**Veggie Burgers**

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| **Ingredients:**1/4 cup green pepper (finely chopped)1/4 cup red pepper (finely chopped)1/4 cup onion (finely chopped)1/4 cup carrots (finely chopped)1 large egg (for a vegan version you can use 1/4 cup water instead)1 Tbsp. olive oil (for sautéing vegetables)4 Tbsp. + olive oil (for frying burgers)1 can chickpeas (or garbanzo beans)1 can black beans1 garlic clove (pressed or as TheLadyinRed prefers, minced)1/2 tsp. salt (divided)1/4 tsp. black pepper1/4 tsp. cumin (or use a 1/2 tsp. if you like a smokier flavor)1/2 tsp. paprika1/4 cup brown rice1 tsp. soy sauce | Variations:The American Burger:  Serve as you would a regular hamburger and for those who like McDonald's Big Mac sauce, add equal parts mayonnaise, mustard, and ketchup.The Asian Burger:  Add 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh ginger, 1/4 cup chopped scallions, and a splash of roasted sesame oil to the final burger mixture before forming patties.  Optional:  Top burgers with teriyaki sauce and serve with fried rice.The Mexican Burger:  Do NOT add soy sauce to the final veggie burger mixture.  Instead, add 1 Tbsp. chopped jalapeno peppers and 1 Tbsp. enchilada sauce.  After frying, top the burger with additional enchilada sauce, avocado slices, and some sour cream.  Serve with Spanish rice.  You can also chop up the finished burgers and served in taco shells or enchiladas.  You can roll it up in tortillas with lettuce, onion, tomatoes, salsa, etc.The Italian Burger:  Do NOT add soy sauce to the final veggie burger mixture.  Instead, add 1/4 cup tomatoes after squeezing out as much liquid as you can from them, and discard that liquid.  Add 1/4 cup small cubed mozzarella cheese, 1/4 tsp. dried oregano, 1/4 tsp. dried basil, and 1 additional pressed or minced garlic clove.  After frying, cover the burger with  pasta sauce and serve with pasta.  If you want to make veggie burger Parmesan, leave out the cubed mozzarella, and once you fry the patties, cover the burgers with tomato sauce and a slice or two of provolone or mozzarella cheese.  Then broil the patties for 5 minutes until the cheese is melted. The Super Veggie Burger:  Add additional very finely chopped vegetables in small quantities to the carrot/onion/bell pepper sauté such as zucchini, broccoli, etc.  Just make sure that as much liquid as possible is removed before adding them in.  Extra liquid will make these burgers fall apart during frying, creating a mess. ) |

**Instructions:**

1.  Heat a large pan to a medium-high temperature.  Choose a pan that you can also use to cook your burgers in so you have one less dish to do!  Add 1 Tbsp. oil.

2.  Add the green and red pepper, onion, carrot, and salt.  Sauté for about 4 minutes just to make them a little tender.

3.  While the veggies are sautéing, use a food processor, or a really good blender on super high speed, or a spice grinder, to grind up the brown rice into a powder.  If you can find brown rice flour in the store, more power to ya!  But this is how you can make your own.  Make sure that you grind it as fine as possible or you will have crunchy uncooked rice bits in your burgers and that's not what we're going for here.

4.  In a bowl beat 1 egg until fully blended and add the brown rice flour and soy sauce.  (Yep, I cheated.  I didn't blend the egg first!  I just had to put a little more muscle into it is all when I mixed it with the brown rice flour.) ;)  Mix it well.

5.  Strain the chickpeas and the black beans.  Rinse them and drain them really well.  Add them to the bowl with the egg-flour mixture.

6.  Add the 1/4 tsp. salt, black pepper, cumin, paprika and garlic.

7.  Mash the beans only half way so they are not pureed but not in huge chunks either.

8.  Add the sautéed veggies.  Mix everything until it's fully combined.

9.  Refrigerate covered for about 15 minutes so it sets.  Longer is better.  You can even refrigerate this overnight; but 15 minutes should do it.

10.  Measuring a generous 1/4 cup of the mixture at a time, mold it into patties.  Place the patties on waxed paper for easy removal.  This should yield 8 patties.  (Don't worry if 8 is too many, you can freeze\* what you won't use for the future. Check the Special Notes below.)

11.  In the same pan you sautéed the veggies in earlier, heat up 4+ Tbsp. of olive oil on medium-high heat.

12.  Fry the burgers for approximately 4 minutes on each side.  When you flip them over, do it CAREFULLY.  They are more fragile and pliable than beef burgers.  If you attempt to flip a burger and it looks like it's going to fall apart, it's not cooked enough on that side.  Give it another minute or two.

And that's all folks!  Pile on your fixins of choice and enjoy!

 **Special Instructions:**

Yield:  8 burgers

\*Freeze your burgers for future enjoyment!  Here's how:  When you are molding your burgers, place them on waxed paper.  Do NOT place them on top of each other as they will stick together if you freeze them that way.  Separate each burger layer with another sheet of waxed paper.  Wrap the burgers in waxed paper, then with a sheet of aluminum foil.  Place the entire packet in a large Ziploc bag and freeze them.  The burgers can either be microwaved for 1-2 minutes, baked, or fried, once you thaw them out.  They will remain freezer-fresh for 3 weeks.