



Featured Recipes

Chicago Diner Burger

Vegetarian burgers made without soy, tofu or beans are hard to find, so when I found this recipe online I had to try it immediately. The recipe also included a very high fat dressing (Red Pepper Aioli) to serve over the burger, which I modified into a much lower fat version. The sauce makes the burger very special so give it a try! These were a hit with all of my family members, although some of them preferred the burger with more traditional burger toppings.

Preparation Time: 30 minutes
Chilling Time: 1 hour
Cooking Time: 45 minutes
Servings: makes 14-15 burgers

4 cups water
1 onion, finely chopped
3 stalks celery, finely chopped
¼ cup soy sauce
2 teaspoons onion powder
2 teaspoons garlic powder
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3 cups rolled oats (not quick cooking)
12 ounce mushrooms, finely chopped
½ cup white whole wheat flour

Place the water in a large pot with the onion, celery, soy sauce, onion powder and garlic powder. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in oats, mushrooms and flour and cook 5 minutes longer. Transfer to a bowl and chill for at least 1 hour, preferably longer.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. *Lightly oil* baking sheets (see hints below). Shape mixture into burger sized patties and place on baking sheets. Bake for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and let rest for 5 minutes (see hints below). Carefully flip over and bake 10 more minutes.

Before serving:

Place baked patties on a non-stick griddle and grill for about 7 minutes on each side, until browned. Serve on buns with Red Pepper Aioli (recipe follows).

Hints: There are quite fragile until after they are baked, so use extra care when flipping them for the first time. I found it worked best if I let them rest out of the oven for at least 5 minutes before trying to loosen them from the pans. I used non-stick baking sheets, but I still had to lightly oil them before using. To lightly oil my pans, I use a very small amount of cold pressed vegetable oil on a paper towel, and then rub that over the pan. Silicone baking pads that fit into the bottom of your baking pans also work well for this recipe.

Red Pepper Aioli

Use this as a topping for the Chicago Diner Burgers, as a dip for raw veggies, or as a spread for crackers or bread.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Chilling Time: 1 hour or longer

Servings: makes 2 cups

1 12.3 ounce package soft silken tofu
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
dash salt
½ cup jarred roasted red peppers

Place the tofu in a food processor and process until fairly smooth. Add remaining ingredients and process until very smooth (this may take several minutes). Refrigerate at least 1 hour for flavors to blend.

Crabby Mini Cakes with Remoulade Sauce

These are very light and delicate cakes, somewhat reminiscent of crab cakes, but without the “fishy” taste. They are a bit labor intensive, but do keep well in the refrigerator and reheat well also. They would make a wonderful appetizer for a holiday party.

Preparation Time: 60 minutes

Cooking Time: 45 minutes

Servings: makes 18 medium cakes

1 pound firm water-packed tofu, drained well
1 cup grated carrots
1 cup finely chopped celery
½ cup finely chopped onion
1/3 cup finely chopped red pepper
1/3 cup finely chopped green pepper
¾ cup dried tortilla crumbs (see hints below)
½ cup tofu mayonnaise (see hints below)
⅛ cup Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons dill weed
2 tablespoons Cajun seasoning (see hints below)
1 tablespoon basil
1 teaspoon white pepper
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup panko bread crumbs

Place the tofu in a large bowl and mash with a bean/potato masher. Add the carrots, celery, onion, peppers and tortilla crumbs. Mix well, then stir in the remaining ingredients EXCEPT the panko bread crumbs. Mix until very well combined. Pour the bread crumbs on a large plate. Take a small amount of the tofu mixture and flatten it into about a 2 inch circle in the palm of your hand. Gently dredge each side into the bread crumbs. (Lay the cake on the crumbs, gently lift off and repeat on other side.) Place on a non-stick baking sheet. Repeat until all cakes are on baking sheets. Refrigerate for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Bake cakes for 20 minutes on the first side, flip over gently and bake an additional 10 minutes. Cakes will still be quite fragile, so be careful when flipping over. Heat a non-stick griddle for about 1 minute, then carefully place a few of the cakes onto the griddle and grill until golden on each side, about 1-2 minutes. Remove to serving platter and keep warm. Repeat until all are grilled. Serve with Remoulade Sauce spooned over the top of the cakes.

Remoulade Sauce

By Carol Van Elderen

Makes ½ cup
¼ cup chopped red pepper
⅛ cup chopped green onions
⅛ cup Dijon mustard
⅛ cup tofu mayonnaise
1 tablespoon chopped shallots
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
1 tablespoon honey or agave nectar
1 tablespoon prepared horseradish (see hints below)
½ tablespoon lemon juice
dash salt
freshly ground pepper to taste
dash Tabasco sauce

Place all ingredients in a food processor and process until finely chopped and quite saucy.

Hints: These cakes are based on a recipe from Sluggo's in Pensacola, FL. They fry their version in oil, but these are much tastier and delicate. We think the Remoulade Sauce really makes them special, but they could also be served with a cocktail type sauce, if desired. They are quite delicate and fragile to work with, and the first time you flip them over be very careful so they don't break apart. Mine turned out perfectly flat and browned nicely, but they were a bit hard to work with. The resulting cakes are worth the extra effort though.

Tortilla Crumbs are sold in 12 ounce cans and are made from milled corn and lime. If you can't find them, process corn tortillas in a food processor until finely ground. Japanese panko bread crumbs are sold in jars in many natural food stores and some Asian markets. Be sure to read the label carefully so you don't get added oil or dairy. Tofu Mayonnaise is made with a package of soft silken tofu, 1 ½ tablespoons lemon juice, 1 teaspoon sugar, ½ teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon dry mustard, ⅛ teaspoon white pepper. Place all ingredients in a food processor and process until smooth. Cajun seasoning can be found in the spice section of most supermarkets, or it may be ordered from Penzey's. Prepared horseradish is sold in jars in most supermarkets. Be sure to get the kind without oil or cream added.

Roasted Garlic

This is a wonderful way to add flavor to mashed potatoes, soups, stews, and salad dressings, and it is also fantastic spread on bread or crackers! Make a lot of it at one time because it keeps well in the refrigerator and then you will have it when you need it.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes
Cooking time: 1 hour 15 minutes
Servings: variable

Fresh garlic heads
Vegetable broth

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Slice the tops off each whole garlic head, do not separate or peel. Place the heads in a baking dish with a small amount of vegetable broth in the bottom of the pan. (Use about 1 tablespoon per head of garlic.) Cover the pan with parchment paper and foil, bake at 400 degrees for 1 hour and 15 minutes. Cool. Invert each head of garlic over a bowl and squeeze to remove roasted garlic. Mash and mix well. Season with a bit of sea salt, if desired. Store in a covered container in the refrigerator.

McVeggie Burgers Note

Lately I have been making the McVeggie Burgers with 3 pounds of firm water-packed tofu and no silken

tofu. We like the consistency even better and the burgers hold together very nicely. Try this for yourself and see what you think.

Mediterranean Lentil Soup

By Mary Duffield

Mary sent me this recipe several months ago and recommended that I try it. We finally did, using fresh chard from our garden, and loved it. This is a great time of year for soups, and one pot meals are always a favorite around here!

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 50 minutes

Servings: 6-8

1 onion, chopped
1 stalk celery, thinly sliced
2 small carrots, thinly sliced
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/2 cups French green lentils, rinsed
8 cups vegetable broth
1 bay leaf
1/2 teaspoon oregano
1/2 teaspoon basil
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
dash salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 14 ounce can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
2 cup chopped Yukon Gold potatoes
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 packed cups fresh spinach or chard, cut into ribbons

Saute the onions, celery, carrots and garlic in about 1/3 cup vegetable broth in a large soup pot, stirring frequently for about 5 minutes. Add the lentils and rest of vegetable broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover and simmer until the lentils soften, about 20 minutes. Add the bay leaf, oregano, basil, pepper flakes, salt, pepper, tomatoes and potatoes. Mix well and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes longer.

Just before serving, remove and discard the bay leaf. Add the lemon juice and spinach or chard to the soup and let simmer gently just until the spinach wilts, about 2 minutes, or chard softens, about 5 minutes. Serve hot with a nice loaf of bread.

Marilyn's Greek "ish" Stew

By Marilyn Mathews

Marilyn sent me this recipe that she had modified from her all time favorite company recipe. You know, the one you always make the first time someone special comes to dinner and you want to impress. She used to make it with beef and now makes it with beans. She says she always doubles the recipe and prepares it one day ahead (two is even better). This is delicious and rich tasting served in a bowl or over rice.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 1 hour 10 minutes

Servings: 4

1 large onion, thickly sliced
1 clove garlic, minced

2 cups vegetable broth
2 cups red wine or alcohol free wine
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
1 6 ounce can tomato paste
1 teaspoon allspice
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
3 tablespoons brown sugar
1 bay leaf
1 package frozen pearl onions
2 carrots, sliced
1/2 pound cremini mushrooms, sliced
2 16 ounce cans kidney beans, drained & rinsed
1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch, dissolved in 1/4 cup water

In a large pot, saute sliced onions and garlic in a little water until onion begins to soften and brown a little.

Add the rest of the ingredients EXCEPT cornstarch mixture, mix well and simmer for 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Stir in the cornstarch mixture and cook and stir until stew thickens.

Pumpkin Gnocchi

By Jason Wyrick

Jason Wyrick is the executive chef for The Vegan Culinary Experience (www.veganculinaryexperience.com). He wrote me about these recipes this week. " I thought I'd let you know that I'm doing some McDougall style Thanksgiving recipes (*Chai Spiced Sweet Potatoes, Barley Lentil Lemon Soup, Pumpkin Gnocchi, Baked Fennel and Onions, Sweet Apples in Phyllo Dough, Roasted Garlic Tortes*) on The Vegan Culinary Experience this week. You're welcome to use them if you want. My two favorites were the Barley Lentil Lemon Soup and the Pumpkin Gnocchi. They were so good, I had to make them again the next day."

Preparation Time: 15 minutes + 12 hours for the cashews to soak

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Servings: 6

1/4 cup raw cashews
1/4 cup water
1/4 cup fresh basil
1/4 teaspoon fresh pepper
4 cups gnocchi
1 1/2 cups pureed pumpkin
1 1/2 cups almond milk
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon salt

Soak the cashews in water for at least 12 hours. Drain and blend them together with the 1/4 cup of water, basil, and pepper. This should have the consistency of a thick cream, meaning it should slowly drip off the spoon.

Drop the gnocchi into boiling water and boil until they float, then drain them in a colander.

Mix the pureed pumpkin with the almond milk, nutmeg, and salt. Simmer this for 5 minutes and add the gnocchi. Simmer it for another minute.

Place the gnocchi and sauce on the plates. Add dots or swirls of basil cream to the top of the sauce. Garnish with a few whole basil leaves, if desired.

Hints: The almond milk adds a hint of sweetness to the pumpkin puree as well as thins it out. Be sure to buy gnocchi with no added oils or dairy. Cooking the gnocchi softens them and causes the molecular bonds to loosen. Allowing the gnocchi to rest brings those bonds back to a stronger state which means that when the gnocchi hits the sauce, they will stay tight and intact. Soaking the cashews softens them so they can be blended into a cream with the basil, which sets atop the sauce to add not only a shot of semi-sweet fresh herb, but also to give a contrasting color to the orange sauce.

Barley Lentil Lemon Soup

By Jason Wyrick

Jason says "this is a fairly simple barley soup with the additions of lentils, lemon and eggplant, which give it an entirely new dimension".

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Servings: 4

1 cup baby eggplants
4 cups vegetable stock
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 cup barley
½ cup lentils
1 teaspoon whole peppercorns
1 sprig of rosemary
½ teaspoon salt

Remove the stems from the baby eggplants and cut them into bite sized pieces.

Bring the vegetable stock and lemon juice to a boil. Add the barley, lentils, peppercorns, rosemary, and baby eggplant and stir. Cover and reduce heat to low.

Allow this to cook for 20 to 25 minutes, until lentils are soft. Remove from heat, add salt, and remove the rosemary sprig.