



## Creamed Spinach Stuffed Mushrooms

By Erin Fletter

**Prep Time** 10 / **Cook Time** 18 / **Serves** 6 - 12

### Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**bake:** to cook food with dry heat, as in an oven.

**mix:** to thoroughly combine two or more ingredients until uniform in texture.

**stuff:** to fill the cavity of a food with another food, like a fruit or vegetable or a savory, sweet, or bread mixture, usually before cooking.

### Equipment

- Oven
- Oven mitt or pot holder
- Sheet pan (9" x 13" works well)
- Parchment paper
- Measuring spoons
- Small metal spoon

### Ingredients

#### Creamed Spinach Stuffed Mushrooms

- 14 medium-large button mushroom caps—if also making Green Bean Casserole Cups, use caps from that recipe **\*\* (for MUSHROOM ALLERGY sub 8 to 10 mini sweet peppers)\*\***
- 10 oz frozen spinach (thawed, drained, and squeezed)
- 1/2 C cream of mushroom mixture, made from Green Bean Casserole Cup recipe **\*\* (see allergy subs in that recipe)\*\***
- 2 T whipped (or regular) cream cheese **\*\* (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free cream cheese)\*\***

- ☐ 2 T grated Parmesan cheese **\*\***(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub nutritional yeast, found in health food stores)**\*\***
- ☐ 1/2 tsp salt
- ☐ panko bread crumbs, optional **\*\***(Omit for GLUTEN ALLERGY or sub gluten-free/nut-free panko bread crumbs)**\*\***

## Food Allergen Substitutions

### Creamed Spinach Stuffed Mushrooms

**Gluten/Wheat:** Omit panko bread crumbs or substitute gluten-free/nut-free panko bread crumbs.

**Mushrooms** : Substitute 8 to 10 mini sweet peppers for 14 mushroom caps.

**Dairy:** Substitute nutritional yeast (found in health food stores) for Parmesan cheese. Substitute dairy-free/nut-free cream cheese.

## Instructions

### Creamed Spinach Stuffed Mushrooms

#### preheat + line

Preheat your oven to 400 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

#### add + mix

Add **10 ounces of spinach** (thawed, drained, and the liquid squeezed out) to a mixing bowl. Add **2 tablespoons cream cheese, 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, 1/2 teaspoon salt**, and the remaining **1/2 cup of creamy mushroom mixture** from Green Bean Casserole Cups (see recipe), and mix well to combine.

#### stuff + bake

Line your mushroom caps with holes facing up, ready to be stuffed, or sliced mini peppers facing up (if mushroom allergy present), on the lined baking sheet. Stuff each mushroom cap (or mini sweet pepper) with the creamed spinach mixture and top with optional French fried onions or panko bread crumbs. Bake for 18 minutes until golden brown and bubbly! Let them cool slightly before eating, as they will be very hot!

## Featured Ingredient: Mushrooms!

Hi! I'm Toady! I'm a Mushroom!

"I'm also a fun guy! Get it? Fun guy—fungi? I'm good in salads, sandwiches, soups, stews, on pizza, with pasta, and stuffed with other yummy foods. Plus, you can cook and use me in recipes just like you would

meat!"

## History

The first mushrooms were thought to be cultivated in Southeast Asia, but it is not known why for sure.

Perhaps someone discovered that mushrooms grew by accident and sought out a growing method.

All mushrooms are fungi, but not all fungi are mushrooms! There are an estimated 1.5 to 2 million species of fungi on planet Earth, of which only 80,000 have been properly identified. There are over 250 kinds of mushrooms that people eat.

Mushrooms are a kind of fungus that look like umbrellas! They grow in places like yards, forests, fields, and gardens.

What is a fungus? It's a kind of living organism that is different from plants. In fact, mushrooms are more like humans than plants!

Fungi walls are made of a fibrous substance called "chitin," rather than cellulose, like plants. Also, plants produce their own energy from the sun from photosynthesis, but mushrooms and other fungi don't need the sun for energy!

Many fungi eat by breaking down dead plants. However, other fungi feast on dead animals, bird droppings, manure, wallpaper paste, fruit, and living animals. So fungi are like nature's cleanup crew!

The yeast that makes bread rise is a type of fungi.

Mushrooms are sometimes called Toadstools! Can you picture a toad sitting on top of a giant mushroom?

Some mushrooms are good to eat, like portobellos, crimini, and shiitakes, while others are extremely poisonous. Never eat a mushroom you find growing outside unless you are with a mushroom expert!

The Honey Mushroom in the Blue Mountains of Oregon is the world's largest living thing. It is actually a mushroom colony and is believed to be at least 2,000 years old! It covers almost four square miles!

Some mushrooms live entirely underwater.

In the Amazon rainforest, mushrooms release spores into the air, which creates the surface for water to condense and can trigger rain. The rain then causes more fungi to grow.

Before the invention of colorful synthetic dyes, people used mushrooms for dyeing wool and other natural fibers.

Greek warriors ate mushrooms to increase their strength before battle.

Mushrooms are one of the vegetable world's substitutes for meat.

## Anatomy & Etymology

The largest mushroom you'll find in most grocery stores is the portobello. It is the fully grown version of the *Agaricus Bisporus* species and has a large, brown cap. Smaller, immature mushrooms may be brown, like the crimini, or white, like the button.

Mushrooms contain more than 90 percent water!

Some mushrooms glow in the dark! They produce light through a process called bioluminescence. People used to carry these in ancient times to light their way through the forest.

Mushrooms can grow super fast. Once they break through the surface of whatever they're growing on, they can double their size in just one day.

The word "mushroom" comes from late Middle English for any fungus with a fleshy and fruiting body. It is derived from the Old French "mousseron," from the late Latin "mussirio."

## How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Wild mushrooms can be found in many wooded areas. If you choose to harvest wild mushrooms, make certain you have a professional identify your pick. Many mushrooms may resemble safe mushrooms but are actually poisonous!

Buy mushrooms with whole, intact caps, and be sure they are not wet or slimy!

They will smell strong, sweet, and earthy when fresh.

Rinse mushrooms before you slice or cut them. Whole mushrooms won't absorb much water, while cut mushrooms will. Wait to rinse mushrooms until right before you cook them; otherwise, they'll turn slimy.

Mushrooms can be broiled, sautéed, and grilled. Mushrooms can be chopped or sliced and added to other dishes. Portobello caps are large enough to eat like a hamburger on a bun!

The mushroom cap is most often the part that is cooked and eaten. The stem can be fibrous and woody but will add flavor to vegetable or meat stock.

Mushrooms pair well with balsamic vinegar, fresh herbs (like oregano, rosemary, thyme, and cilantro), marinara, spinach, leafy greens, tomatoes, goat cheese, mozzarella, cream-based sauces, garlic, and onions.

Store mushrooms in a partially closed resealable plastic bag to ensure air circulation without drying out the mushrooms.

## Nutrition

Mushrooms are low in calories and are an excellent source of B vitamins. These vitamins are needed for healthy cell and brain function, and they help prevent cancer and stress.

Even though mushrooms don't use the sun for energy, they use it to produce vitamin D, just like humans do! Vitamin D is essential to our bones! It keeps them strong and regenerating.

Mushrooms have essential minerals such as selenium, copper, phosphorus, zinc, and potassium. Copper helps the body build red blood cells and is necessary for the health of our bones. Selenium is an antioxidant that may decrease cancer risk.

Mushrooms have been used successfully in traditional Chinese medicine for thousands of years to treat many health conditions. Western medicine is finally beginning to recognize and utilize some of the medicine mushrooms naturally contain.