

The Willow's

Bunless falafel burger

SERVES 4 V Vn GF DF

HANDS-ON TIME 45 MINS TOTAL TIME 1 HR

8 large portabella mushrooms
2 tbsp coconut oil, melted, plus extra to fry
a large handful of rocket leaves
2 ripe vine tomatoes, sliced
4 tbsp almond butter, stirred

For the falafel burgers

½ medium courgette, grated
1 tsp olive oil
125g drained cannellini beans
1 x 215g tin chickpeas, drained
50g gram (chickpea) flour
1 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 tbsp chopped coriander
¼ tsp ground allspice
1 tsp Cajun spice
1 garlic clove, crushed

For the avocado slaw

100g red cabbage, finely shredded
1 large ripe avocado, flesh chopped
juice of ½ lemon
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
a pinch of flaked sea salt, to taste
1 small carrot, finely grated

- 1 For the burgers, fry the courgette in the olive oil in a frying pan over a medium heat until soft, about 5 minutes. Set aside and leave to cool. Blitz the drained beans and chickpeas to a coarse purée in a food processor, transfer to a large bowl and add the gram flour, a pinch of salt and the herbs, spices and garlic. Add the cooled courgette to the bowl and mix well. Form into 4 burgers, transfer to a plate or board, and chill.
- 2 Preheat the oven to 180°C, fan 160°C, gas 4. Take the stalks off the mushrooms by twisting them gently. Brush all over with the coconut oil and a pinch of salt, roast for 10-15 minutes on a baking tray until softened but still holding their shape. Heat a chargrill pan and fry the mushrooms for about 2 minutes per side to pick up char lines. Remove from the pan onto a kitchen paper-lined plate – they release quite a lot of liquid, so change the paper if you need to while you sear the rest.
- 3 To make the avocado slaw, blanch the red cabbage in boiling salted water for 2-3 minutes. Drain well in a colander and rinse with cold water. Drain again

At *The Willow* in Kingston upon Thames, head chef Paul Smith specialises in healthier dishes, like this bunless, vegan-friendly *falafel burger*. He says: 'We replaced the bun with portabella mushrooms. This not only adds flavour but reduces the carbs.'



» GET AHEAD

Make the falafel burgers 1 day ahead and chill. Bake the mushrooms an hour ahead, keep at room temperature and griddle just before serving.

- 4 and pat dry with kitchen paper. Put the avocado, lemon juice, olive oil and salt in a small blender and whizz until smooth, adding a splash of water if you need to. Tip into a large bowl and add the blanched cabbage and the carrot. Toss well to coat and season again with more lemon juice and some salt, if you like.
 - 4 To cook the burgers, heat a knob of coconut oil on a medium heat in a nonstick pan. Fry for 3 minutes on each side or until golden and heated through.
 - 5 Put a few rocket leaves and slices of tomato in one of the mushroom caps to make a base 'bun', sit a falafel burger on top and add 1 tablespoon of almond butter and a spoonful of avocado slaw. Sit another mushroom cap on top as a 'lid', so it looks like a burger. Skewer with a cocktail stick, and serve with the rest of the avocado slaw. Use knives and forks rather than picking it up!
- 456cals; 30g fat (10g sat fat); 17g protein; 13g fibre; 22g carbs; 5g total sugars; 0.5g salt ►