

Delicious Ways of Cooking Mushrooms

--No. 8 of "The Fine Art of French Cooking"—By A. Escoffier, the Greatest French Chef.

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AMONG the many improvements that I believe could be made in American housekeeping would be an increased use of mushrooms, especially of the many excellent kinds that are now entirely neglected.

I am informed that a group of enthusiasts in Boston have devoted themselves to the pursuit of hunting up and popularizing the less known edible varieties of mushrooms. Their work seems to me worthy of all praise. An increased appreciation of mushrooms should lead to increased cultivation and lower prices.

In France probably one of the most delicious of all mushrooms is the "morille," or "morel," as it is called in English. I am informed that this is found in the United States, but that the native product is rarely if at all used. Preserved morels or "morilles" bottled in France may, however, be obtained in New York and other large cities.

It is only for a short time in the Spring that the morels appear in France. We take care to gather all we can during their brief stay. There are two kinds of morels, white and black. The latter have the better flavor.

Their preparation requires considerable care on account of the earth which is generally found in their crevices. It is necessary that each morel, large or small, should be cut in two in order to make sure that the centre is sound and contains no foreign substance.

The favorite way of preparing morels is as follows: After cleansing plunge them several times into cold water and drain them on a clean cloth. Melt in a casserole saucepan an ounce of butter for every pound of morels. Put the morels in the saucepan with a pinch of salt and pepper and a little lemon juice. Cover the saucepan and place on the fire. Allow it to cook ten to twelve minutes. At this point the morels are cooked.

They may be placed in bottles and preserved during the rest of the year for use at any time.

Morels thus preserved may be served with white or dark sauce. They are excellent when served "a la creme," "au gratin" or "a la Bechamel."

Chicken Saute with Morels and Truffles a la Creme.

CUT the chicken up and place in a sauteing dish. Add a pinch of salt and pepper. Place on a slow fire until it takes a golden color. At this moment add a small glass of white wine. When the wine has been somewhat boiled down, add the prepared morels and a truffle, chopped fine. Complete with a large glass of good, fresh cream. Allow it to simmer ten to twelve minutes and serve very hot.

Morels (or Mushrooms) Saute.

AFTER having thoroughly washed the morels, dry them well in a cloth and halve or quarter them according to their size.

Season them well with salt and pepper and saute them with butter in an omelet pan over a sufficiently fierce fire to avoid the exudation of their vegetable moisture. Dish them in a timbale. Squeeze a few drops of lemon juice over them and sprinkle them with chopped parsley.

Mushrooms Saute.

THE following is a simpler and more economical way of sauteing mushrooms than the previous one, and will probably be more generally chosen for use in the average home:

After having washed the mushrooms, dried and chopped them in large slices, and seasoned them with salt and pepper, toss them with butter in a frying pan over a fierce fire. Sprinkle them with chopped parsley at the last moment. If it is desired to present them in a very elegant manner at the table, they may be served in a timbale.

Grilled Mushrooms.

TAKE some large meadow mushrooms. Carefully peel them, season them well. Smear them well with French olive oil by means of a brush and grill them gently.

Set them on a round dish and garnish them in the middle with well-seasoned maitre d'hotel butter.

Maitre d'hotel butter is prepared as follows: Mix until perfectly combined four ounces of butter and three ounces of sifted flour. Soften into a cream. Add a tablespoonful of chopped parsley, a little salt and pepper and a few drops of lemon juice.

Stuffed Mushrooms Au Gratin.

SELECT some fine medium-sized mushrooms. Remove stalks; wash them and dry well. Set them on a dish; season them; sprinkle them with a few drops of French olive oil; put them in the oven for five minutes. Then sprinkle the surface with fine cheese raspings and a few drops of oil or melted butter and set the gratin (i. e., the crisp crust that forms from cheese raspings) to form in a hot oven.