

Zinnia Stook's
From the Larder
Hobbit Cuisine

Sharon Helms



More Mushrooms!

*Hobbits have a passion for mushrooms,
surpassing even the greediest likings of Big People.*

- J.R.R. Tolkien,

The Fellowship of the Ring
“A Conspiracy Unmasked,” p. 112

Porcini Mushroom Shepherd's Pies

Bring **two cups of water** and **one ounce dried porcini mushrooms** to boil in small saucepan. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer until liquid is reduced to 3/4 cup, about 25 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer porcini to cutting board. Coarsely chop porcini. Transfer to bowl and reserve. Strain liquid into 2-cup measuring cup, leaving any sandy residue behind. Add **3/4 cup milk** to porcini liquid; reserve.

Cook **two pounds russet potatoes**, peeled in large pot of boiling water until very tender, about 20 minutes. Drain. Transfer potatoes to large bowl. Add **3/4 cup milk** and **five tablespoons butter**. Mash or beat until smooth. Season with **salt and pepper**.

Cook **2 1/2 cups green beans** (one inch pieces) and **three carrots** (cut

into 1/4 inch thick slices) in large pot of boiling water three minutes. Add **two cups frozen corn kernels** and boil until all vegetables are tender, about three minutes longer. Drain well.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Butter eight 1 1/4 cup custard cups. Melt **three tablespoons butter** in large skillet over medium heat. Add **1 1/2 cups chopped onions**; sauté until golden, about eight minutes. Stir in **one pound sliced mushrooms** and porcini. Cover and cook five minutes. uncover; cook until almost all liquid is absorbed, about six minutes. Add **three tablespoons all purpose flour**; stir two minutes. Stir in **four teaspoons soy sauce, 1 1/2 teaspoons dried thyme** and porcini liquid. Bring to boil, stirring. Reduce heat; simmer to thicken sauce, about two minutes. Stir in vegetables. Divide among custard cups. Spoon potatoes over; smooth tops. Bake until golden, about 15 minutes.

Make eight; serves not more than eight. . .

Wild Mushroom Crostini

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Arrange **36 1/3 inch thick baguette slices** on rimmed baking sheet. Toast in over until golden, about nine minutes. Cool. (Can be prepared two days ahead. Store in airtight container at room temperature.)

Heat **two tablespoons extra virgin olive oil** in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add **1/3 cup chopped shallots**; sauté one minute. Add **2 1/4 cup chopped oyster mushrooms, 2 1/4 cup chopped stemmed shiitake mushrooms, 1 1/4 cup chopped chanterelle mushrooms**; sauté until beginning to brown, about six minutes. Stir in **one garlic clove, minced**; sauté one minute. Remove from heat. Stir in **1/4 cup whipping cream, one teaspoon minced fresh rosemary** and **1/2 teaspoon grated lemon peel**. Season with **salt and pepper**. Cool. Mix in **one cup grated Fontina cheese** and **1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese**. (Can be made two days ahead. Cover and refrigerate.)

Preheat broiler. Top each toast with about one tablespoon mushroom topping. Place on two rimmed baking sheets. Working in batches, broil until cheese is melted and begins to brown, watching closely to prevent burning, about three minutes. Transfer to serving platter. Serve warm.