

Sesame Sweet Potato & Cabbage Burgers

Yield 4 large or 6 medium burgers | *Prep time* 20 minutes | *Cook time* 15 minutes

4 tablespoons olive oil
1 large or 2 small onions, diced
Scant ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
1 medium sweet potato, coarsely grated
2 cups shredded cabbage
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
1 egg
1 tablespoon well-stirred tahini
Juice of 1 lemon
¼ cup panko or coarse bread crumbs, plus more if needed

My favorite veggie burger cooking method involves both the oven and the stovetop, but I realize that can be a bit much when you just want to eat, so I've revisited my new recipes to focus on the stovetop, and then provided a deep dive in the book on the many cooking methods that are available to you. If you have the time, though, the combination of a stovetop sear plus the indirect heat of the oven results in a better veggie burger texture, allowing the burgers to dry out so that they aren't mushy, but still get a nice and crispy char on the exterior. To follow this method, preheat your oven to 375°F. After you've seared your burgers on the stovetop, transfer them either to a sheet pan or arrange them in your oven-safe skillet if they all fit, and move to the oven to bake for 12 to 15 minutes more, until firmed up. You can also reverse this method, baking them first until firmed up, and then a few hours or even a day or two later, reheat them in a skillet or on your outdoor grill.

1. Set your widest skillet over medium heat and when hot, swirl in 2 tablespoons of the oil, followed by the onions and cayenne. Fry until soft and begin to color deeply, 10 to 12 minutes. Add the sesame oil, followed by the sweet potato, cabbage, and salt. Cover and cook until tender, stirring periodically, about 10 minutes. Allow to cool slightly.

2. In a mixing bowl, whisk together the egg, tahini, and lemon juice until combined. Add the potato-cabbage mixture, then fold in the panko or breadcrumbs. Add additional panko if the mixture seems loose, but err on the side of wet because the burgers will firm up as the cook and cool. If you have time, let the mixture sit for 20 to 30 minutes, then shape into 4 large or 6 smaller patties.

3. To cook, wipe out the skillet and return it to medium heat, then swirl in the remaining 2 tablespoons oil. Add as many burgers as will fit comfortably without crowding the pan (usually 2 or 3 for me), and cook until seared and crisped on the bottoms, 5 to 7 minutes, then flip and repeat on the other side, lowering the heat if they begin to burn. The burgers will firm up a bit as they cook, and further once they're removed from the heat and have cooled slightly. Serve warm.

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