



Vegan Mushroom & Walnut Bolognese

Description

This Vegan Mushroom & Walnut Bolognese is a delicious and hearty twist on the classic Italian sauce. Made with finely chopped mushrooms, crunchy walnuts, and a rich tomato base, this dish is packed with umami and depth of flavor. It's perfect for pasta lovers looking for a healthy, plant-based alternative that doesn't compromise on taste or texture. Whether served over spaghetti, rigatoni, or zucchini noodles, this sauce will become a new favorite in your home.

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil (for depth and to carry flavors)
- 1 small onion, finely chopped (adds sweetness and depth)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (essential for flavor complexity)
- 1 medium carrot, finely diced (adds subtle sweetness and texture)
- 1 celery stalk, finely diced (enhances the base flavors)
- 8 oz cremini or button mushrooms, finely chopped (provides umami and meaty texture)

- 1 cup walnuts, finely chopped or pulsed in a food processor (adds heartiness and healthy fats)
- 2 tbsp tomato paste (intensifies the tomato flavor and adds richness)
- 1 can (14 oz) crushed tomatoes (creates the saucy base)
- ½ cup vegetable broth (helps deglaze and maintain moisture)
- 2 tbsp soy sauce or tamari (adds depth and umami)
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar (balances the acidity and enhances sweetness)
- 1 tsp dried oregano (for a classic Italian herb flavor)
- 1 tsp dried basil (complements the tomatoes and adds warmth)
- ½ tsp smoked paprika (adds a subtle smoky depth)
- ½ tsp red pepper flakes (optional, for a hint of heat)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 8-12 oz spaghetti or pasta of choice (to serve)
- Fresh basil and vegan parmesan (for garnish, optional)

Instructions:

1. **Sauté the Aromatics:** In a large skillet or saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and cook for 3-4 minutes until softened. Stir in the garlic, carrot, and celery, cooking for another 3-4 minutes until fragrant.
2. **Cook the Mushrooms & Walnuts:** Add the chopped mushrooms and walnuts to the pan. Cook for about 8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms release their moisture and the mixture begins to brown slightly.
3. **Build the Flavor:** Stir in the tomato paste, letting it cook for 1-2 minutes to deepen the flavor. Pour in the crushed tomatoes, vegetable broth, soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, oregano, basil, smoked paprika, and red pepper flakes if using.

4. **Simmer to Perfection:** Reduce the heat and let the sauce simmer gently for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. The flavors will meld, and the sauce will thicken beautifully.
5. **Taste & Adjust:** Add salt and black pepper to taste. If you prefer a slightly richer sauce, drizzle in an extra teaspoon of olive oil or balsamic vinegar.
6. **Serve & Enjoy:** Cook your pasta according to package instructions. Drain and toss with the sauce, or serve the sauce over the pasta. Garnish with fresh basil and vegan parmesan, if desired.