**Ingredients** 

1 tablespoon butter

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 clove garlic, minced

¼ cup flax seed

1/4 cup pearl barley

½ cup brown rice

4½ cups chicken broth

Salt and pepper to taste

1/2 cup wild rice

1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped

1/4 cup soft winter wheat berries

Dining

4 ounces dried porcini, reconstituted (use fresh if available) and chopped

½ cup purple prairie barley (or pearl barley if purple is not available)

**Mixed-Grain Pilaf with Porcini mushrooms** 

1 ½ cups cremini or brown mushrooms, thinly sliced

#### **Natural Food**

By Susie Iventosch



Open Sesame Natural Foods in Lafayette

bout 15 years ago, a good A friend of mine served a mixedgrain mushroom pilaf to us at a dinner gathering. She'd found it in a 1990-something Martha Stewart Living magazine and saved it in her recipe file. It was absolutely delicious and every once in a while, I come upon the recipe (now in my file) and remember to serve it again.

Photo Susie Iventosch

Since I've been on a flax kick lately, I decided to change it up a little using an even wider variety of grains than the original recipe called for, plus the addition of porcini, otherwise known as God's gift to humanity!

I started looking for other interesting and healthy grains to add to the flax seeds I'd purchased earlier

at Open Sesame Natural Foods in blueberries, purple cabbage and Lafayette. One of my favorite pasbeets. Purple barley is 15 percent times, perusing market shelves to protein and is the highest source he's see what's new and interesting, proseen for healthful, cholesterol-fightduced a new item I'd not heard of ing beta glucans, immune response before – purple prairie barley. Natupotentiators known to promote rally, I bought it and took it home. health in a number of ways.

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Some time passed before try-

ing the new purple barley and by

then I'd already forgotten where I'd

bought it in the first place. So, I

phoned Timeless Seeds, the grower

of this particular grain, and the CEO,

David Oien, answered the phone.

Chief among my questions was

where I could possibly buy it again.

He helped me out and also offered

some very good information about

this kind of barley. And, as a result,

Open Sesame now carries this ma-

heirloom grain about six or eight

years ago," he said. "Hulless barley

originated in the Nile River Valley

and the purple hulless barley can be

traced back for at least many cen-

turies to the mountainous areas of

Tibet, as well. Barley is an adaptive crop and can grow in both high heat

and cool mountainous regions. It's

been our observation that the purple

pigmentation occurs due to fertile

soil and adequate levels of rainfall."

caused by anthocyanins, water sol-

uble vacuolar pigments that serve as

The purple color, he says, is

**Open Sesame Natural Foods** 

"We re-introduced this hulless

jestic wonder grain.

He went on to inform me that pearl barley has an indigestible husk that must be removed before human consumption, and in the process many of the nutrients are lost. Flax seeds also promote good health, and according to Sue Jun, owner of Open Sesame, flax is good for fiber and is an excellent source of Omega 3-6-9 essential fatty acids, which can help to reduce cholesterol and inflammation, and fight heart disease.

After all that searching, and researching, Martha's good old mixed-grain pilaf evolved into a regular health-nut dish. The purple barley gives a rich earthy flavor, and when combined with flax seeds, wild rice, wheat berries, onions and porcini, it is good enough for a main

And, if you felt like adding toasted pecans before serving that would be very tasty too.

Open Sesame has served the Lamorinda area for 30 years and carries a wide variety of grains, including the purple prairie barley, many gluten-free products and several cookbooks containing wonderful, healthy recipes.

Five grains used in this dish: from center front left clockwise: pearl barley, wild rice, brown rice, dried porcini and cremini mushrooms, purple prairie barley, flax. Pilaf in center

#### **Directions**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

On the stovetop, melt the butter in a large oven-proof pot (with a tight-fitting lid) over low heat. Add oil, garlic and onion and sauté until translucent. Add mushrooms and increase heat to medium-high. Cook until mushrooms are soft and both onions and mushrooms begin to brown slightly. Add all of the grains, and stir well to coat them with the oil and onion-mushroom mixture. (You may need to add one more tablespoon olive oil at this point.) Cook over medium-high heat, stirring often for about five minutes. Add the chicken stock to the pot and bring to a boil. Remove pot from stove, cover immediately, and bake in oven for about 1 hour or until grains are cooked, but al dente. Season with fresh ground sea salt and ground pepper.

You can substitute these grains with your favorites, or something new you happen to find on a market shelf, but keep the total quantity of grains the same – 21/4 cups. Also, toasted pecans and/or freshly grated Parmesan cheese are both nice additions to this dish.

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These recipe is available on our web site. Go to: www.lamorindaweekly.com Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com



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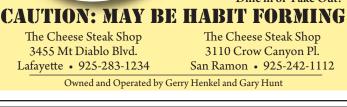
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