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Thoughtful Food

Savor These Spinach or Cauliflower Patties

By Susie Iventosch



Spinach and Cauliflower patties

Photo Susie Iventosch

Here is a fun way to eat your vegetables and feel as though you are eating something really hearty at the same time! These patties are sort of like having your burger, bun, cheese and lettuce all in one neat package. These are two

slightly different recipes, but both use the same potatoes and onions; just the vegetables and cheese are different. At first, I thought I liked the spinach patties better, but then I preferred the cauliflower, before I went back to the spinach and ended

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up at cauliflower! It's really tough to decide, so why not make both?

These are also great for a vegetarian or gluten-free entrée. Serve plain, or with your favorite mustard or dipping sauce.

Spinach and Feta Patties

(Makes 4 large patties)

INGREDIENTS

2 medium-sized Russet potatoes
6 cups of fresh spinach leaves
1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
½ cup crumbled feta cheese
Olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
Scrub potatoes and remove any bad spots. Spear through the skin with a fork in one or two places. Rub potatoes all over with a light coating of olive oil. Place potatoes directly on oven rack and bake in preheated 425-degree oven for about 45 minutes, or until tender when speared with a knife. Remove from heat and cool.

When able to handle, scoop the pulp out from the skin and place in a bowl. Smash with fork or potato masher. (Reserve skins for another use ... they are really delicious with a little cheese melted on top!)

Meanwhile, heat 2 Tbsp. of olive oil in a large frying pan and cook onions until translucent. Add spinach and cook until wilted. The spinach will reduce significantly in volume.

Add spinach-onion mixture to smashed potatoes along with feta cheese and mix well. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Form into patties. If you feel this mixture is too dry, add a dash of milk at a time until you can form a patty.

Place oil in frying pan (can use the same pan) and place patties in pan. Cook over medium to medium-high heat until browned on both sides, and heated all the way through. Flip patties partway through to make sure both sides have a nicely browned color.
Serve hot!

Cauliflower, Gruyere Patties

(Makes 4 large patties)

INGREDIENTS

2 medium-sized Russet potatoes
1 head cauliflower
1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
½ cup grated Gruyere cheese
Olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Scrub potatoes and remove any bad spots. Spear through the skin with a fork in one or two places. Rub potatoes all over with a light coating of olive oil. Place potatoes directly on oven rack and bake in preheated 425-degree oven for about 45 minutes, or until tender when speared with a knife. Remove from heat and cool. When able to handle, scoop the pulp out from the skin and place in a bowl. Smash with fork or potato masher. (Reserve skins for another use ... they are really delicious chopped and sautéed with onions and herbs for a side dish.)

Meanwhile prepare the cauliflower by removing outer leaves and stem, and cut cauliflower into smaller chunks or florets. Using a French steamer, cook until tender when pierced with a knife. (I actually used the Trader Joe's microwaveable cauliflower, which was super easy for this part.) Allow to cool, and chop cauliflower into roughly ¼-inch pieces with a chef's knife. Set aside.

Cook onions in oil over medium heat until tender and translucent.

Mix all ingredients together: smashed potatoes, cooked cauliflower, sautéed onions and Gruyere cheese. Form into patties. If you feel this mixture is too dry, add a dash of milk at a time until you can form a patty.

Heat 2 Tbsp. olive oil in frying pan (can use same pan as onions) and cook over medium to medium-high heat until browned and heated through on both sides.
Serve hot!

Paso Robles

A morning departure will land you in Monterey or Carmel just in time for lunch. If you leave the evening before, consider staying the night at the classic Cypress Inn.

Owned by cinema star Doris Day, the dog-friendly Cypress was the original place to overnight with your pooch. Grab a bite at Monterey's Poke Lab, a fast-casual concept that is the Chipotle of this fishy specialty, or check out Carmel's Cultura, an authentic Oaxacan-inspired restaurant and bar that boasts fresh, innovative dishes, Old World ambiance, and an exclusive selection of smoky mezcals. If you're itching to set foot in a state park, pack a picnic and make a detour through ruggedly lovely Point Lobos.

Continue down Highway 1, stopping at Big Sur bakery on your way. A second pit stop at San Simeon will give you the opportunity to spy some elephant seals and allow for a late-afternoon arrival in the quaint central square of Paso. This year's annual Harvest Wine Weekend is slated for Oct. 14-16 and will include over 140 activities, from ceremonial grape stomping and on-site barrel tastings to food-pairing events, live music, and a CABs of Distinction grand tasting showcasing Cabernet Sauvignon and Bordeaux varietals from over 75 local vineyards.

Whether or not you make it for the harvest festivities, you'll want to snag a reservation at Villa Creek, where San Luis Obispo County culinary icon Maegan Loring has recently taken over the kitchen. A winemakers' hangout with farm-to-table practice and their own in-house winery, the spacious patio and indoor dining rooms provide a casu-

ally elegant space where thoughtful food, like basil risotto topped with apple fennel slaw, is served alongside a comprehensive wine list that leans heavily toward Paso.

Taste the latest vintages from Paso's 200-plus wineries by way of vineyard tours, tasting rooms, or one of nine pre-planned wine trails. Many Paso vineyards are SIP (Sustainability in Practice) certified, with some, like boutique winery Jada, implementing biodynamic farming practices. Sample sips at Calcareous, a spacious hilltop winery on the western edge of the AVA (American Viticultural Area). Overlooking the Salinas Valley and the Santa Lucia mountain range, Calcareous is named for the shale abundant in the soil on which the vineyard is situated. Its estate vintages uniquely evidence the limestone and shale of the terroir.

Also worth a visit is Oso Libre, a 90-acre ranch where farming grapes and raising livestock is a lifestyle as well as an occupation. Eat tasty Angus burgers on the grounds where the cattle were raised and watch Olde English baby doll sheep play beside alpacas during Saturday burger events.

When you've had your fill of big reds and estate blends, mosey over toward Templeton and grab a pint at Firestone Walker or Barrelhouse Brewing Company, a local micro-brewery with a 10-tap tasting room and spacious outdoor beer garden (cornhole included). Next, check out downtown Paso for a small town feel and slower pace. Hit up Spearhead Coffee for the best third-wave coffee in the region, stop in at Brown Butter Cookie Company to sample one of their six scrumptious varieties, and peruse the shelves of the

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General Store, a specialty store and gift shop that was first established as a mercantile 100 years ago. Sample their famous almond-brittle, custom blend local olive oil and signature Pasotastic ice cream, a sheep's milk delicacy made by Negranti Creamery. You can also make or pick up custom gift baskets and bring a little Paso home.

After two or three days of sun-filled afternoons and jacket-clad evenings, drive back to Lamorinda refreshed rather than frazzled, taking a bit of Paso's homespun hospitality with you.

Possibilities for Paso Fun:

Paso Robles Wine Weekend:
www.pasowine.com/events/harvest

Villa Creek:
1144 Pine St., Paso Robles
www.villacreek.com

Jada:
5620 Vineyard Dr., Paso Robles
www.jadavineyard.com

Calcareous:
3430 Peachy Canyon Rd., Paso Robles, www.calcareous.com

Oso Libre:
7383 Vineyard Dr., Paso Robles
www.osolibre.com

Barrelhouse Brewing Company:
3055 Limestone Way, Paso Robles
www.barrelhousebrewing.com

Brown Butter Cookie:
801 12th St., Paso Robles
www.brownbuttercookies.com

Spearhead Coffee:
619 12th St., Paso Robles
www.spearheadcoffee.com

General Store:
841 12th St., Paso Robles
www.generalstorepr.com

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