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High Res Blended Burger Images Available



Restaurant Sign-Up Begins Today for James Beard Foundation's Third-Annual Blended Burger Project

National competition encourages chefs to blend mushrooms with meat for more delicious, nutritious and sustainable burgers

New York, NY (February 22, 2017) – The James Beard Foundation's (JBF) annual call to chefs to make 'shroom for improvement on their menus will continue in 2017 with the third Blended Burger Project™ (BBP). Starting today, restaurants nationwide can register to take part in JBF's summer-long competition to blend finely chopped mushrooms with meat for burgers that are more delicious, nutritious and sustainable.

Last year, chefs at 349 restaurants nationwide – including fast casual, fine dining, food trucks, campus cafeterias, and iconic burger joints – took part in the 10-week competition. Chefs created and menued their take on a burger featuring a ratio of at least 25 percent cultivated mushrooms blended with protein. Participating chefs and restaurants included Hugh Acheson's Empire State South in Atlanta, Jehangir Mehta's Graffiti in New York and Maria Hines' Tilth in Seattle. Consumers voted online more than 2 million times for their favorite burgers. Many of last year's participants noted how the burger met the changing needs of their guests – who are seeking more nutritious and/or sustainable dishes – and continue to menu the burger today.

"Shortly after the debut of our blended burger last year, we had lines of people eager to try it—some coming in almost every day," said Chef Toni Elkhouri of Melbourne, Florida's Cedar's Café, one of five 2016 BBP winners. "In the end, our little 30 seat (48 if you count outside) restaurant served more 2,000 blended burgers in two months."

"The Blended Burger Project is a fun and impactful component of the Foundation's ongoing work to support the culinary community's desire for a more sustainable, healthy food system," said Kris Moon, vice president, James Beard Foundation. "Mushrooms' umami, nutritious quality and low environmental footprint make them the perfect ingredient for chefs to utilize when reimagining the iconic American burger."

To take part in the 2017 Blended Burger Project, restaurants should:

- Develop their unique version of the blended burger
- [Register to participate](#), including sharing a photo and description of the burger
- Menu the burger and encourage consumer votes from Memorial Day (May 29) through July 31

Consumers can vote for their favorite burgers at jamesbeard.org/blendedburgerproject. Chefs from the five restaurants with the most online votes will win a trip to the James Beard House in New York City in early 2018 to cook their burgers at a special Blended Burger Project event. New this year, consumers who vote for their favorite blended burger will be entered in a random drawing for a chance to win a trip for two to the 2018 Blended Burger Project event.

Visit jamesbeard.org/blendedburgerproject to read the contest's Official Rules, including eligibility requirements and 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](#), or subscribe to the free digital newsletter [Beard Bites](#). Follow the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Livestream](#).

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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