

STUFFED MUSHROOMS

As a kid, I used to hate mushrooms. Combined with my loathing for stuffing as a youngster, it is quite remarkable that I have matured to such a degree and achieved this culinary masterpiece. I guess old age isn't so bad. These are great for appetizers, but rarely stay on the plate for more than a few minutes, so if you want some, snatch a few before you take them out to the guests. These are also a nice side dish with virtually any Italian main course.

What I really like about this recipe is that it is pretty easy, and people always feel spoiled when you make them for them.

- 1 pound fresh Mushrooms
- 1 cup small Bread Cubes (about 3 pieces)
- 2 Tablespoons Butter
- 1 Tablespoon Olive Oil
- 1/2 cup minced Onion
- 1/4 teaspoon Garlic Powder
- 1 Tablespoon dried Parsley
- 3/4 teaspoon Salt
- 1/4 teaspoon Pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon dried Marjoram
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan Cheese

Remove the stems from the mushrooms, and set the caps aside. Chop the stems finely. Cut the bread into the smallest sized cubes you can and place in a mixing bowl. It doesn't have to be pretty.

Place butter and olive oil into a medium saucepan over medium heat. Sauté the onions until they just begin to become translucent (clear), about 2 minutes. Add the chopped mushroom stems and sauté until most of the moisture is extruded, about 3 minutes. Add all of the spices (NOT THE CHEESE) and stir for 1 more minute, and remove from heat.

Pour this mixture on to the bread crumbs and stir well. The stuffing should be moist enough to hold its shape when formed, but not soggy. If the stuffing seems really dry, try adding water 1 teaspoon at a time, mixing well. If it's too moist, and some bread crumbs, or take a soda cracker, pulverize it, and stir it in.

Once it has cooled enough to handle comfortably with your hands, mix in the Parmesan Cheese.

When you are ready to stuff the caps, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a cookie sheet or 9" by 13" cake pan.

Start with the biggest mushrooms first, and work your way towards the smallest. Using your hands, mound the stuffing on the caps. When you are done, you may have some extra mushrooms or you may have some extra stuffing. If you have extra mushrooms, at least it's the small ones! If you have extra stuffing, feel free to pile more on the ones you've already done.

Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes or until caps are soft and the tops are toasted brown. If the caps are soft and the tops are NOT brown, remove them from the oven, put the oven rack up high, and turn on the broiler to low. Once it is hot, place the mushrooms under broiler for no more than 30 seconds at a time, turning the pan each time you check. DO NOT LEAVE! If they burn all is lost.

Remove from pan with tongs and serve hot.