"Can't Believe it's Vegan" Bolognese

Date : 18-02-2020

Ingredients

- 4 cups minced mushrooms
- 2 large chopped tomatoes
- 2 small chopped red onions
- 1 can of diced tomatoes
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 cup chopped basil
- 4-5 sprigs of thyme
- 5 cloves chopped garlic
- 2 tbs olive oil
- 1/2 tbs balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper
- 1/2 tsp oregano

Method

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Mushroom “Meat”

1. Place your mushrooms in a food processor, and pulse until the mushrooms are very finely minced (Open and stir frequently to make sure you don’t wind up pureeing the mushrooms! They will be just short of a puree though.)
2. Measure out and put the minced mushrooms in an extra large skillet, on high heat, using a spatula to ensure they are spread into a thin, evenly spaced layer
3. Leave on high heat until the mushrooms start to really dry out; toss, and allow to sit again
4. Repeat until the mushrooms start to brown and resemble a crumbled meat or meat substitute
5. Add thyme and 1/2 tsp salt, stir, and set aside

Sauce

1. Heat up 2 tbs of olive oil in a medium sized pot
2. Add chopped garlic and red onions, and sautee until the garlic browns and the onions turn translucent
3. Add canned tomatoes, balsamic vinegar, basil, chopped tomatoes, crushed red pepper, oregano, water, and 1 1/2 tsp salt
4. Bring to a simmer, cover, and allow to cook for 10-12 minutes
5. Open, stir, and allow to reduce until desired consistency is reached
6. Stir in the mushroom “meat” until well combined, and serve hot!

A vegetarian bolognese has always felt a little like an oxymoron to me! After all, it's really tough to arrive at the exact texture and richness of a bolognese without meat or synthetic meat substitutes (which I tend to shy away from). That all changed with the discovery of this "Can't Believe it's Vegan" Bolognese!

I've experimented with vegetarian and vegan substitutes for a long time, always on a mission to find ways to get as close to the real thing as possible, but the hardest thing to crack has always been a good meat crumble substitute. Bur after LOTS of trial and error, I'm happy to report that I finally found something that had my husband asking "what kind of meat did you use in this?"

The answer?? MUSHROOMS! I'm not kidding! This skillet is not filled with soy crumbles, or ground turkey or beef, but mushrooms methodically cooked and flavored. In the end, you get one of the cleanest, simplest meat substitutes possible, with the huge added benefit of an actual meat-like texture.

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The process is very straightforward, but the key to really getting this right is patience. Once your mushrooms are in the skillet, give them time to sit and do their thing. The more moisture you can get out of them, the better. I recommend getting them started, and then proceeding to prep and prepare the rest of the sauce, and they'll be ready right in time to stir in at the end!

This was a huge hit with our entire family, even with the "strict non-vegetarians," which made it seem only fair to call this the "Can't Believe it's Vegan" Bolognese!

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