

Cuisine from the bayou will always have a special place in my heart; it's so full of spice and soul. This meatless version of a Cajun classic cuts down on the saturated fat and calories by replacing the meat with mushrooms and veggies and using a low sodium vegetable broth, but I promise y'all won't miss out on any of the flavor. Fix this stew on a chilly night for a dinner that's sure to warm you up.



Vegetarian Gumbo *in a new light*

Adapted from Paula's original Gumbo recipe

Makes: 8 servings

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Difficulty: Medium

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 1 large green bell pepper, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 8 ounces brown mushrooms, sliced
- 3 tablespoons garlic, chopped
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can low-sodium diced tomatoes, with juice
- 6 ounces vegetarian spicy sausage
- 1 cup okra (fresh or thawed frozen), chopped
- 1/2 cup roasted red pepper
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Cajun seasoning
- Black pepper, to taste
- 4 green onions, chopped

1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
Hot sauce, for serving

Heat oil in a heavy skillet (preferably cast-iron) over medium heat. Add flour and cook, stirring frequently, until flour turns golden-brown and smells toasty, about 5 minutes. Add onion, bell pepper, celery, mushrooms and garlic; cook, stirring, until vegetables are softened, about 2 minutes.

Add broth, tomatoes, sausage, okra, roasted red peppers, Cajun seasoning and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until gumbo begins to thicken and the flavors are blended, about 20 minutes. Stir in the green onions and parsley. Pass hot sauce at the table.

*Gumbo is traditionally served over rice. You might try whole grain (brown) rice or barley. This has not been accounted for in the nutritional information listed below.

Per serving (1 cup): 140 calories, 6 g fat (.5 g saturated, 0 g trans), 0 mg cholesterol, 450 mg sodium, 16 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 7 g protein.

Making it lighter

- Replaced the meat and seafood with mushrooms and veggie sausage to reduce saturated fat and calories.
- Used low-sodium vegetable broth and low-sodium chopped tomatoes to lower sodium.
- Replaced high-sodium Worcestershire sauce with roasted red bell peppers which add a smoky flavor.

What's the difference?

Vegetarian Gumbo in a new light cuts out 180 calories, 13 g fat, and 600 mg sodium from the original.



Material reviewed by Diabetes Care and Education, a dietetic practice group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

A good balance of the right foods, along with regular exercise and your prescribed medications, can help you feel better and stay healthier. As with any meal, remember to pay attention to portion size and enjoy every dish as part of your overall meal plan. You may need more or less carbohydrates each day depending on how you manage your diabetes. Work with your health care team to determine a meal plan that works for you.