

Published June 28th, 2017

Thoughtful Food

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Porcini Pappardelle (with morels). Photos Susie Iventosch

you're there!"

We spend several months of the spring and summer in Idaho, and this year has been a bumper crop for morels and spring porcini in our neck of the woods, but these delicacies can also be found in the foothills and mountains in northern California. Knowing how expensive these mushrooms are at the market, it is super awesome to be able to find them in the wild. But, be sure you know what you are doing or go with someone who does. You really don't want to risk it with wild mushrooms.

Because porcini are such delicacies, I wanted to make homemade pappardelle pasta for the dish. The only problem is that pasta is a really tough dough, and since I sprained my wrist flipping over my mountain bike handlebars a month ago, kneading still poses a bit of a problem. The solution: knead with the elbow! It actually worked surprisingly well. Also, where I normally roll out my dough with a rolling pin (a difficult task even with two healthy wrists), I splurged and purchased a beautiful Marcato Atlas 150 pasta roller/maker. What a luxury. I will never hand-roll my pasta dough again. This great little gadget came with the primary roller and two additional attachments for cutting spaghetti and fettucine. I did have to hand-cut the pappardelle, but it was really easy once the dough was already rolled out so thin. Since pappardelle pasta is one of my favorites, I went ahead and ordered that attachment for next time. There are probably eight or 10 or more attachments that can be ordered for this pasta maker.

Note: If you can't find fresh porcini, you can make this recipe using reconstituted dried porcini, along with diced fresh cremini mushrooms, and reconstituted dried morels and it will be delicious, as well. Morels are most often dried before using, whereas high-grade porcini can be used fresh or dried.

Cooking Term of the Week

Harissa

Harissa is a spice mixture used as both a seasoning and a condiment and is a staple in Middle Eastern and North African cuisine. It is of paste-like consistency and is made from a combination of ground chillies, cumin, coriander and garlic mixed with olive oil. Sometimes you might see caraway, tomatoes or mint in the ingredient list, too.

Porcini Pappardelle (with morels)

(Serves 4-6)

INGREDIENTS

1 lb. pappardelle egg noodles (recipe below or use store-bought)

Pasta Sauce:

2-3 Tbsp. olive oil

1 large shallot or 1/2 red onion, finely diced

1 cup chopped porcini

6-8 oz. fresh porcini, thinly sliced

5 or 6 dried morel mushrooms, reconstituted and chopped

1/2 cup dry white wine

1/4 cup freshly snipped parsley

1/2 cup half & half or cream

Salt and pepper, to taste

1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan or Pecorino Romano

DIRECTIONS

Heat 1 Tbsp. olive oil in a large skillet. Sear sliced porcini over medium-high heat until beginning to

We've been cooking a lot with wild mushrooms lately - morel risotto, porcini pappardelle and chicken-mushroom crêpes. We've even tried sautéed coral mushrooms, which were delicious.

The reason for this mushroom mania is that we have a good friend who is a "mushroom whisperer" and he knows exactly where to look and exactly what to look for in terms of edible versus poisonous or inedible mushrooms. This is incredibly important when foraging for mushrooms.

And, his timing is impeccable for knowing precisely when to head into the forest depending upon recent rains, sunshine and temperatures. We are learning and rapidly expanding our abilities to spy these sneaky fungi, and it is so much fun. Actually it's a bit addictive, because just when you think you're done for the day, you find just one more and that inspires you to continue foraging for another hour or so. Eventually you find yourself luring them out, "Come on, mushrooms, I know

brown on the edges. Season with salt and pepper and set aside on a plate. Using the same pan, add another Tbsp. olive oil and cook shallots until translucent. Add chopped porcini and cook until tender and beginning to brown.

Meanwhile, place dried morels in a bowl and cover with boiling water to reconstitute. When plump, drain and reserve liquid. Strain liquid in a fine tea strainer to eliminate any dirt and set aside. Rinse morels and chop. Add morels to shallots and porcini in the sauté pan and continue to cook for a few more minutes, until beginning to brown and get a little bit crispy on the edges.

Add wine to pan and deglaze pan, scraping the bottom for any mushrooms or shallots that may be stuck on the bottom. Add cream and reserved morel liquid. Season to taste with salt and pepper. When ready to serve, toss cooked pasta with sauce and sprinkle Parmesan and parsley over each serving.

Egg Noodles



INGREDIENTS

5 oz. all-purpose flour
5 oz. semolina flour
1 tsp. salt
2 large eggs
4 egg yolks

DIRECTIONS

Mix salt with flour and place on a large cutting board, or in a large bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour. Break eggs together and mix well and pour into the well of the flour. Start mixing with a fork, bringing more and more flour into the mixture as you go. Finally, gather the dough together into a ball, incorporating as much of the flour as you can. The dough will be pretty stiff at this point.

Knead dough for 8-10 minutes, dusting with flour as needed. Form dough into two discs and wrap with plastic wrap. Allow the dough to sit at room temperature

for about half an hour.

Now, using either a rolling pin or a pasta maker, roll dough to desired thickness and cut into 5/8-inch strips for the pappardelle.

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