

4 views | Nov 23, 2020, 12:42pm EST

How To Cook A Smaller Thanksgiving Meal During COVID-19



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Dining

I cover food, travel, and occasionally tennis (when Nadal is playing).

f With social distancing becoming the operative words of 2020, many
t people celebrate Thanksgiving a little differently this year. Those in
in warmer cities can host **outdoors**, others go **virtual**, but a mixture of
caution and travel restrictions result in smaller gatherings.

For those looking to scale down their meals without losing the holiday feel, here are some tips shared by chefs from around the country.



Thanksgiving Lentil Loaf with oven roasted green beans, mushroom 'gravy' and cranberry

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As for plant-based eaters, Chef Meredith Haaz of [The Ranch 4.0](#) in California recommends a Thanksgiving Lentil Loaf from the cookbook [FOOD FOOD FOOD](#). You don't need meat to make a dish that's "hearty, filling, healthy," and perfect for Thanksgiving. This vegan dish pairs well with "traditional sides like mashed potatoes, gravy and cranberry sauce. And leftovers can be used to make meatloaf sandwiches. It can do it all!"

THANKSGIVING LENTIL LOAF

Prep time: 1 hour or less | Cook time: 45 minutes or less

Makes 4 - 6 servings



For the Lentil Loaf:

1 cup dry French green or black lentils
2 cups water
2 Tbsp avocado oil
½ onion, small dice
2 carrots, small dice
2 celery stalks, small dice
½ cup red pepper, small dice
1½ cups crimini mushrooms, small dice
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 Tbsp tomato paste
1 Tbsp barbecue sauce
1 Tbsp fresh parsley, minced
½ tsp + 1 pinch of salt
¼ tsp pepper
¾ cup chickpea bread crumbs
(gluten-free bread crumbs also work)
½ cup oat flour
Touch of maple syrup, to taste

For the Maple Sweetened Glaze:

2 Tbsp tomato paste
1½ Tbsp maple syrup
1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
Pinch of sea salt

To Make the Lentil Loaf:

Preheat oven to 300°F

Combine the lentils, water and a pinch of salt in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer for 15 - 20 minutes until the lentils are just soft.

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Then, sauté the onion, carrots, celery, peppers and mushrooms until tender, adding salt to taste. Add the garlic last and sauté for approximately 2 more minutes.

In a food processor, pulse the lentils into a chunky paste. Set aside in a large mixing bowl.

Next, take the veggie sauté and pulse it in the food processor until a minced, not pureed, form is achieved. Add it to the mixing bowl and fold all of the remaining ingredients together to form the loaf mixture. Mix well, and add any additional ingredients to taste.

To Make the Maple Sweetened Glaze:

Combine all of the ingredients for the glaze and mix well.

Place the loaf mixture in a loaf pan and baste the top with the glaze.

Cook for 30 minutes. Baste the top once more with the glaze, and continue to cook for another 10 minutes.

Let cool, and enjoy.

146 | THANKSGIVING

Recipe for the Thanksgiving Lentil Loaf from "Food, Food, Food" THE RANCH MALIBU