

Baby Bella Sauté

SERVES 6-8

- 24 oz.** Baby Bella mushrooms (3 cello-packs)
- 1 cup** purple onion (one large)
- 4 cloves** garlic
- 1/2 cup** dry red or white wine (see note)
- 2 Tbs** soy sauce
- 1 tsp** salt
- 1 tsp** thyme
- 3 Tbs** olive oil
- 1/4 cup** sherry vinegar
- 1/4 cup** chopped parsley

Clean mushrooms and cut off stems. Cut mushrooms vertically in 1/2 inch slices and put into a glass bowl. Cut onion pole-to-pole in 1/4 inch pieces and thinly slice garlic. Place each aromatic in a separate bowl.

Place mushrooms in a microwave and cook on high for 6 minutes. Mushrooms will begin to cook and shed liquid, and reduce in volume by about a third. Remove from microwave and discard accumulated liquid from bowl.

Add oil to a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until oil shimmers. Add onions and sauté until soft, about three minutes. Add

garlic and thyme and continue to cook until garlic is fragrant, about a minute more. Turn the heat down to medium.

Add mushrooms and toss with the aromatics, then spread evenly across pan. Let cook undisturbed until most liquid is rendered and the mushrooms begin to brown on the bottom. Toss mixture to evenly cook for another four minutes. Add wine and use a wooden spoon to get up the *fond* from the bottom of the pan. When wine has cooked down, add soy sauce and sherry vinegar and cook on low until absorbed. Stir in salt and parsley and cook another 2 minutes until wilted.



MUSHROOMS ARE THE PERFECT COMPLEMENT to meaty dishes and are just as welcome alongside chicken as they are beef. Just like meat, searing enhances their complexity through the Maillard Reaction, which occurs when foods are heated to about 300° and the amino acids and sugars in the proteins change and produce hundreds of new flavor compounds.

MOST PEOPLE KNOW THAT FUNGI ARE COMPRISED MOSTLY OF WATER, so cooking mushrooms—especially if they are too crowded in the pan—often results in steaming, not sautéing, and the temperature only rises to the boiling point, far below the heat necessary to produce the browning that is a hallmark of a proper sauté.

COOKING MUSHROOMS IS ALL ABOUT DEALING WITH EXTRACTING THE WATER and replacing it with flavor. Our solution to the overcrowding issue is to use a large skillet and to pre-cook the mushrooms in the microwave, which will often extract a cup of liquid.

MUSHROOMS ARE ALSO A GOOD SOURCE OF UMAMI—often called the fifth taste—and searing accentuates the effect. Combined with other umami-rich ingredients, this sauté is good enough to eat without the meat. These mushrooms will keep in the refrigerator for a week or so, and also freeze well. If you intend to use the mushrooms with red meat or in rich sauces, use a red wine like a cabernet or a chianti. If you are using them with chicken, pork or eggs, use a white wine such as sauvignon blanc or pinot grigio.

They can be used as a topping on home-made pizza, are great with pasta or risotto, and go well with eggs as a filling for an omelet; a base for shirred eggs; or in a quiche. Straight from the freezer, you can add them to a tomato sauce, or to almost any braised meat, like the short ribs on page 2 of Dx D.