

# RECIPE for health

APRIL 2009 In partnership with Health4U and University Housing

Featured Food:

## PORTOBELLO MUSHROOMS



By Peggy Crum, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

Mushrooms grow quickly, hence the verb, mushroom. Crimini, a small brown umbrella-shaped fungus, will mushroom into the six-inch diameter flat-topped Portobello in only five or six days. Portobello mushrooms are known for their intense earthy flavor.

Like so much in life, mushrooms get better with age. Don't shy away from shriveled specimens. Although not especially attractive, dryness intensifies the flavor. The mushrooms you bring home should be dry and firm, never slimy.

Once you have your mushrooms home, remove them from the plastic container and plastic wrap. If the gills (underside of the cap) are matted down, give them a whiff. They should have a sweet earthy aroma. If they smell the least bit funky, use your knife to slice away the gills. Place the Portobello mushrooms in a paper bag; if they came in a cardboard container, replace the plastic wrap with paper towel. Either way, refrigerate.

It is perfectly acceptable to simply wipe cultivated mushrooms with paper towel to clean them. Cheesecloth or a brush also work well. If you feel best washing them, give them a quick rinse, running your hands over the surface, then drain quickly. Mushrooms are not sponges — they are already mostly water so exposing them to water is not harmful. Washing does damage the surface, therefore your clean mushrooms should be cooked soon.

The gills you see on the underside of Portobello mushrooms are prominent, and they are stock-piled with browning enzymes. When cooked, the gills will bleed dark juices into your dish which may or may not be desirable. Another cooking pointer: longer cooking gives firmer texture.

Just how did a crimini grow up to be called 'Portobello?' I don't know, but these big browns *mushroom* when it comes to flavor, texture and versatility.

## Grilled Portobello Mushrooms with Vegetable Couscous

Recipe tested by Jill Yarbrough and featured in University Housing Dining Services. (Serves 4)

- 4 each Portobello mushrooms
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup couscous
- 1 cup vegetable or chicken broth
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 cup onions, diced
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup carrots, diced
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup zucchini, sliced
- 1 cup eggplant, peeled, small dice

Marinade:

- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lite soy sauce
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup canola oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup + 2 Tbsp. burgundy wine
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup Dijon mustard

Wash mushrooms and remove gills. Whisk marinade ingredients together. Pour over mushrooms and marinate one hour. Drain, reserving marinade. Cook couscous in broth, following directions on box. Add salt and pepper to taste. Wash and cut vegetables. Heat oil in skillet; add garlic, then onions and carrots. Sauté two to three minutes. Add zucchini and eggplant, continuing to cook until vegetables are tender crisp. Add couscous to vegetables and mix together. Heat reserved marinade. Grill mushrooms on both sides, brushing with marinade as they cook. Slice mushrooms on a cutting board, or leave whole. Serve with vegetable couscous.

Grilled Portobello Mushrooms will be featured in the MSU Residence Hall Dining Rooms at dinner on two dates: April 2 in Yakeley, Wonders, Wilson and Shaw, and April 16 in Case, Brody, Akers and The Gallery. Once you try this delectable dish, you'll want to make it at home! Enjoy. For meal hours and complete menus, visit [www.eatatstate.com](http://www.eatatstate.com).

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