

Make Your Own Chicago Style Hot Dog

It's easy and fun to make your own Chicago Dog. Our guide will tell you everything you need to know to create the perfect Chicago Dog in the privacy of your own home. We will tell you where to shop, what to buy and how to properly assemble your Dog in true Chicago style. You can even print a shopping list and a step-by-step guide to adding toppings. Let's get started.



Shopping for Ingredients

In order to create your "masterpiece", it is important to start with the proper ingredients. Although you can substitute any of the ingredients mentioned here, we suggest that for your first attempt, you try the ingredients we recommend. We have carefully selected each topping to work harmoniously together to create Hot Dog Synergy. Do you remember learning about synergy in grade school? If you can't remember, synergy is two or more entities working together to produce an effect that is greater than the sum of the parts.

The Hot Dog

A Chicago Style Hot Dog is a traditionally all beef and contains no fillers. Don't even think of using a Hot Dog made from turkey, chicken or pork. Some all beef Hot Dogs are "Kosher". If you prefer a Kosher Dog, look for the Kosher symbol (K) or (U) on the packaging. When buying your Hot Dogs, stay away from the 97% fat free choices as they are more difficult to cook and lack flavor. We recommend either "Best's Kosher" or "Vienna Beef". Both of these brands are excellent and are available at most grocery stores. For a real treat, try the "jumbo" sized Dogs. Sentry Hilldale (in Madison) has a great selection of all beef Hot Dogs.



Relish

Classic Chicago Dogs are famous for their sweet bright green relish. Finding the perfect relish has been a struggle, but luckily we found "Rolf's Deli Style Sweet Pickle Relish". So far, the only store we found that sells Rolf's is Woodman's (in Madison). Any sweet relish will work well on your Chicago Dog, but Rolf's is a special treat and worth every cent.

Mustard

Another classic topping of a Chicago Dog is yellow mustard. When we think of Hot Dogs, we instantly picture yellow Mustard slathered on the Dog.

According to the [National Hot Dog and Sausage Council](#), Mustard is the Hot Dog condiment of choice. Any classic yellow Mustard is acceptable. Do not use Dijon Mustard on your



Courtesy of HotDogChicagoStyle.com

Chicago Dogs! We recommend either Plochman's or French's.

The Pickle

There is nothing like the perfect pickle to compliment your Dog. As far as we are concerned, the pickle you place on your Hot Dog can make or break the experience. A classic Chicago Dog will either have a pickle slice or spear. The pickle you choose should compliment, but not overpower any of the other toppings. A common mistake is to place a sour and/or spicy pickle on your Hot Dog. The pickle should have a nice crunch and the seasoning should be mild. We highly recommend Claussen Kosher Dill. These pickles are available in both slices and halves. If you buy the halves, make a spear by slicing down the middle of the pickle (or slice into thirds). Claussen pickles are located in the refrigerated deli meat section of any grocery store. Sometimes cucumber slices are substituted for the pickle.



Onion

Nothing special here. Purchase your standard white onion and chop it. If you don't like the bite of your typical onion, try a vidalia. Vidalia onions have a smooth sweet flavor.

Tomato

For true authenticity, buy a red ripe tomato and cut it into wedges. Do not chop your tomato or even think about cutting your tomato into slices!

Sport Peppers

An essential topping for any Chicago Dog is the Sport pepper. These peppers are green, about 1-1/2 inches long and usually have a medium-hot taste. When Sport peppers adorn your Dog, they should be whole and never sliced. Don't make the mistake of using peppers that are too hot. Remember, a Chicago Dog is blending of all the toppings. No single ingredient should overpower the others. Our search for Sport peppers has been a little frustrating, but we found them (in Madison) in the ethnic food section at the Copp's on Junction Rd, at Woodman's and Gino's Italian Deli.



Celery Salt

This blend of ground celery seed and fine-grained salt is often described as the defining ingredient of a Chicago Dog. Celery salt is usually available at any grocery store.

Poppyseed Bun

Genuine Chicago Style Hot Dogs are traditionally served on a steamed poppyseed bun. Unfortunately, we have been unable to find a good source for pre-packaged poppyseed buns in Madison. However, you can usually special order



Courtesy of HotDogChicagostyle.com

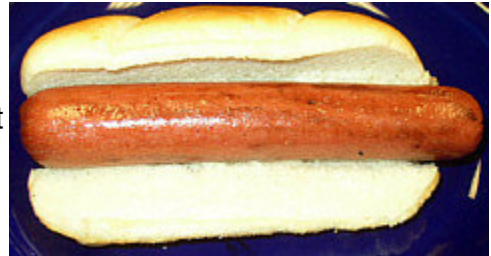
poppyseed Hot Dog buns at grocery stores that have their own bakery. Your local Pick'n Save is one example. We are still searching for packaged buns and will let you know when we find them. In the Chicago area, poppyseed buns are available at most grocery stores including Jewel. If you can find "Mary Ann" buns, you are in for a real treat. Turano Bakery also has great buns.



Creating Your Chicago Dog - Some Assembly Required

Now that you have gathered all of the ingredients and heated your Hot Dog(s), the time has come to create your Chicago Dog. The toppings are just as important as the order they are applied to the Hot Dog. The goal is to evenly distribute the toppings so you get a taste of each ingredient with every bite. Remember, dress the Dog and not the bun! Start out by placing your heated Hot Dog on the bun and add the toppings in the following order:

1. **Yellow Mustard** - Squirt the mustard directly on the Dog from one end to the other. We personally enjoy a zig-zag pattern.
2. **Bright Green Relish** - Add a generous amount of sweet relish.
3. **Fresh Chopped Onions** - Place onions on top of the Dog. The amount depends on your personal taste.
4. **Two Tomato Wedges** - The tomatoes should be placed along the crevice between between the top of the bun and the Hot Dog.
5. **Pickle Spear or Slice** - The pickle should be placed in the crevice between the bottom of the bun and the Hot Dog.
6. **Two Sport Peppers** - Traditionally 2 sport peppers are added on top of a Chicago Dog, but the sport pepper is often considered an optional topping. Once again, personal tastes play a role.
7. **Celery Salt** - Sprinkle a dash of celery salt over the Dog.



Here is what the finished product will look like. Enjoy!



Heating Your Hot Dog

Remember, Hot Dogs are already cooked so all you need to do is heat up the Dog. Although there are many ways to heat up Hot dogs, Chicago Style are traditionally grilled, steamed or boiled. Our favorite method is to grill them. No matter which method you choose, remember, the goal is to heat the Dog and NOT cook it. The cooking information listed below are general guidelines. For more cooking instructions read the instructions on the package of Hot Dogs.

Grilling - On a grill, place your hot dogs over medium heat and turn as soon as one side starts to brown. Watch your hot dogs carefully and turn frequently as they tend to brown quickly. Imagine your hot dog has a square shape and turn four times to brown all four sides. Two to three minutes on each "side" should be sufficient. Total heating time should be about 8-12 minutes. If frozen, heating times will be slightly higher.

Steaming - If you really want to try steaming, use a Dutch oven fitted with a steamer rack, or a bamboo steamer. Fill the pan with enough liquid to reach just below the steamer rack. You don't want liquid bubbling up onto your hot dogs.

Bring your water to a boil, reduce heat to low, add your Hot Dogs to the steamer basket. Cover tightly and steam 5-7 minutes or until Hot Dogs are heated through. To steam your buns, stack them on top of the dogs in the last two minutes of cooking. BE CAREFUL NOT TO BURN YOURSELF ON THE STEAM.

Boiling - If you must boil your Hot Dogs, Fluky's (a Chicago institution since 1929) recommends these instructions for heating your Hot Dogs: Bring the water to a boil, turn the water down until it stops boiling, or a slight simmer. (DO NOT COOK HOT DOGS IN BOILING WATER). Place desired number of hot dogs into water and cook uncovered for 20 minutes.

Microwave - Hot dogs can be successfully heated in the microwave oven. It is recommended that you first thaw the Dogs in the microwave and then heat. Since microwave ovens vary in power and features, you may have to experiment with cooking times. Some microwave ovens have a special setting for steaming fresh buns.

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