

Mushrooms perk up meals

BY MELANIE POLE
SPECIAL WRITER

Once considered nutritional lightweights, mushrooms are now recognized as a source of a wide array of nutrients and health promoting properties. There are more than 35,000 varieties of mushrooms, including the well-known white button mushrooms most commonly found in American supermarkets.

While nutrients vary from one kind of mushroom to the next, many contain protein, vitamins A and C, B-vitamins, and minerals including iron, selenium, potassium and phosphorus. Phytochemicals found in some mushrooms are being studied as possible cancer-fighting substances.

Sampling

If you've been reluctant to try some of the interesting, exotic mushrooms you see at the market, here's a sampling of the types you're most likely to find, along with some tips on how best to use them:

Shiitakes have a firm, meaty texture and a subtly sweet flavor. They are great in soups, stews, sauces and can also be stir-fried, baked or grilled.

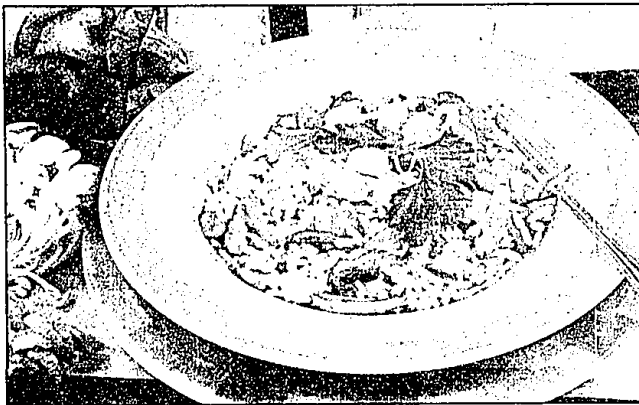
Enokis have a mild citrus flavor and are crunchy. Sprinkle them in a stir-fry. Cook them lightly, however, as they toughen if cooked too long.

Porcini are large mushrooms, with a rich, sweet, earthy taste. Slice and saute them for a side dish or pasta topping, or grill them with olive oil and your favorite herbs.

Oyster mushrooms, with their savory, delicate flavor and mellow texture, are quick-cooking and should be added to sautes, stir-fries or soups near the end of cooking.

Morels are famous for their robust nutty, spicy flavor. Sautéed or simmered, they are wonderful with pasta, noodles or rice.

Portobellos are true giants with a flavor and texture that is



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Magnificent mushrooms: For something different, try Mushroom Risotto made with arborio rice, freshly sliced mushrooms, and a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese.

almost steak-like when they are grilled. They're also a tasty addition to hearty soups and stews.

Even though some may look quite unusual, the same rules apply for selection of most all types of mushrooms. Choose those that look plump and fresh, with rounded caps folded around the gills. It's best to cook all mushrooms within a day or two of purchase. They should be stored in paper bags in the refrigerator. Clean them gently with a soft damp paper towel before using.

MUSHROOM RISOTTO

- 3 cups chicken stock 2 tablespoons Soft margarine 1 medium onion, chopped 1 clove garlic, minced 1/2 cup coarsely chopped sweet red pepper

- 6 cups sliced mushrooms (1 pound)
- 1 1/2 cups arborio rice
- 1 cup dry white wine or extra chicken stock
- Salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped scallions
- Chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese

In saucepan, bring stock to low simmer. Meanwhile, in wide shallow saucepan or large skillet, melt half of the margarine over medium-high heat; cook onion, garlic, red pepper and mushrooms, stirring, for about 10 minutes or until tender and most of the liquid released by mushrooms has evaporated.

Add rice, stirring to coat. Stir in about half of the wine or additional broth; cook, stirring often, until liquid is absorbed, about 2 min-

utes. Add remaining liquid and cook, stirring often, until absorbed.

Add hot chicken stock 1/4 cup at a time, stirring after each addition, until all of the stock is absorbed and rice has swelled to double its size and is tender but still a little firm, about 20 minutes. Stir in remaining

margarine, and extra stock if necessary to make risotto creamy and moist.

Season with salt and pepper to taste. Spoon into warmed pasta bowls and sprinkle with onions, parsley and cheese.

Nutrition information: Each of the 6 appetizer servings contains 229 calories and 7 grams of fat.

Melanie Pole is a registered dietitian and Director of Nutrition Education, American Institute for Cancer Research.

Cranberry orange cake low-fat indulgence

AP - A home-baked cake is a warm treat to make on a dull winter day.

Cranberry Orange Cake offers an evocative blend of flavors: the cranberry that is still so seasonable, overlaid with the tang of grated orange peel. The cake doesn't call for complicated ingredients and is simple to make. And it's also a low-fat indulgence.

CRANBERRY ORANGE BUNDT CAKE

- 3 1/3 cups cake flour (or 3 cups all-purpose flour)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2/3 cup margarine, room temperature
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 3 eggs or 6 egg whites, room temperature
- 1 1/2 teaspoons grated orange peel
- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk
- 1 1/2 cups finely chopped

fresh or frozen cranberries

Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease and flour a 10-inch bundt pan.

Sift together flour and soda; set aside. In a separate large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat margarine and sugar until creamy. Add eggs or egg whites and orange peel; beat mixture until light and fluffy.

Sprinkle half the dry mixture over the margarine mixture and beat until blended. Beat in half the buttermilk. Repeat process with the remaining portions; beat

just until blended. Gently stir in cranberries.

Pour batter into the prepared pan. Bake 1 hour or until cake tests done when a toothpick inserted into the cake comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes in pan. Remove from pan and complete cooling on a rack. Makes 24 servings.

Nutritional facts per serving: 160 cal., 3 g pro., 24 g carbs., 6 g fat, 1 g fiber, 160 mg sodium.

Recipe from: Wheat Foods Council.

Easy to make sandwich pizza quick snack

AP - Sandwich Pizza feeds six to eight — and it's quick and easy to make. Canned sliced mushrooms and artichoke hearts speed preparation time. Enjoy as a snack, hot from the oven.

SANDWICH PIZZA

- 1-pound loaf French bread
- 4-ounce can sliced mushrooms, drained

- 16-ounce can artichoke hearts, drained
- 1/2 large green pepper, sliced
- 1/2 large red or yellow pepper, sliced
- 1/2 cup chopped red onion
- 2-ounce can sliced black olives, drained
- 1 cup pizza sauce

1 to 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

Coarsely cracked black pepper

Slice loaf in half lengthwise. Spread equal amounts of ingredi-

ents on each half, layered to taste, topped with cheese. Sprinkle lightly with black pepper. Bake in preheated 350-degree F oven for 7 to 10 minutes.

Recipe from: Wheat Foods Council.

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