

For the Love of Good Food

### ***Champignons - Mushrooms***

This month I would like to give you a base recipe that can be adapted for many different occasions and presentations.

Fall is a perfect time for mushrooms, especially wild mushrooms. In many parts of Europe and I am sure here in the USA, rural people go out into the woods and fields and pick baskets of these fragrant fungi. In France, there is often a local pharmacist who will also be a herbalist, and who will tell anyone who takes in their wild harvest, which mushrooms/fungus are safe to eat and which ones should be thrown away. My particular favorites are the cepes/boletus, although I confess I have a weakness for any kind of mushroom. The following recipe can be used on its own, on toast, or can be used as an integral part of other dishes. You can substitute cultivated mushrooms for any of the wild ones, they just do not have quite the same fragrance or flavor, but are still very good and considerably cheaper.

*Ingredients for 4 servings:*

*1lb of assorted wild mushrooms, cleaned and sliced (or a mixture of portabello, crimini, and any other kind of mushroom you can find in the supermarket)*

*2 finely chopped shallots (or ½ a white onion)*

*1 clove of garlic finely chopped*

*2oz butter*

*¼ cup either sour cream or sweet cream depending upon your own preference.*

*2 tablespoons chopped parsley*

*Splash of brandy or if you do not drink alcohol, try balsamic vinegar or sherry vinegar, or even a fruit (raspberry) vinegar.*

1. Melt the butter in a large skillet with a little bit of oil. Once hot add mushrooms in single layers and cook until all the moisture is gone and they are thoroughly cooked. Do it in batches if necessary.
2. Add the shallots and garlic to the pan and put back any previous cooked mushrooms. Cook for a couple of minutes.
3. Add salt and pepper, some grated nutmeg then add the brandy and cook at a high heat to cook off the alcohol.
4. Add the cream and cook until cream coats the mushrooms in a thick sauce.
5. Sprinkle with parsley and serve as follows:
  - A. Simply on buttered toast.
  - B. On lightly scrambled eggs for an elegant supper dish. Use as a filling for an omelet – a popular treatment for cepes in Bordeaux – France.
  - C. In individually pre-cooked tartlette or vol-au-vent cases, or slice small warmed croissants lengthwise and fill with the mushroom mixture.
  - D. Add to plain risotto rice, or add extra cream and serve with fettucine.
  - E. Add some cream and eggs for a quiche filling.
  - F. If you eat bacon, shred some pre-cooked bacon and add to the mushroom mixture for any of the above.