

Grind Your Own

WHY OWN A MEAT GRINDER WHEN YOU CAN buy ground chuck at the supermarket? Because that gelid, plastic-wrapped mush of geriatric bovine can't compare to, say, a few pounds of heritage-breed pork shoulder, bought from a butcher,

that you grind into mouthwatering meat loaf an hour later. So we asked Daniel Holzman and Michael Chernow (right), the maestros behind the Meatball Shop in New York City, to choose the best machine for grinding at home. —DEBBIE LEE



◀ Norpro #151 Grinder/Mincer/Pasta Maker

It's tiny, inexpensive, and made of plastic, but when Chernow and Holzman test recipes at home for the Meatball Shop, this is what they use. Thanks to a sharp blade, "it works effortlessly," said Holzman. "We ground 40 pounds of meat a week with the Norpro, and it never got dull." Plus, the suction-cup base keeps the diminutive body steady. "It's perfectly engineered," said Holzman. [\$30; norpro.com]

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◀ Waring Pro Meat Grinder #MG100A

"The moment of truth is whether you can grind stale bread," said Holzman, and this streamlined aluminum grinder had more than enough grunt to ace the test. "It comes with all of the parts you need but none of the useless stuff," said Holzman. "The plates are a bit rinky-dink, though." Chernow deducted points for the noisy 500-watt motor, but not many. "You just need a pair of headphones, and you're good to go." [\$100; waringproducts.com]

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◀ Maverick Meat Grinder #MM-5501

An easily sharpened blade and a strong lock between the grinding tube and the body earned the Maverick kudos. Less impressive, though, was its difficulty in churning out ground pork. While forcing meat down to compensate for the somewhat weak motor, Holzman broke the plastic pusher. "I wasn't even being aggressive," he said. His harsh verdict: "This would work only if you were in a bind." [\$125; maverickhousewares.com]

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◀ LEM #12 Big Bite Grinder

Chernow dubbed this 47-pound stainless steel beast "the Land Rover of meat grinders" upon first sight. It didn't disappoint. "You shouldn't need to push the meat — it should fall out of the grinder on its own," Holzman explained, as the LEM's .75-horsepower engine minced meat and pulverized stale bread with ease. "It's even better than the \$1,000 model we have here in the restaurant. I want one. I want one bad." [\$400; lemproducts.com]

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THE PERFECT PORK BALL

HOW TO MAKE THE MEATBALL SHOP'S CROWD-PLEASER

Ingredients

- 1-1/2 lb diced pork shoulder
- 1/2 lb fresh bread
- Jar of pickled hot cherry peppers
- 2-1/2 tsp salt
- 2 eggs
- Olive oil

Mix pork shoulder, torn-up bread, five peppers, and salt in a bowl, along with 1/8 cup of liquid from the pepper jar. Feed through the grinder using a 1/4-inch cutting die. After grinding, mix in eggs by hand. Fry up a small patty of meat to check the taste and, if

necessary, add more pepper liquid or salt. When ready, roll golf ball-size pork balls. Preheat oven to 450°, and roast them on a sheet sprinkled with olive oil for about 14 minutes, until firm. Makes 18 pork balls — enough for four people, or yourself.



For video of Daniel Holzman demonstrating how to make pork balls, visit mensjournal.com/meatball