

SOY BURGERS USING TEXTURED VEGETABLE PROTEIN (T.V.P.)

BY

MARY CURTIS

AUTHOR OF THE PRACTICAL VEGETARIAN

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Soy Burgers Using Textured Vegetable Protein (t.v.p.)

Note: In addition to t.v.p. patties, you can use this recipe to make vegetarian balls, to replace meatballs, or a loaf, to replace traditional meatloaf. Just follow the notes highlighted in the preparation instructions.

Introduction: About This Recipe

I have revised my recipe from my original to help make this process simpler with fewer - and less expensive – ingredients. Essentially, by using bread (or crackers) and flour in my revised recipe, and stirring vigorously, you will be creating gluten, which is a sticky protein, to achieve adhesiveness; you can also use less oil (fat) and achieve successful results this way.

Note that this is not a recipe for vegans because it contains eggs (if you do not want to use eggs, you can try your preferred egg substitute: however, I have not tried this myself so I do not know if the results will be successful). It is also not advisable for anyone who is allergic or sensitive to gluten. This recipe is intended for anyone – excluding these exceptions – who desires a lower-fat alternative to regular hamburger ground meat.

This recipe yields about a dozen (12) regular-size (2 inches diameter) patties, give, or take, for size and moisture content. You cannot save the mixture for later because it will not adhere together properly. If 12 patties are too much for you and your family, reduce the measurements to one-half to make fewer patties, or, make all of them

at one time and then wrap those extras in foil for later. Cooked patties in foil can be refrigerated until the next day, or frozen; when you're ready for them, just heat the foil packet in a warm oven, 200° F., for a few minutes.

I have been a vegetarian since the late 1980's; I am not a vegan, although I tried it for a very brief period. I'm not radical in my eating habits – I will participate in a good old-fashioned holiday meal without reserve – but I choose alternatives to meat for health reasons, to lower fat and control my weight. I am sharing these recipes free of charge to the public as a way of letting others know that there are viable alternatives for those who have been told to reduce their fat or cholesterol intake and for those who need to lose weight, or simply if you just want to go without meat once in a while.

My desire has always been to achieve alternatives – to foods like hamburgers or meat loaf, for instance – that please the eyes and that taste good. These burger patties, I feel meet those standards with a couple of caveats; they are not equal to ground beef patties in color or taste – and if you expect them to look and taste exactly like ground beef, you will be disappointed. These patties are lighter in color than ground beef patties, and more resemble chicken or turkey burgers. Their taste is crisp and they adapt well to the flavor of any condiments you add to them. But, unless you add strong flavor to them (such as onions or garlic) they have a light taste different from beef; given a chance, however, you may actually prefer this flavor.

I hope you enjoy this recipe for how it tastes as well as its time-saving easiness. As always I am open to your comments and suggestions. I look forward to hearing from you about how these recipes work for you and your family and, as always, I am open to input and suggestions. Contact me at mary@thepracticalvegetarian.com.

Secrets to Success: How to Get T.V.P. to Stick Together

Although textured vegetable protein (t.v.p.) has good health benefits (it is highly nutritious because it is packed with quality protein and low in fat making it an excellent alternative to meat), preparing t.v.p. for veggie patties (or any other alternative to traditional meat meals) can be problematic because, by itself, t.v.p. lacks stickiness to hold together in a “burger” patty. This lack of stickiness is due to a lack of fat. When you just add the t.v.p. to your favorite recipe in replacement of ground meat, your results will probably be disappointing, the t.v.p. will tend to remain granular and fall apart in the pan or on the plate. Unless you take certain steps to help the t.v.p. be more adhesive, you will likely give up in frustration. My recipe that follows will relieve you of disappointment in preparing textured vegetable protein as a viable replacement for ground meat.

Textured vegetable protein is dry and granular. Commercial producers of t.v.p. usually make this product from high soy protein or soy flour which has been defatted and then dried, however, t.v.p. can be derived from wheat, oats, and other plants too. It is a good idea to check the label to make sure of the source of t.v.p. you are considering, especially if you, or any members of your household, have food allergies.

In order to make t.v.p. ready for food preparation, you must hydrate it with water or another liquid. Even after you add liquid to it, t.v.p. does not hold together on its own because it lacks fat (it is actually the fat in hamburger meat that makes the patties stick together). It is necessary, therefore, that you add ingredients or perform a process that will create stickiness in the t.v.p. mixture to successfully make vegetarian patties; you must add ingredients or do something to the textured vegetable protein that will enable

the mixture to stick to itself and thereby you will be able to form it into patties, or any other shape, prior to cooking. This recipe will show you the process to make t.v.p. adhesive so it sticks together for you to use as a meat alternative.

In addition making vegetable “burgers” patties, you can also use this recipe to make veggie balls, instead of meatballs, to add to tomato sauce and pasta. Additionally, this recipe will make an excellent veggie loaf, an alternative to traditional meat loaf. To make a vegetarian loaf, just form the mixture into a loaf, instead of patties or balls, and bake it in an oiled loaf pan for about 30 minutes on a 275° F. oven; prior to baking, if you desire, top the loaf with ketchup or barbecue sauce.

Equipment

- Small mixing bowl with a lid (instead of a lid, you can also use foil or plastic wrap to cover the bowl)
- 1 fork
- Small frying pan
- Spatula

Ingredients

NOTE: These measurements yield 12 patties (about 3 inches diameter); your yield may vary depending on the size of patties you make and on moisture levels of ingredients. All measurements listed below are approximate. Adjust moisture levels for your own climate.

- 1 cup textured vegetable protein (t.v.p.)
- 1 egg
- Approximately ¼ cup oil (olive, peanut, or any quality oil according to your flavor preferences)
- 4 slices bread or 6 crackers or 1 large matzah – crush the crackers or matzah, or break the bread into small pieces (one-quarter inch or less pieces, approximately)
- ¼ cup flour, white or whole wheat
- A few sprinkles each of salt and pepper (red and/or black); you can eliminate the salt in the recipe and instead add it at the table, if you desire, or you can completely eliminate the salt.
- ½-2 cups hot water (use enough to moisten t.v.p. thoroughly)
- Olive oil (recommended for flavor, although any quality vegetable oil will do) – a small bottle is more than enough because you will only be using it for a thin coating on your frying pan to fry patties.

Preparation

1. In a small mixing bowl add everything except the last two ingredients.
2. Measure the full 2 cups of hot water in a separate container and begin adding it in half-cup increments; you do not have to be exact with this, just pour from your container for a second or two.
3. After each addition of hot water, stir vigorously with a fork.

4. Keep adding hot water followed by stirring until your mixture is moist and sticky. If you add too much hot water where the mixture becomes too loose, just add more t.v.p., a handful at a time, and drizzle oil over the top, and then stir vigorously again.
5. Moisten your hands with water. Begin kneading the mixture between your fingers inside the bowl. Do this for about 30 seconds to a minute to build up stickiness. Then cover the bowl and refrigerate for about 20 minutes. If this is too long, you can pop the bowl into the freezer for two to five minutes. The objective is that you want to chill the mixture before working with it.
6. When refrigeration or freezer time is up, remove the covered bowl and place it on your work counter or table.
7. Coat the bottom of your frying pan with a thin layer of olive (or preferred vegetable) oil and begin heating on medium heat. Get the oil hot enough so that a bead of water bounces off of it.
8. Roll some the chilled mixture into a small ball about the size of a golf ball.
9. Now flatten the ball between the palms of your hands; the patty you just formed should not be too thin but be at least a quarter-inch thick. Place the patty into your frying pan.
10. Continue making patties as you just did (see above steps 8 and 9) until you fill the frying pan without crowding them - leave a little space around each of the patties so you can work with them with your spatula.
11. Immediately after filling your pan with patties, “wake up” each patty to prevent them from sticking to the bottom of the pan. Here’s how: use the space you created around each patty to get your spatula under the edges of each patty while they are still

cooking. Start with the first patties you put into the pan and work your way around all of them. Monitor your heat; if they are cooking too fast, lower the heat; the objective is that the patties should be slowly frying.

12. When done with the “waking up” process (step 11), gently press the spatula on the top of each patty.
13. Next, cook the patties about 2 minutes.
14. Flip each patty over with your spatula.
15. After flipping each patty, gently press the top of each patty with the spatula just a little but don’t flatten all the way.
16. Cook another 2 minutes.
17. Remove to your serving plate.

If necessary add more oil to the pan, and continue making patties, as directed above to finish uncooked mixture. Remember that uncooked mixture cannot be saved (see Introduction above). If you have too much mixture for one meal, finish by making and cooking all the uncooked mixture into patties. Wrap any extra patties in foil. They will keep in the refrigerator until the next day; or, you can store them, wrapped in foil, in a freezer until you are ready to use them. When you are ready for these extra patties, just heat them in a warm (200° F.) oven for a few minutes.

VEGETARIAN BALLS: Prepare mixture up through step 8 above; the only difference is that you should add a little more oil into the pan so that the layer is at least one-quarter inch. Next, instead of flattening the balls into patties, place them instead immediately into your heated oil in your frying pan. Leave a little room around each ball, not crowding

them, so you can work with your spatula. As soon as you finish, begin gently rolling the balls a little, starting with the first ones. Cook a few seconds and repeat the rolling process around the pan with each of the balls. Continue doing this process until the balls are crisp on all sides all around. Remove to serving plate or put into pasta sauce.

VEGETARIAN LOAF: Prepare the mixture through step 6. Oil a loaf pan with a coating of olive (or your preferred vegetable) oil. Preheat your oven to 275° F. Shape chilled mixture into a loaf and place it into your loaf pan. If you desire, top your loaf with ketchup or barbecue sauce. Bake on middle oven shelf for about 30 minutes. Remove to your serving plate.