

Questa Del Rio News

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By **FOOD EDITOR ELIZABETH BRUNAZZI**

Mushroom Zoom!

Mushrooms have been gathered, cultivated, and prized for their nutritional and medicinal qualities for millennia over the entire planet. Neither “animal nor vegetable,” they are a useful source of texture and flavor in a range of dishes, and available in many different varieties.

It is always best to buy them in bulk, not packaged. My go-to available mushrooms are Portobellos, as they marry well with both meat and vegetables. If only packaged mushrooms are available, I recommend buying only whole mushrooms, not pre-sliced.

Mushroom Risotto

2 T olive oil
2 T butter or plant butter
1 onion, chopped
1 red bell pepper, chopped
1 ¼ C sliced or roughly chopped mushrooms, caps and trimmed stems
1 ½ C Risotto or any good Arborio rice
4 ½ C vegetable or chicken broth
1 T chopped cilantro

Heat olive oil and butter in a large saucepan. Sauté onion until transparent. Add pepper and mushrooms and cook for 2 minutes. Add rice and stir for 1-2 minutes. Add 1½ cups broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium, stirring constantly until liquid is absorbed. Add remaining broth a cup at a time, cooking and stirring until liquid is absorbed each time. Remove from heat and stir in parsley. Can be served as a main course with a salad or as a side dish with a wide variety of entrées.

Mushroom Soup

¼ C minced onions
6 T butter or plant butter
3 T flour
6 C boiling chicken stock, low-fat, low sodium
2 parsley sprigs
1 bay leaf
½ tsp thyme
Salt and pepper to taste
¾ - 1 lb chopped mushrooms, trimmed stems included
1 t lemon juice
2 egg yolks
½ C cream or organic half-and-half

Cook the onions slowly in half the butter (3 T) for 8 minutes, until they are tender without browning. Remove from heat. Beat in the boiling chicken stock and blend thoroughly with the flour. Season to taste. Stir in the mushrooms, and simmer partially covered for 20 minutes or a bit more. Strain, pressing out mushroom juices. Return the preparation to the pan.

Melt 2 T of butter in a separate saucepan. When it is foaming, toss in the mushroom mixture, salt, and lemon juice. Cover and cook slowly for 5 minutes. Pour this mixture into the strained soup base. Simmer for 10 minutes. Cool and reheat before proceeding.

Beat egg yolks and cream into a separate mixing bowl, then beat in the hot soup mixture by spoonfuls until 1 cup has been added. Gradually stir in the remainder. Check and correct seasoning. Return soup to the pan and stir over moderate heat for a minute or two to poach the egg yolks, but do not allow it to reach the simmering point. Remove from heat, and stir in the remaining 1 T of butter or plant substitute. Pour into your favorite tureen and decorate with optional mushrooms and herbs.

Inspired by and adapted from: Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, 1967.

Mushroom Rosemary Meatloaf

¾ lb ground turkey (not solely breast)
¾ lb ground lean pork
1 T butter or plant butter
½ C finely chopped onions
¼ lb mushrooms, thinly sliced or chopped, caps and stems, about 2 C
¼ C heavy cream or organic half-and-half
1 large egg, beaten
½ C fine, fresh bread crumbs
2 T finely chopped parsley
1 t finely chopped fresh rosemary, dried if fresh not available
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1 sprig fresh rosemary, or sprinkling of dried

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Use a small loaf pan, 4 ½ x 8 ½ inches. Put meats in a mixing bowl.

Melt butter in a small skillet, add onions. Cook, stirring until wilted. Add mushrooms, cook until wilted. Continue cooking until the mushrooms give up liquid, then until all liquid evaporates. Cool and add to the meats.

Add cream, egg, bread crumbs, parsley, rosemary, and salt and pepper, to taste. Pack mixture into the loaf pan and smooth it over with a fork, patting it gently toward the corners of the pan. Press rosemary sprig or sprinkles of dried rosemary down the center.

Place meatloaf in the oven and bake 40 - 45 minutes. Optional: Serve with your favorite tomato sauce or Dijon mustard. I like it without any other sauces.

Recipe inspired by and adapted from Pierre Franey's *More Sixty-Minute Gourmet*, 1981.

This recipe can be adapted to make an excellent Mushroom Turkey Burger. Leave out the pork and replace with double the amount of ground turkey. If the mixture seems too wet, add bread crumbs for a firmer texture. Test for seasoning, to taste. A splash of Worcestershire sauce may be added. Make into patties and grill in a lightly oiled hot iron skillet until browned. Drain on paper towels. Serve with Dijon mustard and/or light mayonnaise on your favorite buns.