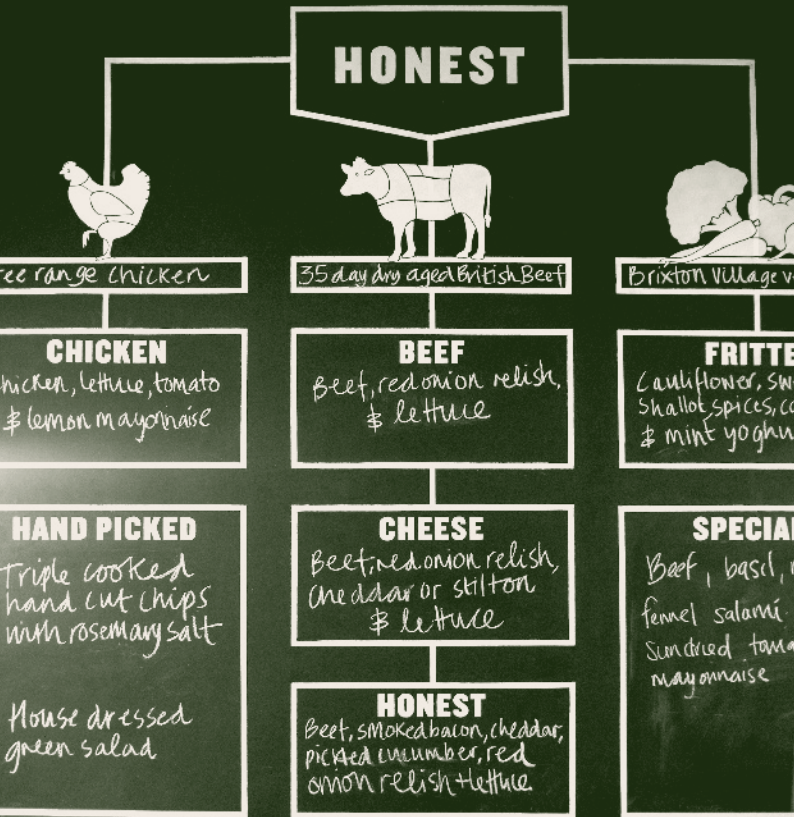
BEST IN SHOW

Brixton Village shaped Honest's early days (we bought 'Chippie's Choice' potatoes and veg from the market stall opposite) and it's still our home. We've always been a best-of-British place.

We never set out to open an American diner, or to make burgers we'd eaten on our travels. Our way was always about making burgers you could eat at a British farmers' market, in wellies, in the rain.

The first Honest Burgers in Brixton Village





Honest blackboard number one

HOME FROM HOME

From the start, we wanted everything to taste homemade. Which means it has to be homemade – there are no shortcuts. So we make as much as we can ourselves, in our kitchens.

Our chips, our rosemary salt, our veggie fritters, our iced tea, our lemonade, our pickles, our relish, and our Honest sauces are all made by hand, by us. And now we've got our own butchers, we've got burgers covered too.

WHAT HE SAID

When Brixton opened, we were still learning. Tom was in the kitchen and Phil waited tables. We worked hard. We got things wrong. We put them right. We kept getting better.

Then Jay Rayner, a food critic who lived in Brixton, came to visit. He described our rosemary salted chips as “edible crystal meth”. There were queues round the block after that. The buzz about Honest Burgers took us completely by surprise – and made us work even harder.

NOT A SIDESHOW

If you order an Honest burger – any burger – it comes with rosemary salted chips. We season them as soon as we’ve fried them (you can hear them hiss as we add the salt).

Our chips aren’t an extra; they’re an essential. It’s been that way since Brixton opened its doors, simply because we wanted everyone to try our rosemary salted chips. It might be the worst business decision we’ve ever made, but if it means you try our chips, that’s OK.



Homemade and hand-seasoned rosemary salted chips

POTATOES

YOU SAY POTATO

We say they're complicated. We didn't know this when we started out, but we do now. One type of potato is not like the next, for a start. And they need a lot of TLC.

But there's one big thing that matters to us: our chips are fresh, not frozen. Always. It's a full-time job (what takes us seven days a week, 12 hours a day, could probably be done in minutes if we had piles of frozen chips).

We get our potatoes from a farmer whose family has been growing potatoes for six generations. He knows a lot about spuds, and now we do too.

TOM & PHIL

TO BE HONEST

We met working at a restaurant in Brighton, when we were both at university there. We loved restaurants. We talked about them, worked in them, ate in them, and thought 'we could do this better than them'.

We decided to open Honest Burgers one night over a pint in our favourite pub. And that's what we wanted Honest to be like too: a no-fuss, pull-up-a-chair local (you'll find a different beer from a local brewery in every Honest) with good people and good food.



Tom and Phil's first paid job in Somerset

Before Brixton, the very first Honest Burgers was us, cooking burgers at a family friend's birthday party in a tent in a field in Somerset. We got a real buzz from it. We weren't trained chefs, we just loved cooking. We still do.

We kept cooking burgers and we kept learning. We went to farmers' markets and bought great meat and veg, and made even better burgers. Then we had a chance to open our first restaurant in Brixton Village. A few years on, we're both still here, still cooking, still learning.

KEEPING HONEST HONEST

It's all been a bit of a blur and a lot has changed, but the big things about Honest Burgers are still the same. We want to keep making the best burgers and chips with great British meat and veg. If that means doing things the hard way, we will. If that means doing things no-one else is doing – especially if no-one else is doing them – we'll find a way. If that means opening our own butchers, we'll do it. We already have.

Let us know what you think – the good and the could-do-better – and we'll get on it.

honestburgers.co.uk/feedback

The first Honest Burgers outside London in Cambridge



HONEST

Est. Brixton 2011