

Vegan Sloppy Joes with Lentils

Prep: 5 minutes • Cook: 25 minutes

Hearty, smoky-sweet lentil sloppy joes with a savory tomato base, gentle heat, and satisfying texture — a quick, comforting plant-based sandwich.

Ingredients

- 2 cups water or vegetable broth (or use half water, half vegetable broth)
- 1 cup lentils (green or red, well rinsed)
- 2 Tbsp oil (olive, grapeseed, or avocado)
- 1/2 medium onion (white or yellow, minced; plus more for serving, sliced)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 1/2 medium bell pepper (red or green, diced)
- to taste sea salt
- to taste black pepper
- 15 oz (1 can) tomato sauce
- 1-2 Tbsp coconut sugar (or sub brown sugar; plus more to taste)
- 1-2 Tbsp vegan Worcestershire sauce (ensure gluten-free if needed)
- 1-2 tsp chili powder (plus more to taste)
- 1 tsp ground cumin (plus more to taste)
- 1 pinch paprika (smoked or regular; optional)
- 4 hamburger buns (gluten-free or whole-wheat, toasted; optional, for serving)

Instructions

1. If using green lentils: Add 2 cups liquid (water and/or vegetable broth) and rinsed green lentils to a small saucepan. Bring to a low boil over medium-high, reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook 18-22 minutes until tender. Drain excess liquid.
2. If using red lentils: Bring 2 cups liquid (water and/or vegetable broth) to a boil. Add rinsed red lentils, return to a gentle boil, reduce to a simmer, and cook uncovered 7-10 minutes until just tender. Drain well.
3. Meanwhile, heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add oil, minced onion, garlic, and diced bell pepper. Season with a pinch of salt and black pepper. Sauté 4-5 minutes, stirring frequently, until tender and lightly browned.
4. Stir in tomato sauce, coconut sugar, vegan Worcestershire sauce, chili powder, cumin, and paprika (if using). Mix to combine.
5. Add cooked lentils to the skillet and stir to coat. Cook over medium-low heat 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until thickened and heated through.

6. Taste and adjust: add more chili powder or cumin for smokiness, salt for saltiness, coconut sugar for sweetness, or Worcestershire for depth.
7. Serve the mixture on toasted hamburger buns with additional sliced onion if desired.
8. Storage: Best fresh, but the sloppy joe mixture keeps refrigerated 4-5 days or frozen up to 1 month. Reheat on the stovetop or in the microwave, adding a splash of water or broth if thick.

Tags: Vegan, Sandwich, Lentils, Quick, Weeknight Friendly, Gluten-Free Friendly

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