

Shitake Mushrooms w/ Young Pecorino Cheese

7 tsp. lemon juice, divided
2 tsp. Dijon mustard
8 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil, divided
1 lemon, cut peel into thin slivers
coarse salt
non-stick vegetable oil spray
1 lb. fresh shitake mushrooms fresh, cut into ½” wide slices
1 garlic clove, peeled and flattened
6 ounces of young pecorino (or Monterey Jack) cheese cut into ½” cubes
¼ cup fresh Italian parsley

Whisk 5 tsp. lemon juice and mustard in a small bowl. Gradually whisk in 6 tbsp. olive oil and stir in lemon peel slivers. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Preheat oven to 425degF. Spray rimmed baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray. Toss mushrooms, remaining 2 tsp. lemon juice and 2 tbsp. olive oil in a large bowl and transfer to baking sheet. Sprinkle with coarse salt and pepper. Roast for 15 min. Using a spatula, turn mushrooms and roast until soft and beginning to brown at the edges, about another 10 min.

Pour half of dressing over mushrooms, add garlic and toss to coat. Allow to cool on sheet.

Combine mushrooms, cheese, parsley and remaining dressing in medium bowl. Let marinate at least one hour and up to two hours. Discard garlic clove. These can be served independently or poured over a meat or grain.

Exotic Mushroom Risotto

½ pound unsalted butter
1 pound shitake mushrooms, julienned, tough stems removed
1 pound portabella mushrooms, julienned, tough stems removed
1 pound oyster mushrooms, julienned, tough stems removed
¼ cup diced shallots
fresh rosemary
¼ cup roasted garlic cloves
1½ cups warm chicken stock
1 cup warm veal stock
½ cup freshly grated parmesan cheese

Heat the butter in a large heavy bottomed non-reactive skillet and sautee the mushrooms with the shallots and rosemary. Season with freshly ground salt and pepper. Add the Arborio rice and cook for at least 3 minutes. Add the warm stock, about ½ a cup at a time stirring until each addition is incorporated. Fold in the parmesan cheese and roasted garlic. Mold into a 4 ounce ramekin and turn out onto a warm serving plate.

Farfalle with Beets, Beet Greens and Pine Nuts

1/3 cup pine nuts
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
2 large onions, quartered lengthwise through root end, sliced crosswise (about 4 cups)
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 bunches 2-inch-diameter golden beets with fresh healthy greens; beets peeled, each cut into 8 wedges, greens cut into 1-inch-wide strips
12 ounces farfalle (bow-tie pasta)
1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese plus additional for serving

Heat heavy large skillet over medium heat. Add pine nuts and stir until lightly toasted, about 3 minutes. Transfer to small bowl. Add 2 tablespoons oil and onions to same skillet and sauté until beginning to soften and turn golden, about 10 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue to sauté until onions are tender and browned, about 30 minutes longer. Add garlic and stir 2 minutes. Scatter beet greens over onions. Drizzle remaining 2 tablespoons oil over; cover and cook until beet greens are tender, about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook beets in large pot of boiling salted water until tender, about 10 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer beets to medium bowl. Return water to boil. Add pasta to beet cooking liquid and cook until tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain, reserving 1 cup pasta cooking liquid. Return pasta to pot.

Stir onion-greens mixture and beets into pasta. Add pasta cooking liquid by 1/4 cupfuls to moisten. Season with salt and coarsely ground black pepper. Stir in 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese. Divide pasta among shallow bowls. Sprinkle with pine nuts. Serve, passing additional cheese.

Beet and Goat Cheese Salad with Pistachios

3 large red beets (1 2/3 lb without greens)
2 large golden beets (1 lb without greens)
1/4 cup minced shallot
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 cup pistachio oil
4 oz soft mild goat cheese
3 tablespoons salted shelled pistachios (not dyed red), coarsely chopped
1 oz *mâche* (also called lamb's lettuce), trimmed (4 cups)

Special equipment: a 2 1/2-inch round cookie cutter (without handle; at least 2 inches high)

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Separately wrap red and golden beets tightly in double layers of foil and roast in middle of oven until tender, 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Unwrap beets.

While beets are cooling slightly, whisk together shallot, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in a small bowl, then add oil in a stream, whisking.

When beets are cool enough to handle, slip off and discard skins. Separately cut red and golden beets into 1/4-inch dice and put in separate bowls. Add 2 1/2 tablespoons dressing to each bowl and toss to coat.

Creamy Chinese Celery Soup

1 medium leek (white and pale green parts only), chopped
1 medium russet (baking) potato
1/2 cup chopped shallot
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 bunches Chinese celery (1 1/2 lb total), top leaves discarded and stalks cut into 2-inch pieces
1/2 cup dry white wine
4 cups chicken stock or low-sodium chicken broth (32 fl oz)
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

For croutons

6 (1/4-inch-thick) diagonal baguette slices
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt to taste

Garnish: fresh Chinese parsley leaves or flat-leaf parsley leaves

Wash leek well in a bowl of cold water, then lift out and drain well. Peel and chop potato. Cook shallot in butter and oil in a 3-quart heavy saucepan over moderate heat, stirring, until softened, about 2 minutes. Add leek and cook, stirring, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add celery and potato and cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Add wine and boil 1 minute. Add broth and simmer, covered, until celery is very tender, about 1 hour.

Purée soup in batches in a blender until very smooth (use caution when blending hot liquids), then pour through a large medium-mesh sieve into a bowl, pressing hard on solids. Discard solids. Transfer soup to cleaned saucepan, then stir in cream, salt, and pepper and heat over low heat until hot. Thin with water if desired.

Make croutons while soup simmers:

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Brush baguette slices with oil and season generously with kosher salt and pepper. Arrange in 1 layer on a baking sheet, then bake in middle of oven until golden brown and crisp, 12 to 15 minutes.

Serve soup topped with croutons.

Cooks' notes:

- Soup can be made 1 day ahead and cooled, uncovered, then chilled, covered.
- Croutons keep in an airtight container at room temperature 2 days.