

# FOOD

## Best Veggie Burger (*Vegan & Grillable*)

### Ingredients

- 1/4 cup ground flax
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 cups cooked black beans (2 15-oz cans, drained and rinsed)
- 1 cup cashews
- 1 1/2 cups cooked brown rice
- 1/2 cup chopped parsley
- 1 1/2 cups shredded carrots
- 1/3 cup chopped green onions
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons smoked paprika
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1-2 teaspoons salt, to taste

### Directions

1. First, cook your rice if you don't already have some leftover in the fridge. Gather all the ingredients.
2. Mash the drained/rinsed black beans in a large bowl, leaving a few beans whole.
3. Pulse 1 cup of cashews (or other nut/seed) in a food processor until breadcrumb size. Don't leave these out unless you have to, they add so much texture and you'll miss them!
4. Add all the ingredients to the bean bowl and mix well with a large wooden spoon. Shape into patties about 3-4 inch thick.
5. To pan-fry or grill, refrigerate the shaped patties for at least 30 minutes. Then grill for a few minutes on each side. Use 2-3 tbslp oil if pan-fried.
6. To bake, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F and line a baking sheet or two with parchment paper. Place the patties on the pan(s) and bake for 20 minutes. Flip, bake for 15 more minutes. Remove from oven.
7. Serve on hamburger buns and any burger fix-



ings you love! Go with the classic: vegan mayo, ketchup, mustard, pickle slices, lettuce, tomato and onion. Or get creative: barbecue sauce, Sriracha vegan mayo, avocado and arugula, etc.

## Diverse Play Explores Jewish Identity

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insight and humanity, holding them open rather than answering them. A cast of seven Jewish actors, diverse in terms of age and racial identity, appear in a variety of roles, including as actors in various productions of "The God of Vengeance," a touchstone of Yiddish theater. The story of that particular play becomes the vehicle to inform us about the play's vibrant lost history, and to help us grapple with the questions of identity that continue to plague the Jewish community.

It is hard to capture just how compelling and relevant this deep dive into Yiddish theater actually is. It was news to me--as, I expect, to most people--that in 1906, a young Polish-Jewish writer, Sholem Asch, wrote a play that was perhaps ahead of its time and perhaps outside of time itself. In "The God of Vengeance," an innocent Jewish girl, Rifkele, who is the daughter of a brothel owner and a former whore who aspires to respectability, falls in love with Manke, one of the prostitutes who works for her father. In their quest for respectability, Rifkele's parents have commissioned a Torah (the sacred handwritten scroll of the first five books of the Jewish scriptures) for their home, not because they are so pious but in order to attract a good husband for their daughter. When they discover Rifkele's relationship with Manke, the brothel owner, in a scene that shocked even the least observant Jews, angrily discards the Torah, and casts out his wife and daughter.

At its first reading in Warsaw in 1906, the play shocked and offended people with its depiction of two women in love, its sacrilegious treatment of the Torah, and its centering of characters who were not at all the sort that a marginalized community would want to highlight. The play was written in Yiddish, the mother tongue that tied together the community of Ashkenazi Jews in Central and Eastern Europe at the time, a beleaguered community that had endured centuries of pogroms and segregation. At the time the play was written, Jews disagreed about whether interaction with the secular, non-Jewish world would help or hinder their survival as a community, and what such interaction should look like. The first professional Yiddish theaters in the 1870s were part of a movement toward making Yiddish a

language of the arts, philosophy, and science--but Asch's play was viewed by many in that world as shaming the Jews in front of Gentiles.

Nevertheless, "The God of Vengeance" found surprisingly enthusiastic audiences for many years, with successful productions all over Europe in several different languages. Its reception in the U.S. was more mixed; a Yiddish production in New York in 1907 sparked disagreements in the Yiddish press over whether the play was indecent or an artistic triumph, and an English-language production in 1923 (which revised the play to darken the relationship between the two women) was shut down for obscenity, supported by the testimony of a prominent rabbi. The play simply did not portray who American Jews wanted to be in the world, and eventually Asch, after the Holocaust, banned further productions of it.

"Indecent" becomes a compelling rumination on this history. We follow the playwright and his wife; a tailor who becomes so inspired by the first reading of the play that he spends much of his life managing productions of it; actors who embody the story on stage while experiencing the intersections between their own lives and the play's handling of hypocrisy and forbidden love. As I watched the shifts in the play and the artists, I felt in my body the many times I have experienced pressure to show up in certain ways to benefit my community or to avoid hindering its ambitions.

The design of this production, beautifully directed by Shana Cooper, lifts the play to a plane that feels both deeply embodied and also spiritual. A uniformly wonderful cast that, importantly, includes Jews of color, inspires reverence for the role of art to help us look where we had never thought to look for inspiration and hope. And three on-stage musicians carry the soul of the play in the sounds of the accordion, clarinet, and violin. I left inspired, understood, and grateful to so many artists--including the playwrights Sholem Asch and Paula Vogel--who have lifted these questions and struggles for identity to places that are so hard to reach.

Darleen Ortega is a judge on the Oregon Court of Appeals and the first woman of color to serve in that capacity. Her movie review column Opinionated Judge appears regularly in The Portland Observer.

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## 2019




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