

Embargoed for release until March 29 at 11 am ET / 8 am PT

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High Res Blended Burger Images Available

**JAMES
BEARD
FOUNDATION**



James Beard Foundation Challenges Chefs Nationwide to Menu a Blended Burger

Second annual Blended Burger Project™ encourages chefs to blend mushrooms with meat for more delicious, nutritious and sustainable burgers

New York, NY (March 29, 2016) – Is there ‘shroom for improvement in your favorite burger? This summer, chefs nationwide will be re-imagining the iconic favorite when they take part in James Beard Foundation’s (JBF) Blended Burger Project™, a competition challenging chefs to blend mushrooms with meat to create a more delicious, nutritious and sustainable burger.

Some of the nation’s top chefs and restaurateurs have already pledged their participation, including:

- Hugh Acheson (5&10, The National, The Florence and Empire State South, all in Georgia)
- Jenn Louis (Lincoln and Sunshine Tavern, Portland, OR)
- Jehangir Mehta (Graffiti, Me and You and Mehtaphor, New York, NY)
- Mike Rakun (Marin, Minneapolis, MN)
- Maria Hines (Tilth, Seattle, WA)
- Alex Seidel (Fruition, Denver, CO)
- Tim Byres (SMOKE, Dallas, TX)
- Bernie Kantak (The Gladly, Phoenix, AZ)
- Mike Jenkins (Garces Trading Company, Philadelphia, PA)

“As a proponent of sustainable, healthy foods, I’m thrilled to join the Blended Burger Project,” said Hugh Acheson, James Beard Foundation award-winning chef, author and Top Chef judge. “The meaty, umami qualities of mushrooms make them the perfect ingredient to boost a burger’s flavor – and their nutritional and environmental qualities make a great burger even better.”

The Blended Burger Project is open to chefs nationwide from restaurants of all types. Last year, nearly 250 restaurants joined in the inaugural challenge, creating and plating myriad takes on the culinary concept known as The Blend. JBF anticipates 500+ restaurants around the country will take the challenge in 2016.

“The Blended Burger Project helps bring to life the work of our Foundation’s Impact Programs, which engage the culinary community in the process of creating a sustainable food system that provides nutritious and delicious food for all,” said Kris Moon, Vice President of JBF. “We’re pleased to be partnering once again with the Mushroom Council on this creative educational campaign as a way to share the virtues of The Blend with chefs and diners across America.”

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To participate, chefs simply need to sign-up at jamesbeard.org/blendedburgerproject beginning March 29 at 11 am ET, then create and menu a custom blended burger at their restaurant from Memorial Day (May 30) through July 31.

Diners across America can cast a vote for their favorite blended burger based on a set of judging criteria by visiting jamesbeard.org/blendedburgerproject. In October, the five chefs with the most votes will win an opportunity to prepare their blended burger at the historic James Beard House as part of the official welcome reception for the Foundation's annual Food Conference.

To help their favorite chef win an opportunity to cook their blended burger at the James Beard House, diners can:

- Visit participating restaurants and order the featured blended burger from May 30-July 31
- Vote for their favorite burger based on a set of judging criteria at jamesbeard.org/blendedburgerproject

Note: No purchase is required to vote. Visit jamesbeard.org/blendedburgerproject to see a full list of participating restaurants nationwide, and all official voting and judging criteria.

About the James Beard Foundation (JBF)

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation celebrates, nurtures, and honors America's diverse culinary heritage through programs that educate and inspire. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, the late James Beard was a champion of American cuisine. He helped educate and mentor generations of professional chefs and food enthusiasts, instilling in them the value of wholesome, healthful, and delicious food. Today JBF continues in the same spirit by administering a number of diverse programs that include educational initiatives, food industry awards, scholarships for culinary students, publications, chef advocacy training, and thought-leader convening. The Foundation also maintains the historic James Beard House in New York City's Greenwich Village as a "performance space" for visiting chefs. For more information, please visit jamesbeard.org. Get food news, recipes, and more at the James Beard Foundation's [blog](#). Follow the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

About The Mushroom Council

The Mushroom Council is composed of fresh market producers or importers who average more than 500,000 pounds of mushrooms produced or imported annually. The mushroom program is authorized by the Mushroom Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act of 1990 and is administered by the Mushroom Council under the supervision of the Agricultural Marketing Service. Research and promotion programs help to expand, maintain and develop markets for individual agricultural commodities in the United States and abroad. These industry self-help programs are requested and funded by the industry groups that they serve. For more information, visit mushroomcouncil.org.

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