

MUSHROOMS

LIKE blackberries, mushrooms are for many people a free gift. All that is necessary is to get up early in the morning and be prepared to get wet-footed in the paddocks picking them. In the cities mushrooms are very expensive, but are nevertheless in great demand, even broken ones fetching a very good price.

What a tasty variety they add to the usual ordinary meal. Even a small piece of (rationed) grilled steak will fill a big gap if served with a generous helping of mushrooms—fried or stewed in a little milk and thickened with corn-flour. Mushrooms are quite high in calories (in the proportion of 119 to 205 as compared with carrots), contain more protein than carrots (19 to five), but are beaten by carrots in carbohydrates, being only eight to 43. Carrots also contain vitamins A and C; mushrooms have only vitamin D. Try these recipes:—

Mushroom Pancakes

These will make a good meal *without any meat!* First make a batter with $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. flour, 2 eggs, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint milk and about 2 tablespoons of water, beat until very smooth, and leave for an hour. Then add 2oz. of grated cheese, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Put a little lard into a frying pan, and when smoking hot, pour in a little batter to make one pancake. Cook on both sides till brown, then spread with a thick layer of this mushroom filling, roll up and serve hot.

Mushroom Filling

Mix together $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. peeled and chopped mushrooms, 2oz. grated cheese, one small finely-grated onion and a good teaspoon of chopped parsley. Season to taste and fry the mixture in a little butter. When sufficiently cooked, stir in a beaten egg to bind the mixture, which is now ready to spread on the pancakes. I suppose one could do without the egg if necessary. This recipe comes from Worcestershire.

Preserving Mushrooms

(a) They should be preserved on the day of picking, or not later than next day. Peel them and pack in layers in preserving pan, sprinkling each layer lightly with salt. When juice starts to run, place pan over gentle heat, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon, and go on adding mushrooms as you peel. As soon as sufficient juice has come out, increase the heat and boil all until thoroughly cooked—about 1 hour. Turn into a basin and when cool (this can be done next day if pressed for time), pack them firmly into jars, fill with their own juice to within half an inch of top, attach new rubber rings, and screw lids on tightly. Place in a water-bath with the water half-way up the jars, and bring to the boil. Boil for 1 hour. Then screw jars tight and leave boiling for another 10 minutes. Take out, turn upside down and store. There is usually much more juice than is required, so by adding mace, peppercorns, more salt, and ginger to taste, and boiling up for about half an hour, a delicious ketchup can be made.

(b) *A Quicker Way:*—Peel mushrooms and sprinkle with salt, pack carefully into sterilised jars without adding any water. Cover lightly with lid and place in water-bath (on rack or cloth so that they do not touch bottom of bath). Have water in bath a little more than half way up the jars. Keep steam in with lid or improvised cover. Bring water gradually to boiling point and boil for an hour, when it will be found that the mushrooms have shrivelled up and expelled their own juice. Remove the jars from the water and fill up one from another, then return to steriliser, and allow to boil gently for another hour. When done, screw down the lids tightly.

(c) Mushrooms may also be dried instead of sterilised by putting in a cool oven or outside in the shade on sheets of paper and left till dry and shrivelled up. Store in paper bags. When being used, they should be soaked beforehand, preferably in gravy. Nice for soups, meat-pies, etc., in winter.

Mushroom Omelette

Chop enough peeled mushroom caps and stems to make $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups, fry lightly for 5 minutes or till tender, in 2 tablespoons butter, season with pepper, salt and a few grains of nutmeg. Add to an ordinary omelette.

Mushroom and Lettuce Salad

A lettuce, 8oz. mushrooms, 1oz butter, 2 tablespoons vinegar. Peel and wash mushrooms, and cook very slowly with the butter and $\frac{1}{2}$ teacup of water in a frying pan. Leave to cool. Arrange on lettuce leaves, sprinkle with vinegar, salt and cayenne pepper and serve.

FROM THE MAILBAG

A Five-Minute Pudding

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Here is a delicious pudding—ideal for those occasions when an unexpected guest arrives just before dinner, and you frantically wonder if there'll be enough to go round. It is really a sponge-roll, and although the ingredients may seem all wrong as far as the measurements are concerned, they really are all right. The tin in which you cook it must be large (I use a large meat-tin)—for although the mixture barely covers the bottom, yet in cooking it swells and swells and nearly fills the tin. Put $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar, 2 flat teaspoons baking powder and a pinch of salt into a bowl. Drop in 2 eggs, and beat with a spoon until mixture is smooth—about 2 minutes. Grease and flour a large tin, and also line the bottom with a greased and floured paper. Pour the mixture in. Cook in a moderate oven (350 to 375 degrees, top element off, bottom low), for 5 minutes. Turn the cake out on to a paper sprinkled with icing sugar. Spread with warmed jam and roll up quickly. Serve immediately with sweet sauce. This makes a good jam-roll for afternoon tea, but only if eaten the same day as made.—*Jean (Christchurch).*

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