

# For Immediate Release

**As the Blended Burger Trend Grows, the James Beard Foundation Encourages Restaurants to Join the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Blended Burger Project™**

***New Judging Format Expands Opportunity for Restaurants to Earn Top Honors in Mushroom + Meat Blended Burger Competition***

**New York City (April 10, 2018)** – With mushroom popularity increasing nationwide as a functional, versatile and sustainable ingredient, restaurants can tap into consumers’ “fungi frenzy” by signing up for the James Beard Foundation’s annual Blended Burger Project™ (BBP). The summer-long competition challenges chefs to create and menu a better burger by blending finely chopped mushrooms with meat. As part of this year’s program, JBF is also offering greater opportunities for participating restaurants to earn top honors.

Starting today, restaurants can register to take part in the 4<sup>th</sup> annual competition by entering their version of a blended burger featuring at least 25% chopped, cultivated mushrooms for a dish that is more delicious, nutritious and sustainable. From Memorial Day through July 31, guests will be able to vote for their favorite at [jamesbeard.org/blendedburgerproject](http://jamesbeard.org/blendedburgerproject).

New this year, judges on behalf of the James Beard Foundation will review 20 restaurants receiving the most votes to select the five top winners, based on most creative use of mushrooms, best flavor profile and presentation. Upon conclusion, the five (5) winning chefs, selected by a panel of experts from the twenty (20) burgers with the most votes online, will win a trip to New York City to cook their blended burger dish at the historic James Beard House. This year’s judging practice replaces previous years’ formats, in which the top five vote-getters automatically won the competition.

“Last year, nearly 500 restaurants took part the Blended Burger Project, which we developed as part of our goal of encouraging restaurants to foster a more sustainable and healthy food system,” said Kris Moon, vice president, James Beard Foundation. “With such high participation and interest among the culinary community, we wanted to grow the opportunity to honor participating restaurants and the guests who support them. We are excited to see and experience the creative, new blended burgers on menu at restaurants of all kinds this summer.”

“It’s really important as a chef to start thinking about how I can make dishes that are not only more sustainable, but also taste great,” says James Beard Award winner and Iron Chef Stephanie Izard, executive chef and owner of Girl & The Goat, Little Goat, and Duck Duck Goat. “You shouldn’t have to sacrifice flavor in order to think sustainably. That’s why I’m partnering with the Blended Burger Project. I’m not asking people to give up meat! Instead I’m asking them to try substituting some of that meat for a combination that tastes even better than the original.”

To take part in the 2018 Blended Burger Project, restaurants should:

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Social: #BlendedBurgerProject  
High Res Blended Burger Images Available

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- Develop their unique version of the blended burger.
- Register to participate at [jamesbeard.org/blendedburgerproject](https://jamesbeard.org/blendedburgerproject), including sharing a photo and description of the burger.
- Menu the burger and encourage consumer votes from Memorial Day (May 28) through July 31.

James Beard Foundation conducts the annual competition in collaboration with The Mushroom Council. Visit [jamesbeard.org/blendedburgerproject](https://jamesbeard.org/blendedburgerproject) to read the contest's Official Rules, including eligibility requirements, voting and judging criteria.

## About the James Beard Foundation

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation celebrates, nurtures, and honors chefs and other leaders making America's food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. 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](https://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 [@beardfoundation](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), and Snapchat. Watch the James Beard House Kitchen Cam, James Beard Awards, and more on the Foundation's [Livestream](#) channel. Find more JBF-related video on the Foundation's [YouTube](#) channels.