

## Vegan Comfort Classics: Jalapeño Poppers, po' boys & more...

**A** bold collection of 100 recipes puts a vegan twist on comfort foods in food blogger Lauren Toyota's Hot For Food Vegan Comfort Classics: 101 Recipes to Feed Your Face (Ten Speed Press).

Enjoy plates piled high with the likes of fried chicken, mac 'n' cheese, and cheese steaks - indulgent, crave-worthy food that is completely vegan. Toyota shows readers just how compelling vegan food can be with recipes like Southern Fried Cauliflower, Oyster Mushroom PoBoy, and Raspberry Funfetti Pop Tarts.



### ✕ Baked Jalapeño Poppers ✕

A classic appetizer shouldn't be messed with too much so she's kept these poppers pretty true to what you're used to, stuffing them with an herby cream cheese filling and bacon bits. They're just the right size to eat in one or two bites with your hands.

If you're afraid of being eaten alive by the heat of a jalapeño, the key is cleaning out the middle seeds entirely. The cream cheese and The Sundried Tomato Aioli also help soothe the heat while you eat.

- 1 cup vegan cream cheese, preferably flavored with herbs, chives, or garlic
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped chives
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ cup tofu bacon
- 7 to 10 jalapeño chili peppers (depending on size)
- ½ cup bread crumbs
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika or chili powder



- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- Vegetable oil spray, for coating
- The Sundried Tomato Aioli (see below)

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Mix the cream cheese together with the chives, cilantro, garlic, and bacon crumbles in a bowl. Refrigerate while you prepare the jalapeños.

Cut the jalapeños in half lengthwise and gently scoop out the flesh and seeds with a small spoon or pairing knife, being sure not to break the peppers. Combine the breadcrumbs with the paprika, garlic powder, and salt in a shallow dish.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Stuff the jalapeño halves with the cream cheese mixture. Have some of the mixture slightly piling out of the halves but not overflowing. Sprinkle the tops with the breadcrumb mixture, coating them well. Place on the baking sheet.

To help brown the tops, spray with a light coating of oil. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes until golden brown.

Serve immediately with a drizzle of the aioli on each piece or serve the aioli on the side as a dip.

**Makes 4-6 servings. Prep time: 40 minutes. Cook time: 20 minutes.**

#### Bacon Marinade

- ¼ cup low-sodium tamari or soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon liquid smoke
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika

Combine all of the marinade ingredients together in a bowl or wide dish with a whisk or fork.

#### The Sundried Tomato Aioli

- ¼ cup dry-packed sundried tomatoes
- ½ cup vegan mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon chili powder
- ¼ teaspoon mustard powder or Dijon mustard
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper

Soak the sundried tomatoes in warm water for 10 minutes and then drain. This helps to soften the tomatoes for blending.

Add the sundried tomatoes and remaining ingredients to a high-powered blender and blend until very smooth. Alternatively, use an immersion blender to combine all the ingredients in a tall jar or other container and blend until very smooth.

**Makes 2/3 cup. Prep time: 15 minutes.**

### ✕ Oyster Mushroom Po' Boy ✕

New Orleans is where the sandwich originated but this recipe helps to make a vegan version that's just as tasty.

#### Prep Ahead: The Thousand Island Dressing

- 1 cup vegan mayonnaise
- ¼ cup sweet green relish
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sambal oelek (chile paste) or hot sauce
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped chives
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper

Stir all the ingredients together in a bowl until well combined. Store in fridge for up to 10 days.

#### Fried Oyster Mushrooms

- 2 tablespoons ground flax
- 6 tablespoons water
- 1 cup unsweetened nondairy milk
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons vegan oyster sauce or vegan Worcestershire
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- 1 teaspoon ground white or black pepper
- 8 ounces oyster mushrooms (16 to 20)
- 4 to 6 cups vegetable oil, for frying

#### Breading

- 4 hoagie or kaiser-style rolls
- The Thousand Island dressing
- 2 ½ cups finely chopped romaine lettuce
- 3 vine tomatoes, thinly sliced
- 3 dill pickles, sliced into rounds

#### Sandwiches

To prepare the mushrooms, mix together the ground flax and water in a bowl and let sit for 10 minutes to thicken.

In another bowl, mix together the nondairy milk, vinegar, oyster sauce, garlic powder, basil, and pepper. Add the flax mixture and pour the marinade over the mushrooms in a large zipper bag, making sure they are well submerged. Refrigerate for at least 20 minutes. Or you can leave it overnight.

Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed pot to a temperature of 365°F to 375°F on a deep-frying thermometer. The oil should be heated to the right temperature just as you're about to bread the mushrooms.

To make the breading, mix together all the ingredients in a bowl. Remove a few mushrooms from the marinade and place directly in the breading, coating evenly on all sides using your hands. Place each piece in the hot oil and fry for 2 to 3 minutes.

Place fried mushrooms on paper towels to absorb excess oil. Continue to bread the mushrooms and fry in small batches.

To assemble the sandwiches, cut the rolls in half and toast, if desired. Spread some Thousand Island on the inside of each roll. Layer the romaine lettuce, tomato slices, pickles, and fried mushrooms on one half of each roll. Add more of Thousand Island, if desired.

Serve immediately while the oyster mushrooms are still warm. Reheat leftover fried mushrooms in a 425°F oven for 10 to 12 minutes until crispy.

**Makes 4 sandwiches. Prep time: 45 minutes. Cook time: 15 minutes.**

**Hot Tip:** Fresh herbs create a more authentic taste and are preferred, but in a pinch you can use dried. I don't know you, but maybe you like your dip thick and your salad dressing thinned out. Whatever your pleasure just add a tablespoon or two of water or nondairy milk to these 3 recipes once they're made to achieve your desired consistency.



**About The Book:** Hot For Food Vegan Comfort Classics: 101 Recipes to Feed Your Face by Lauren Toyota. Published by Ten Speed Press, February, 2018. ISBN-13: 978-0399580147

**About the Author:** Lauren Toyota is a former MTV Canada host and a YouTube sensation. Her channel and blog, hot for food, attract a wide and engage audience of young people curious about how to make vegan food fast and fun. In less than three years, her YouTube channel has gained over 391,000 subscribers. Her vegan recipes have been featured in Laika Magazine, Women's Health Magazine, BuzzFeed, Huffington Post, Thrive, and Clean Eating Magazine. She was also Food Network Canada's first and only vegan blogger and contributor, regularly sharing exclusive recipes for Meatless Monday.