

Season's fungi

Don't forget mushrooms in cooking

Mushroom lovers will soon set out to tramp Michigan's woods and fields gathering the many edible varieties that grow here. For those of us who love to eat and cook the mushroom has a special appeal. Cooked in various ways or eaten raw, the mushroom can be quite delightful.

The term "mushroom" is used to cover all kinds of edible fungi. The mushroom we eat is not the fungi itself, but the fruit of the fungi. The plant or the fungus remains underground in a network of thin thread-like roots.

Mushrooms are found in temperate regions, in forests and orchards, vineyards and pastures growing wild and freely both in spring and autumn. They also are grown and cultivated commercially all over the world. For cultivation the "common mushroom" (*Agaricus campestris*) is most generally used. This is the mushroom used for canning and sold fresh in the produce market.

Mushrooms have little or no nutritional value. Their appeal is due to their unique taste, shape, and texture. The novice mushroom picker need to be aware that some species of mushrooms are not edible, and others are poisonous. Do not pick wild mushrooms unless you are knowledgeable about edible varieties.

One mushroom, however, that deserves recognition is the morel (*Morchella*). This particular variety is safe to experiment with, as there are no known poisonous fungi resembling it closely enough to deceive an ordinarily observant picker.

The morel can be found in forest,



Ben Pearlman

wooded swamps, and sandy soil during the months of May and June. They can be identified by their deeply Honey-combed caps, either rounded or oval shaped. They are yellowish-brown when young and beige, grey, or almost black as they get older. The stalk is often shorter than the cap. They are excellent hot or cold, stuffed and baked, stewed, sauteed, and in sauces.

Here are a few recipes utilizing the prized morel or mushrooms from your favorite produce store.

MUSHROOM IN CREAM SAUCE

- 1 1/2 pounds mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons Melted butter
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 cup bechamel sauce
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- salt and pepper to taste.
- cheese bread, toasted 6 slices

Remove stems from mushrooms and save for a sauce or soup. Wash mushrooms and simmer for 5 minutes in butter and lemon juice. Add bechamel sauce, cream, salt and pepper. Simmer

until mushrooms are tender and sauce has thickened. Serves 6.

BECHAMEL SAUCE

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons flour
- 1 1/2 cup milk or stock
- 1/2 cup heavy cream.
- salt and pepper to taste.

Melt butter in sauce pan. Remove from heat and stir in flour. Cook at medium low heat for one to two minutes. Do not brown. Remove from heat. Add milk or stock. Stir to boiling point. Add cream. Cook one-half minute. Makes 2 cups.

CREAM OR MUSHROOM SOUP

- 2 cups Bechamel sauce
- 2 1/2 cups chicken stock
- 1/4 teaspoon dry mustard
- 3 cups chopped mushrooms
- 1/2 heavy cream
- 1/2 dry sherry
- paprika
- toasted almonds, shredded
- 2 tablespoons butter

Saute mushrooms in butter until tender. Add chicken stock and simmer for

30 minutes add mushrooms and chicken stock into bechamel. Add cream and heat. Stir in sherry. Garnish with a dash of paprika and shredded almonds.

- ### MUSHROOMS A LA GRECQUE
- 2 carrots
 - 4 tablespoons onions, chopped fine
 - 1 clove garlic, chopped fine
 - 1/2 cup olive oil
 - 1 pounds mushrooms
 - 2 cups white wine
 - 1 cup chicken stock
 - salt and pepper to taste.
 - 6 confander seeds
 - juice of one lemon

Saute onions and garlic in half of the olive oil for 15 minutes, add remainder of ingredients and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from heat and add balance of olive oil and let stand for 2 hours. Strain mushrooms and carrots and boil liquid down to about 1/4 cup. Place mushrooms and carrots in a crock or glass bowl and pour cooled, reduced liquid over mushrooms and carrots. Serve cold. Serves 6-8.

MUSHROOM SALAD IN VINAIGRETTE

- 1 pound mushroom caps, sliced
- 2 teaspoons oil
- 1 onion, diced small
- 1/2 vinegar
- 1/2 oil
- 1/2 salt
- 1/2 pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon tarragon leaves, chopped

Saute mushrooms and onions until tender. Mix remaining ingredients together. Add mushrooms and onions and marinate for 1 hour. Serves 4.



DICK KELLEY/staff photographer

The appeal of mushrooms in food is due to their unique taste, shape and texture.

Entertain with versatile rice

Entertaining seems to imply large parties, but many times only one special guest is involved. For that occasion you may give even more attention to the menu than with larger groups.

A special meal connotes something expensive — but that's not always the case, particularly when you combine a gourmet item such as chicken livers with an economical one like rice.

In this recipe for Chicken Livers Supreme, a few grapes and a splash of sherry add elegance to the flavor and appearance.

Or you can create a special meal by working in reverse: feature a more simple entree like poultry and dress it up with a fancy rice. Tanzanian Coconut Rice does just that, combining raisins, coconut and a touch of curry.

Both recipes featured here are in two serving amounts.

CHICKEN LIVERS SUPREME

- 8 oz. chicken livers, cut in half
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 tbsp. butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 3 tsp. sherry
- 1 1/2 tsp. cornstarch
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
- 20 red grapes, halved and seeded (about 1/2 cup)
- 1 tbsp. sliced chives
- 1 cup hot cooked rice

In a medium skillet, cook livers and onion in butter over medium-high heat until brown, 5 to 10 minutes. Combine broth, sherry, cornstarch and seasonings. Add to livers; cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until sauce is clear and thickened. Stir in grapes and chives; cook until heated through. Serve over beds of fluffy rice. Makes two servings.

Each serving provides: 368 calories, 2 1/2 meat exchanges, 4 1/4 fat exchanges, 1 bread exchange, 1 fruit exchange.

Microwave method: In a shallow 1 1/2-quart microwave proof dish cook butter on high (maximum power) 1 to 1 1/2 minutes, or until melted. Add livers and onions. Cover and cook on high 3 to 4 minutes or until brown, stirring every minute. Drain. Combine broth, sherry, 1 tablespoon cornstarch and seasonings. Add to livers; cook on high 3 to 4 minutes, or until sauce is clear and thickened, stirring every minute. Add grapes and chives; cook on high 1/2 minute, or until heated through. Serve over beds of fluffy rice.

TANZANIAN COCONUT RICE

- 1/2 cup uncooked rice
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 tsp. coconut milk
- 1 tsp. raisins
- 1 tsp. butter or margarine
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. curry powder
- 1 tsp. coconut, toasted
- 1 tsp. thinly sliced green onion tops

Combine rice, water, coconut milk, raisins, butter and seasonings in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil. Stir once or twice. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 15 to 20 minutes or until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed, stirring after 10 minutes. Stir in coconut and onion. Garnish with additional toasted coconut, if desired. Makes 2 servings.

Each serving provides: 218 calories, 2 fat exchanges, 1 bread exchange, 1/4 fruit exchange.

Microwave method: Combine rice, water, coconut milk, raisins, butter and seasonings in a 1-quart microwave proof dish. Cook on high 3 to 4 minutes, or until boiling, stirring every minute. Cover and cook at 50 percent power 9 to 10 minutes or until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed, stirring after 4 minutes. Allow to stand 5 minutes. Stir in coconut and onion. Garnish with additional toasted coconut, if desired.

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