

## The Fungi



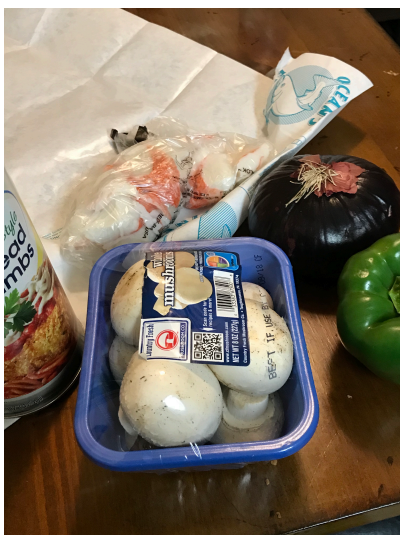
Growing up in a somewhat “ghetto” style environment from the projects of Chicago, my mother, ever since her arrival to California as a teen she has wanted to do things she has never done. She spent a lot of time in Hollywood neighborhoods and even dated a person whose mother was a seventies actress, always wanting to experience different things in life. She would always come home talking about a weird new movie, make me wear strange clothing that she claimed was in style and have some random food to try. I lived in Compton most of my childhood, which in the eighties was not always the most peaceful neighborhoods. I witnessed things that I like my mother would hope to keep my children away from. I was not really allowed to go to other kids’ house or be anywhere my mother or grandmother was not present. What we did have was plenty of diverse people, which meant diverse food. My mother worked a diner so we would go for breakfast there on Saturdays and every other weekend we would go to Sizzlers as we both loved the salad bar. One thing I neighbor did not lack was food. You can go to many places and get Mexican and Chinese food in the same location; she loved to eat everything although she would always say, “This is nothing like it is in Chicago!” According to my mother, Chicago has the best of all foods.

I am eight years old. My mother is hosting a fight party as she always would. Usually these events were a potluck style or someone would barbecue, as my mother is not the family cook. I liked these events to see my aunts and cousins and since everyone in my family is a co-

median, there was always laughs and good food. There is a dish everyone is known for making and my mother's primary job was providing the meeting location and somewhat hosting. I remember my mother eating many things that were not appetizing to me at all! She would eat things such as the mojarra frita, which is a whole fish fried, and squid, chitterlings, and I refused to try anything that looked different than chicken.

As a child, I thought that mushrooms were strange looking and I wanted no part of them. I mean do you eat the whole thing. The stem and all? The inside is black! When I think of the color black nothing that I want to eat. I do not know about this, my mother is always concocting some strange meal or foods that absolutely do not complement each other so throw in an item that is strange alone I am not sure I want to eat it mixed up with other things. I will never forget the day that I was forced, yes forced to try my mother's stuffed mushrooms. She asked if I had wanted to try one as she placed some on others plates, I declined. She told me I needed to try one, that they were very good. At that point, I knew I was not leaving the kitchen until I ate a mushroom. To my surprise, the mushrooms were great! I began to request them and gatherings and as an adult, I make them often for my siblings and myself. The recipe my mother uses is different than mine usually including shrimp and crushed croutons in place of the Italian bread crumbs.

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My basic stuff mushroom recipe consists of the following:

Serves: 2-3

Prep Time: 10 min  
Cook Time: 20 min

## Ingredients

One package regular size  
Fresh mushrooms

1/2 cup  
Chopped bell pepper

1 cup  
Finely sliced artificial crab

1/4 cup  
Chopped red onion

1 cup  
Italian seasoned bread crumbs

2 tbsp.  
Garlic salt

1 tbsp.  
Paprika

1/4 cup  
Melted butter

1/2 cup  
Water

2 tbsp.  
Melted butter

1/4 cup  
Colby jack shredded cheese

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## Instructions

1. Chop bell pepper, onion, artificial crab and add to mixing bowl
2. Add breadcrumbs, melted butter water garlic salt and paprika and mix all contents.
3. Remove stems from mushrooms and rinse.
4. Add mixed contents to mushrooms pack tightly
5. Place in pan and bake on 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes.
6. Turn off over.
7. Sprinkle cheese on mushrooms. (leave in oven until cheese melts)

## Notes

Real crab meat can be used if preferred.

Mozzarella shredded cheese can be used. Can use any type of mushroom but button or portobello work the best



Mushrooms are a part of my everyday world now. I eat them at least once a week. I love mushrooms in spaghetti, omelets, with chicken and gravy, and of course stuffed. There are multiple ways to make stuffed mushrooms and there are different ingredients that can be used but the artificial crab is one of my favorite stuffing. I will try to promote mushrooms to my sons, as they are a good immunostimulatory vegetable. Mushrooms are fairly healthy vegetable.



Mushrooms are reported to have a high vitamin count. Containing high amounts of vitamin D2, vitamin B and vitamin C. The protein levels in mushrooms are very high. Mushrooms can be used in many meals much like tofu, which is a good substitute for vegetarians that need additional protein. Mushroom protein can be as high as seventy-two to eighty-three percent. Mushroom distribution is different in different locations. There are many different types of mushrooms. The most common type are button mushrooms they are the cheapest most found in the supermarket. Portobellos are large and do not have as much flavor but have a meaty texture that people like and are used in recipes as a meat substitute. Shiitakes are well known mostly found in Japan, China and Korea.



Creminis are small portobello looking in appearance. Chanterelles are golden in color looking like flowers and there are many more types of mushrooms that are eaten across the globe. Mushrooms to always avoid will have red coloring or spots on the top and or stem they are from the Amanita family and very much poisonous!

Fungi are natural antioxidants and are good for the immune system. They can be used in medicines such as penicillins. Fungi are decomposers and vital to the ecosystem. Without fungi the decomposition of plants and animal life would be a much slower process if even still in existence. When thinking of eating fungi it's strange so I focus on the taste and now the new found information. I've shared a part of my world and I hope it's enjoyed.

See end product below \*\*\*\*note: mushrooms are stuffed with ground pork, ground beef, shrimp, lobster or just vegetables so try out different stuffings



## References

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Toinye Williams

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