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Calling All Crab-Lovers!

By Susie Iventosch



Joel offers one of his crabs at the Moraga Farmers' Market Photo Andy Scheck

In January and February of each year, many local philanthropies host crab feeds. So, be on the lookout for these wonderful gatherings, where you can not only indulge your craving for this seafood delicacy, but support local organizations through your eating efforts!

Just in case you are sent home with some leftovers, or if your crab desires need satisfying sooner, Northern California crab is now available at local markets and is also available at the Moraga Farmers' Market.

Right now, the Dungeness crab is looking really good according to the "meat guy" Tim Ouimet of Diablo Foods.

"We are offering the two-pound crabs from local waters," he said. "There's nothing like the local product!"

Here are a couple of recipes for crab-stuffed mushrooms. The stuffed Portobello is large enough for an entree, and smaller stuffed mushrooms make a perfect side dish or appetizer. I've included one recipe with a Gruyere cream sauce filling, while the other is seasoned with lemon juice, sauteed shallots and grated white cheddar.

Crab-Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms with Gruyere Cheese Sauce

By Susie Iventosch

(Serves 6)

INGREDIENTS

- 6 large (4 to 5-ounce) Portobello mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 medium-large shallots, finely diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 3/4 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 1-2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup dry sherry (or white wine)
- 1 tablespoon fresh squeezed lemon juice
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 1/2 pounds lump crabmeat
- 1/2 cup grated Gruyere
- 1/2 cup Panko bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon butter (for browning Panko)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 400 F.

Clean mushrooms and remove stems. Finely chop stems for use in stuffing. Brush mushroom caps with olive oil and sea salt and roast in oven for about 10 minutes, or until mostly cooked. Remove from oven. Meanwhile, make crab stuffing.

In a large saute pan, heat butter and olive oil over medium-high heat. Add shallots and garlic and saute until translucent. Add chopped mushroom stems and cook until soft. Add flour and cook in shallot mixture for about 1-2 minutes, to slightly brown the flour. Slowly add sherry and lemon juice, stirring with a whisk or wooden spoon to integrate, and then add the milk and cream and continue to cook just until thick and creamy. Add Gruyere cheese and cook just until melted. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature, before adding crab to complete the stuffing.

In a saute pan, melt 1 tablespoon butter and add panko. Cook until bread crumbs are toasted. Set aside.

To Assemble

When ready to serve, fill mushroom caps with crab filling and sprinkle bread crumbs on top. Bake at 400F for about 15 minutes, or until filling is hot and bubbly.

Serve with a wedge of lemon.

Stuffed Mushrooms with crab, lemon juice and white cheddar

By Susie Iventosch



Photo Susie Iventosch

cheese is melted. Serve hot!

(Serves 6)

INGREDIENTS

6 large Portobello mushrooms
1 1/2 pounds crab meat
2 shallots, finely diced
1-2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 cup panko (Japanese bread crumbs)
1/2 teaspoon white pepper
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1/2 cup grated sharp white cheddar cheese

DIRECTIONS

Wash mushrooms and remove stems. Brush mushroom caps with olive oil, sea salt and pepper. Roast in 400F oven for 10 minutes or until softened. Remove from oven and set aside.

In a large saute pan, heat olive oil and saute shallots until translucent. Add panko and cook until slightly browned. Season with white pepper. Remove from heat and cool, before adding crab meat and grated white cheddar. Mix well.

Stuff cavities of Portobello mushrooms with crab filling and bake at 400F for about 10-15 minutes or until hot and

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