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ASK Aunt Daisy

MUSHROOMS

LIKE blackberries, mushrooms are for many people a free gift. In the cities mushrooms are very expensive, but are nevertheless in great demand, and even broken ones fetch a good price. They add a tasty variety to the ordinary meal, too, and even a small piece of rationed grilled steak will fill a big gap if served with a generous helping of mushrooms. Mushrooms can be fried in bacon fat, or ordinary good fat; or stewed in a little milk and thickened with cornflour. Some of these recipes make a few mushrooms go a long way.

Preserved Mushrooms

This is for those who gather a lot of mushrooms themselves. If possible, preserve them on the day they were picked, or not later than the following day. Remove or trim off the stems, then peel them with a stainless knife, and sprinkle with salt. Pack carefully into clean jars, without adding water. Adjust the rubber rings, and screw down the lids *lightly*. Then put the jars into the copper or a kerosene tin—stand them on a rack so that they do not touch the bottom, and don't let them touch each other. Fill up the tin with water to reach about an inch from the neck of the jars. Gradually bring to the boiling point, and boil for an hour, during which time it will be found that the mushrooms have shrivelled up and expelled their own juice. Fill up the jars, one from another, and allow them to boil gently for another hour. When done, screw down the lids tightly. Mushrooms may also be dried instead of sterilised, by putting them in a cool oven, or outside on sheets of paper in the shade, and leaving them till dry and shrivelled up. They may be stored in paper bags. When being used, they should be soaked beforehand.

Mushroom Soup

You need only a quarter to half a pound of mushrooms for this. If fresh, do not peel them—just wash them and chop them finely. Simmer for five minutes in 1 tablespoon of butter, with 1 tablespoon of minced onion, and 2 tablespoons of minced celery. Add 2 cups of canned chicken broth, or fresh broth, or even veal broth, and simmer for 10 minutes. Make a white sauce with 2 tablespoons of butter melted in a saucepan. Add 2 tablespoons of flour, stir till smooth; then add 2 cups cold milk; salt and pepper to taste. Cook, stirring, till smooth and thickened. Add the mushroom mixture, heat and serve. You may strain it if you like. This is an American recipe.

Mushroom Omelette

Chop enough peeled mushrooms, caps and stems, to make one and a-half cups. Fry lightly for five minutes or until tender, in 2 tablespoons of butter. Season with salt and pepper, and a few grains of nutmeg. Add to an ordinary omelette, when cooked, and fold it over.

Sauteed Mushrooms

Slice 1lb. of fresh mushrooms into one-eighth-inch slices. Fry 2 tablespoons of minced onion in butter for 10 minutes in a covered pan, over a low heat. Add

the mushrooms, cover again, and sauté over a medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Turn off the heat, and allow the mushrooms to stand for 4 or 5 minutes, to absorb the juice in the pan. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and a little lemon juice, and toss lightly with a fork. Serve with or without toast.

Broiled Mushrooms

Wash the mushrooms thoroughly, remove the stems, and keep them for soup next day. Put the mushrooms with the rounded side down in a shallow baking dish. In the upturned cavity of each put half a teaspoon of butter, sprinkle with pepper, salt, and a dash of nutmeg. Add a drop or two of lemon juice. Brush the surface with melted butter, and cook at the top of a fairly hot oven for 5 to 10 minutes. They could also be grilled under the griller.

Baked Mushrooms with Cream

Wash 1lb. of fresh mushrooms thoroughly, and remove the stems. Put the mushrooms in a greased baking dish or casserole. Cut the tips off the stems, slice them, and add to the casserole. Mix 2 tablespoons of butter, one and a quarter teaspoons of salt; dash of cayenne pepper, and a quarter of a cup of top milk, and pour over the mushrooms. Cover, and bake in a moderate oven about 375deg. for about 50 minutes, or till tender. Stir once during the baking, without spoiling the shape of the mushrooms. May be served on toast.

Mushroom Ketchup

This is an old Scottish recipe. Put the freshly gathered mushrooms in an earthenware basin, and sprinkle with salt. Leave overnight or longer. Bring slowly to the boil, simmer 30 to 40 minutes. Strain through muslin. Put liquid on again, boil another 30 to 35 minutes, having added a seasoning of black peppercorns, a little cayenne pepper, cloves, and a little mace. Strain it all, and bottle when cold. It should keep up to 2 years.

Mushroom and Lettuce Salad

Half a pound of mushrooms; 1oz. of butter; 2 tablespoons of vinegar, and some lettuce. Peel and wash the mushrooms, and cook them very slowly with the butter and half a 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

About Army Jungle Shirts

Dear Aunt Daisy,

In answer to your appeal about getting the brown and green colouring out of those army jackets, I have boiled two lots of these jackets, and both are now just perfect. In the first copperful, I put plenty of washing powder, and half a bottle of turpentine. This water became very thick and rusty, which proves that the brown paint comes out first. I changed the water twice, rinsing thoroughly. After the second time I was short of washing powder, so used painters' sugar soap, and some ammonia, and the colours came out just as well. It seems to me that the shirts need boiling the three times, because the water gets so