Banh Mi Smashburger

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Vietnamese Banh Mi Sandwiches are one of my favorite sandwiches and the flavors lend themselves perfectly to a burger. And since we are in quarantine and our freezers are likely stocked up lots of Ground Beef, I've collaborated with Beef. It's What's For Dinner. to bring you a burger from the freezer that is packed with vegetables. And since I love smash burgers and I used to serve Banh Mi sandwiches back in my food truck days, I thought, why not smash them together and make a Banh Mi Smashburger.

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Ingredients: Makes 2 burgers, Scale up if necessary
• 2, 3 ounce Balls of Ground Beef, Roughly a 1/4 cup (preferably 80% lean, aka 80/20) - Ask the butcher for Ground Chuck • 1 Burger Bun, Toasted • 1/4 of a Cucumber, sliced into thin planks • A few sprigs of Fresh Cilantro • Sea Salt
Sriracha Mayo (enough for 2 burgers)
• 1/4 Cup Mayo • 2-3 Tablespoons of Sriracha Hot sauce • Pinch of Sea Salt
Quick Pickled Carrot and Jalapeño (enough for 2 burgers)
• 2 Large Carrot, Julienned or Shredded • 1-2 Jalapeno, sliced • 1/2 Cup Distilled White Vinegar • 1/2 teaspoon Sea Salt • 3 Tablespoons Sugar • 1/4 Cup Warm Water

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DIRECTIONS

1. If using frozen Ground Beef, make sure you give it 2 days to defrost in the refrigerator. Just make sure it's sitting on a plate on the lowest shelf in the refrigerator to make sure nothing leaks during the thawing.

2. You're going to want to make the pickled vegetables as early as you can to allow as much time for them to take on that flavor. To make them, shred the carrots on a box grater or food processor or cut by hand into julienne slices. Then combine white vinegar, sugar, salt and water in a bowl and then add the carrots and jalapeño. Taste the liquid, it should taste smooth, not too sweet, not too acidic, not too salty. Adjust if any of those things are out of balance. Let the veg sit for as long as you can before using or at least 30 minutes. Then they are ready to use.

3. In a bowl, combine the mayo, sriracha, and salt and combine until the sriracha is fully incorporated into the sauce. Set aside.

4. Cut a piece of cucumber roughly the length of the burger bun, then slice into thin pieces.

5. Now that all the elements are ready, it's time to make the burgers.

6. Get a large cast-iron pan on medium-high heat and let it preheat for about 5 minutes. Once hot, toast the buns in the pan before cooking the meat. I prefer a dry toasted bun.

7. Once the buns are toasted, add the ball of meat to the pan with no oil. The fat in the meat should be enough to fry the patty. Then place parchment paper over the meat and with a spatula or a small pot, smash the burgers into the pan until very thin. Remove the parchment paper. Season the meat with a bit of salt. Cook for about 2 minutes, or until you are confident there is a really good sear on the first side. Then flip the burger and cook until it is fully cooked or 160°F internal temperature.

8. Once cooked, transfer the burger to a plate and begin to assemble the burger.

Assembly:

1. Add a little of the sriracha mayo to the bottom bun.
2. Then add 3 slices of the cucumber, overlapping.
3. Add the burger patties on top of the cucumber.
4. Drain out a healthy amount of the carrot and jalapeño and add that on top of the burger.
5. On top of the carrots, add a few sprigs of fresh cilantro.
6. Add a final dollop of sriracha mayo and then close the burger.