

VEGAN POPPERS

This has got to be one of the weirdest things I have ever made. Born of my work with poppers (obviously), I saw this as a challenge. After all, all of my other poppers rely heavily on bacon and going fully vegan means that I can't use cheese either. I am definitely going to have to resurrect my "Stoopedest Thing I Ever Made" series

Anyways, as with the Vegan "Bacon", there are still some kinks to work out, so I am keeping this as a Work In Progress for now. The recipe is my current best guess and may not 100% sync up with the pictures

Full disclosure with this one: All in all, it is pretty time intensive, probably the better part of a day. Is it worth it? Yes. Are they tasty even if you aren't vegan? Absolutely!

20201126 (Thursday): I am pretty sure I nailed this last night. Deep frying is the key! I am updating this and removing the WIP designation. I just might have to give this the "OLD MAN's" designation

INGREDIENTS

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Item</u>
1	Batch	Black Bean Salsa
1	Batch	Vegan "Bacon"
4	Batch	Dehydrated Portabella Mushrooms
1	TSP	Accent
16	-----	Good Sized Jalapenos
AR	-----	Corn Starch
AR	-----	Peanut oil

Recipes for everything can be found in **OLD MAN's Book of Food Insanity - Volume I**

Side note about jalapenos: Just when you think they will be in they are not. Plan ahead!!!

What is Accent? Check the label (it only has one ingredient)

Don't have or like Peanut Oil? Any neutral oil suitable for deep frying at 374 deg. F should do

SPECIAL TOOLS

- Coffee / Spice Grinder [i]
- Food Saver (or similar vacuum sealer) [ii]
- Vacuum seal bags or bag rolls [ii]
- Traeger Pellet Grill with Mesquite Pellets[iii]
- Copper Crispers [iv]

- Counter Top Deep Fryer [viii]
- See “Black Bean Salsa” and “Vegan Bacon” recipes for any other special equipment

PREPARATION

A FEW HOURS OR THE DAY BEFORE

- 1) Make black bean salsa
- 2) Make vegan “bacon” up through Part I

POPPER TIME!!!

PART I

- 1) Rinse the jalapenos and pat dry
- 2) Remove the stems, but be careful not to remove the stem root; if we do this, the filling will leak out!
- 3) Slice the jalapenos in half length-wise
- 4) Scope out the ribs and seeds with the 1/8 TSP metal measuring spoon and set aside. Make sure to NOT remove the stem base so that the filling will not drain out
- 5) Put jalapenos in fridge, uncovered, until needed later
- 6) Rough cut the dehydrated mushrooms into smallish bits
- 7) Grind the dehydrated mushrooms in the spice grinder into a fine powder and set aside
- 8) Pull the Traeger out on your deck and fill with your pellets of choice [v]
- 9) Set the Trager to smoke with the lid open
- 10) Once you see smoke, close the lid and set to 250 deg. F
- 11) Pull the salsa from the fridge and give a quick mix with a wood spoon
- 12) Put the salsa into the food processor and sprinkle over some of the dehydrated mushrooms and the Accent
- 13) Pulse the food processor for about 1 second
- 14) Sprinkle in more dehydrated mushroom and re-arrange with a wood spoon
- 15) Repeat steps 13 and 14 until you achieve a coarse mixture
- 16) Put the mixture into a glass bowl and give it a stir with a wood spoon
- 17) If there is any leftover dehydrated mushroom, mix it in with a wood spoon until evenly incorporated
- 18) Cover loosely with plastic wrap until needed
- 19) Pull the “bacon” out and give it a gentle stir with a wood spoon
- 20) Pull a strip of “bacon” from the marinade and gently shake to let excess marinade drip back off into bowl [vi]
- 21) Unfold and spread the “bacon” on cooling racks in sheet pans to drain
- 22) Cover the bottom of a 9x13 glass pan with corn starch
- 23) For each pepper half
 - a. Fill with the coarse ground salsa mix so that it is mounded a little bit above the top of the pepper half
 - b. Coat on both sides with corn starch [vii]

- c. Wrap in “bacon” such that the entire pepper is wrapped with a single layer with overlapping edges. You don’t want to be able to see the filling. If the “bacon” is too short, wrap in another piece. If the “bacon” is too long for the pepper, fold the remaining length of “bacon” so that it lays on top of the popper
 - d. Place on Copper Crisper. DON’T CROWD THE POPPERS!
- 24) If you are not going to make all the poppers, vacuum seal the left overs and put in freezer. Tupperware and wax paper is fine if you are going to make the rest in the next day or so
- 25) Place the poppers in the Traeger for 2 ½ hours

PART II – OVEN METHOD

If you are using the oven method

- 1) About ½ hour out from the 2 ½ hour timer, heat oven to 450 deg. F
- 2) At the end of 2 ½ hours, pull the poppers inside and place in the oven
- 3) Cook until the “bacon” is nice and crispy. Check in intervals of 5 minutes. Don’t let them burn!!!
- 4) Pull from the oven and let sit for 5 minutes
- 5) Plate and...
- 6) ENJOY!!!

PART II – DEEP FRYER METHOD

If you are using the deep fryer method (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!!)

- 1) About ½ hour out from the 2 ½ hour timer, fill your deep fryer with peanut oil
- 2) Heat the oil to 374 deg. F
- 3) At the end of 2 ½ hours, pull the poppers inside
- 4) Deep fry the poppers in small batches (DON’T CROWD!!!) for 2 minutes [ix]
- 5) Drain the poppers in the basket over the oil for about 15 seconds
- 6) Move the poppers to a ½ sheet cooling rack in a ½ sheet pan
- 7) Cover the poppers with a second sheet pan
- 8) If you are making a large number of them, keep the poppers in an oven set to warm [x]
- 9) Repeat steps 4 – 8 for the rest of the poppers
- 10) Plate and...
- 11) ENJOY!!!

NOTES

- i. These things are great and pretty cheap. A LOT easier than a mortar and pestle.
- ii. The vacuum sealer is GREAT for storing leftovers
- iii. If you don't have a Traeger or the like, you can use the oven. You will, however, miss out on that great smoke flavor.
- iv. Are these really necessary? Well, no, but I bought a couple a while back and found them very useful for this type of stuff. A half sheet cooling rack in a half sheet pan will work just as well
- v. Either Mesquite or Hickory works well here
- vi. If you pull one of the leftover "thick" pieces, set it aside; we only want the thin pieces here
- vii. Add additional cornstarch as required
- viii. Don't have a counter top deep fryer? I have keep the "oven" option as well, but it won't wind up as crisp
- ix. I like them pretty dark and crispy. If you don't like 'em so dark, start at about 1 minute and take it from there
- x. If your "warm" setting is too warm, leave the oven door open a crack

PICTURES









