

RAGOÛT OF MORELS WITH FRESH HERBS AND CRÈME FRAÎCHE

The great morel mushroom is one of the most delicious signs of spring and celebrated by cooks and chefs around the globe for its smoky, earthy, nutty flavor. Fresh morels can be found at specialty produce markets, and depending on the location, at your local farmers markets between April and June. Dried morels are available year round and both the fresh and dried options are incredibly easy to prepare and cook; a simple sauté in some butter and a sprinkle of flaky sea salt will work wonders. However, we want you to experience this wild child of a mushroom in all of its fame and glory, so we created a simple recipe with all of the things that mushrooms love to hang out with; fresh herbs, shallots, cream, and lemon. Spoon this marvelous sauce on top of your favorite cut of steak, chicken, or pork, and prepare to be amazed!

Prep time: 10 minutes, plus 20 minutes for mushrooms to soak

Cook time: 25 minutes

Serves 6

Note: Fresh morel mushrooms can only be found in spring and early summer. If they are large, cut them in half. If dried, they must be reconstituted (rehydrated).

To reconstitute dried morels: Soak 1 oz dried morels in 2 cups of hot water for about 20 minutes. When the mushrooms are fully plump and tender, strain through a coffee filter or wet paper towel to retain the “mushroom stock” for your recipe. Rinse well to remove any debris and pat dry. Place the mushroom stock in a small saucepan over high-heat and reduce to ½ cup. Set aside.

Melt 4 tablespoons of butter in a large sauté pan over high-heat. When very hot, add the morels and sauté for 3-4 minutes. Add the thyme, shallots, salt, and pepper and lower the heat to medium. Cook the mushrooms for 5 minutes more. The outsides should crisp up a bit, and the insides should remain tender.

Turn the heat up to high, add the reserved ½ cup of mushroom stock and reduce by half. Pour in the cream and simmer for 1 minute more. Stir in the crème fraîche and herbs and season with salt, pepper, and lemon juice to taste.

Ingredients:

¼ cup roughly chopped herbs (parsley, chives, and/or tarragon)
½ pound fresh or 1 oz dried morels (or porcini, if morels are not available)
3 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves, or ½ teaspoon dried
¼ cup minced shallots
¼ cup organic heavy cream
2 tablespoons **crème fraîche**, or sour cream
squeeze of lemon juice
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste