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## **Chanukah Newsletter – New Website and Mushrooms**

The free email newsletter on good food and drink.

Tastes of the World are proud to present our long awaited website where you can find previous newsletters, recipes, find out what's in season this month and what's new on sale, look at Tastes of the World's extensive menus and much more, including a food gallery which brings to life the many dishes on offer. Click on the link below (included is a picture of this month's new menu item – Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms and the subject of this newsletter). Soon to be added is my top 10 list of cooking tips.

You can find us now at [www.tastesofworld.weebly.com](http://www.tastesofworld.weebly.com)

In this month's newsletter you can read all about the different varieties of mushrooms and find out why they're so good for you. Learn how to choose the best ones and how best to cook and store them. In addition I've included two great recipes for mushroom lovers.

This month's newsletter was inspired by a recently introduced dish on our menu: - Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms. Served for the first time at Sydelle Brodie's party, her comments were as follows:

"Your food was scrumptious and the talk of the party was about your mushrooms. The late comers were told about them but there were none to be found!!!"

Intrigued? Why not order a batch for your Chanukah party and make it a meal everyone will remember.

For our Chanukah menu see below, place your order soon to avoid disappointment.

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## **Entertaining The Easy Way**

It's so easy to host the perfect Chanukah party and being the host doesn't mean that you can't enjoy the event every bit as much as your guests. Enjoy the latkes with out the smell of frying.

Tastes of the World's food ordering and catering service lets you entertain without spending hours shopping or cooking. If you are inviting guests let us help you lighten the load.

Order just a few dishes or an entire menu including any furniture and equipment you require. Each order is individually prepared to your specific requirements, made with high quality ingredients without any added colors or food additives.

For our full menu, just send me an email request to Tastes of the World: [shalet@bezeqint.net](mailto:shalet@bezeqint.net)

Please forward to all your friends and colleagues so they can register to receive their own copy – see below

## **Mushrooms**

Although they are made up of 90% water, their unique and delicious flavor is unbeatable, making an everyday dish into something really special. Cultivation started in the eighteenth century in France when they began selling mushrooms resembling the basic mushroom that we all buy today. Worldwide there are over 38,000 varieties of mushrooms available, with varying colors, textures and flavors. Some are so rare that they only grow for one week during the year.

Mushrooms grow wild in many areas, but most on the market are commercially grown on farms. The Israeli market for fresh mushrooms is quite limited; the varieties usually available include button, portobello and oyster. Mushrooms do not depend upon photosynthesis to grow. They need only rain and moderate temperatures to proliferate. The best mushroom harvesting is done while it is raining, so they are at their prime during the winter months.

According to the Hieroglyphics of 4600 years ago the Egyptians called the mushroom the plant of immortality and the pharaohs decreed that mushrooms were food for royalty only.

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## **Purchase**

Choose those with a firm texture, even color and tightly-closed caps. Discolored, sweaty, broken and damaged mushrooms with soft spots should be avoided.

## **Storage**

You want to discourage sweating as this will cause them to spoil faster. Store ideally in a paper bag as this gives the right combination of letting moisture out while keeping enough in. For best results use within 3 days of purchase.

## **Cleaning**

Don't soak or peel mushrooms, rinse briefly under cold running water and use your fingers to loosen any clinging soil; if you soak them they'll absorb water and turn mushy when you cook them. Some people suggest just wiping them over, but I personally don't feel that this is sufficient cleaning.

## **Preparation**

With most mushrooms you can use all of the stalk, just discard the thinnest slice off the end. Portobello stalks are however too tough to be eaten raw but can be placed in the freezer for future use in a stock or chopped and incorporated into a recipe where they need to be cooked. The easiest way to remove the stalks is with a gentle twist.

## **Cooking**

Mushrooms are best cooked quickly. Use about 2 tablespoons of fat per 225g of mushrooms, cook uncovered in a wide frying pan for about 5 minutes. If they seem to be steaming and not gaining any color you have probably put too many mushrooms in too small a pan. To grill, brush with oil or melted butter and place under a hot grill for about 5 minutes. If you are cooking mushrooms whole, choose those that are uniform in size to promote even cooking.

## **Nutrition and health benefits**

With winter on the way, the risk of colds and flu is high, especially now with the expected swine flu outbreak. Eating mushrooms as part of a healthy balanced diet will help boost your immune system, giving added protection against viruses.

Recent studies have shown shiitake and reishi mushrooms are potential cancer-fighters. Reishi extracts have been shown to stop the growth of cancerous tumors and also produce an antihistamine action which can help to control allergies. Shiitake mushrooms contain a compound called lentinan, which is being used as a cancer treatment in Japan.

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Mushrooms contain some trace elements which produce hormones and help the nervous system to function. They are also a good source of B vitamins, riboflavin and niacin and contain potassium and phosphorous. They do not contain any fat, salt or cholesterol and are high in fiber and low in calories, making them an ideal diet food. Mushrooms are very low in carbohydrates, so they are ideal for diabetics. Depending on the variety, mushrooms contain 1 to 3% protein and all the essential amino acids, making them a complete protein and therefore an excellent meat substitute for vegetarians.

## Varieties

### **Portobello, Portobella, Portabella or Portabello.**

The largest of the commercially available mushrooms. It's hard to believe but these are just over grown, mature, white button mushrooms. The cap has been allowed to open before harvesting meaning there is more moisture loss which intensifies the flavour and gives a more meat like texture. Before the 1980s growers could not sell mushrooms when they got this mature, so they had to throw them out! Spelling is confusing, the name is not Italian as it sounds, mushroom marketers just made it up. They are perfect for grilling, baking, stir-frying, deep-frying or roasting. They are good whole or sliced.

### **Shiitake**

Also known as golden oak mushroom, Chinese black mushroom and forest mushroom. They range in color from tan to dark brown; characterized by broad, umbrella shaped caps, wide open veils and tan gills. They have a rich, full-bodied flavor, with a meaty texture when cooked. Though shiitake mushrooms are now cultivated, they have the earthiness and flavor of wild mushrooms. They work well in stir-fries, soups, and side dishes. Dried shiitakes are also excellent and have a more intense flavor than fresh. Fresh shiitake are good cooked by any method as for portobello mushrooms.

### **Button or white mushroom**

These are the mushrooms you're most likely to find in supermarkets. They're good raw, they have a very light flavour which intensifies when cooked. Also available canned but these should be avoided.

### **Oyster**

Oyster mushrooms are prized for their smooth texture and subtle, oyster-like flavor and shape. The fluted cap resembles a fan; ranging in color from a soft beige brown to gray; they can be eaten raw in salads but more often this mushroom is cooked to bring out its delicate flavor and velvety texture.

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## **Porcini**

Resembles the traditional fairytale toadstool, they are smooth, pale brown in color meaty in texture with a pungent flavor. They are very expensive and more readily available dried.

## **Enoki, Snow puff or Golden mushrooms**

Not as common as the other types, but can be found in good vegetable shops and supermarkets. They have long stems and tiny, snow-white caps. The small white mushrooms are joined at the base and resemble bean sprouts. They have a light and mild, almost fruity flavor with a crisp texture. Before using, cut away from the communal base. Use in sandwiches, salads and as garnishes. If you use them in a cooked dish, add at the last possible moment as heat toughens them.

## **Dried Mushrooms**

Dried mushrooms are often excellent substitutes for fresh. You can reconstitute dried mushrooms by soaking them with a warm liquid (water, broth, wine, etc.) let them sit for at least 30 minutes. Drain, but don't throw out the soaking liquid it can add more flavor to your dish than the mushrooms themselves. You can also pulverize dried mushrooms with a food processor or blender and then use the powder to flavor sauces and stews.

## **Mushroom recipes**

*Three meals in one – serve with jacket potatoes, pasta or on toast*

### **Porcini mushroom sauce**

*A wonderfully easy and tasty sauce*

*Serves 4*

*25g dried porcini mushrooms, barely cover with boiling water and leave for 30 minutes.*

*225g fresh button, porcini or portobello mushrooms – separate stems and caps*

*1 small onion, finely diced*

*olive oil*

*25g butter*

*1 small cloves garlic*

*1 tsp grainy mustard*

*half tsp fresh rosemary*

*quarter cup white wine*

*half cup sour cream or double cream or*

*1 tbsp fresh parsley*

*salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste*

*half cup grated Parmesan cheese*

### **Variation**

טעמי העולם של רחל  
רחל שלט

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Add 2/3 cup cooked frozen peas to the sauce when you add the mustard.  
Add quarter tsp grated nutmeg

Chop stems of mushrooms, and slice tops. Heat oil and butter in a large frying pan. When the froth from the butter has subsided add the stems and caps from the fresh mushrooms and cook on a medium heat for about 8 minutes stirring occasionally. Add the onion and garlic and cook for a further 4 minutes. Add the seasoning, lemon juice, dried mushrooms and their soaking water and wine, simmer for 4 minutes, then stir in mustard and sour cream or cream. Stir well and simmer on the lowest heat for 2 minutes. Do not allow the sauce boil. Serve with your chosen carbohydrate. Sprinkle the parmesan cheese on top or serve on the side.

## **Mushroom risotto**

I only like to make risotto in the winter in Israel, when it is pleasure to stand by the hot gas for 20 minutes.

Serves 6

### *Mushroom ingredients*

225g fresh mushrooms, one type or a mixture, sliced  
3 tbsp olive oil  
1 small handful fresh thyme, picked and chopped  
1 clove garlic  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
2 tbsp parsley  
pinch chili powder  
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

### *Basis Risotto ingredients*

1 liter vegetable chicken stock  
1 tbsp olive oil  
1 medium onion, finely chopped  
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
400g risotto rice  
100ml dry white wine  
70g butter  
100g grated parmesan cheese

1. Start with the mushroom ingredients, this part can be prepared a few hours in advance if you wish. Heat oil in a large frying pan, add mushrooms and cook on a medium heat for about 8 minutes stirring occasionally. Add garlic and a pinch of salt, cook for another 2 minutes. Add parsley, chili and lemon juice to the pan leave to one side.

2. Heat the stock in a saucepan until simmering.

3. In a separate, heavy based pan, heat the olive oil, add onion and a pinch of salt and sweat for 3 minutes. Add garlic and cook for another 2 minutes. Add rice, turn up the heat and do not leave the pan. While stirring continuously, (more or less) fry rice for 2-3 minutes without coloring. Add wine, it will sizzle, just keep stirring. Once wine

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is absorbed add the first ladle of stock and a pinch of salt. Keep the rice at a steady simmer adding ladleful of stock stirring and allowing each ladleful to be absorbed before adding the next. It will take about 15 minutes. When the rice is soft but still has a slight bite it is ready. Add cooked mushrooms, cook for 2 minutes, and correct seasoning. Remove from heat add butter and parmesan and stir gently to mix. Cover pan and leave it to sit for 5 minutes. Serve with a crisp green salad.

## Tastes of the World – Chanukah menu

This is a condensed version of our full menu which is available on request, just send an email.

Item Description	Parve/ milky	Quantity	Price
<b>Fried Foods</b>			
Latkes	Parve	8 ptn/16pcs	60
Sweet potato latkes	Parve	8 ptn/16pcs	80
Latke toppings: cinnamon infused apple puree	Parve	300ml	30
Latke toppings: Sour cream and dill	Parve	200ml	20
Mini Thai fish cakes (tuna) with a dipping sauce	Parve	10ptn/30pc	110
Fish goujons	Parve	8 ptn/56pcs	190
Fish cakes-made with tuna or salmon with potato & herbs	Parve	8 ptn/16pcs	120/140
Sweet potato balls served with a spicy salsa sauce	Milky	10ptn40pcs	110
<b>Warming winter Soups</b>			
Zucchini and dill	Parve	3ltr/10 ptn	100
Carrot and coriander - a bright orange soup speckled with fresh green coriander	Parve	3ltr/10 ptn	80
Sweet potato with thyme	Parve	3ltr/10 ptn	90
Leek and potato	Parve	3ltr/10 ptn	85
<b>Pates, dips and starters</b>			
Cream cheese herb and sun-dried tomato dip	Milky	0.5 ltr	45
Guacamole and bulgarit pate	Milky	0.5 ltr	55
Guacamole	Parve	0.5 ltr	50
Tuna Pate - a great combination of tuna, mayonnaise, parsley & pickled cucumber	Milky	0.5 ltr	55
Italian goats cheese pate covered in black olives and served with a red pepper sauce	Milky	900ml / 15-20 ptn	235
Mushroom, spinach and walnut pate	Milky	0.5 ltr	80
<b>NEW - Stuffed portabella mushrooms</b>	Milky	10 ptns/20 pcs	150
Italian roasted peppers stuffed with tomato and/or anchovy – serve hot or cold	Parve	10 pcs/ 5-10 ptn	110
Slices of eggplant wrapped around goat's cheese served with a pesto sauce	Milky	30 pcs/10 ptn	150
<b>Milky main course</b>			
Lasagna	Milky	8 ptns/13 ptns	160\220
Quiche and savory strudel selection	Milky	from 5 ptns	From 60

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<b>Salads</b>			
Warm couscous salad with chickpeas and roasted vegetables (serve hot or cold)	Parve	10 ptns	90
Roasted antipasti salad with lemon and garlic (serve hot or cold)	Parve	10 ptns	110
Pasta salad with sun-dried tomatoes & feta cheese	Milky	10 ptns	75
Bulgar wheat salad with aromatic herbs, almonds and pistachio nuts and dried cranberries	Parve	10 ptns	80
Mixed lettuce salad with a honey, mustard and garlic dressing	Parve	10 ptns	80
Lentil and sun-dried tomato with mixed lettuce leaves, feta and a balsamic vinegar dressing -NEW on the menu	Parve	10 ptns	85
Spicy Moroccan carrot salad with lemon, coriander & chili	Parve	10 ptns	60
<b>Bite-sized desserts</b>	Parve	10 ptns	
Chocolate fingers	Milky	20 pcs	35
Chocolate brownies	Milky	24 pcs	32
Chocolate balls	Milky	24 pcs	30

## Abbreviations:

ptn - portions

pcs – pieces

ltr - liters

Chag Semeach

Warm regards

Rochelle Shalet  
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