

Mushroom Lentil Burger

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 40 minutes | Total Time: 1 hour

Chef's Notes

What is vital wheat gluten you ask?

Step 1: Cooking the Lentils

- 1/2 lb (approx. 1 cup) dried lentils*
- 3 cups water
- 1 bay leaf
- 5 juniper berries (optional)
- 1 tsp sea salt

*Note: Use any kind of lentils that you like. This recipe uses brownish-red lentils.

To start, place the lentils, bay leaf and juniper berries (if using) into a pot along with the water and bring to a simmer. Then, turn down the heat and let cook for about 30 minutes, or until just cooked through. About 10 minutes before the lentils are done, add the salt.

When the lentils are cooked, the water should mostly be absorbed. If not, drain any excess water once they are done.

Step 2: Preparing the Burgers

- 1 large red onion
- 2 tbsp coconut oil or grapeseed oil
- 2 portobello mushrooms
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 tsp fresh thyme
- 1 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1/2 cup red wine
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp liquid smoke
- 2 tbsp vegan Worcestershire sauce*
- 1 cup chopped nuts (such as walnuts or almonds)
- 3/4 cup ground flaxseeds (also called flaxmeal)
- 3/4 cup vital wheat gluten*

To prepare the burgers, first dice the onion. Next, heat a large pan over medium heat. Add a tablespoon of the oil, followed by the onions. Cook the onions until translucent.

Meanwhile, prepare the mushrooms. Remove the gills and the stems from the mushrooms and dice them. Once the onions have started to soften, add the mushrooms to the pan. If needed, add a touch more oil. Let cook until all of the moisture has come out of the mushrooms and they start to brown.

In the interim, mince the garlic. Once the mushrooms and onions are done, add the garlic, thyme, salt and pepper. Cook for a minute or so, and then add the tomato paste. Stir to combine. Next, add the red wine, balsamic vinegar, liquid smoke and Worcestershire sauce. *Note: Regular Worcestershire sauce contains anchovies. If you are vegan, you may want to use a vegan Worcestershire sauce.

Turn off the heat (you do not have to reduce the wine). Add the chopped nuts. If you like, you can toast the nuts first. If your fry pan is big enough, you can finish mixing the burgers right in the pan; otherwise, you will need to transfer everything to a large bowl.

Next, add the lentils to the mushroom mixture and gently stir to combine. Add the ground flaxseeds along with the vital wheat gluten and stir to combine. At this point you want to work the burgers a bit. This will help to strengthen the gluten and give the burgers a chewier texture. It also helps them hold together nicely while they are being cooked.

Next, form the mixture into six 6-ounce burgers and refrigerate for about an hour. This can be done the day before. The burgers also freeze very well.

Step 3: Cooking and Assembling the Burgers

- 1-2 tbsp coconut or grapeseed oil To cook the burgers, heat a large fry pan over medium heat. Once it is hot, add the oil followed by the burgers. Let cook for 4 or 5 minutes per side, adjusting the heat as necessary. Alternatively, you can cook the burgers in a 350°F oven or start the cooking in a fry pan and finish in the oven. Cook until heated through.

Serve with your favorite condiments, such as tomatoes, lettuce, mustard, relish or pesto.