A HOME COOKING GUIDE

The Mushroom Kitchen

Easy everyday recipes for home cooks

Clara Bennett



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CONTENTS

What is inside

1. Choosing and Storing Mushrooms 5

2. Quick Weeknight Meals 7

3. Slow Weekend Cooking 9



CHAPTER 1

Choosing and Storing Mushrooms

Good mushroom dishes start at the shop. A few minutes spent choosing firm, dry mushrooms and storing them the right way makes every recipe in this book taste better.

> *Dry mushrooms brown, wet mushrooms steam.*

What to look for

- Firm caps with no slimy patches
- A fresh, earthy smell
- Store them in a paper bag

Mushrooms are mostly water, so they spoil fast when they sit in plastic. Buy them a day or two before you cook, and keep them in the fridge in a paper bag. The paper lets them breathe and stops them from going soft.

How to clean mushrooms

You do not need to wash mushrooms under the tap. Wipe each one with a damp kitchen towel or a soft brush to remove any soil. If they are very dirty, rinse them quickly in a bowl of water and dry them straight away. Never leave them to soak.

Which mushrooms to buy

- **White button**: mild and cheap, good for sauces and soups
- **Chestnut**: a little deeper in flavour, great for frying
- **Portobello**: large and meaty, ideal for grilling whole
- **Oyster**: soft and delicate, best cooked quickly

Start with chestnut mushrooms if you are not sure. They are easy to find and work in almost every recipe.



CHAPTER 2

Quick Weeknight Meals

These recipes are for the nights when you want a real meal without a long wait. Each one takes about 20 minutes and uses one pan.

> *Hot pan, small batches, no stirring for the first two minutes.*

The golden rules

- Heat the pan before the mushrooms go in
- Cook in small batches
- Salt them at the end

The secret to golden mushrooms is space. If the pan is too full, the mushrooms release their water and boil instead of frying. Cook them in two batches if you need to, and leave them alone for the first two minutes so they can brown.

Garlic mushrooms on toast

1. Slice 250 g of chestnut mushrooms.
2. Fry them in a hot pan with a little oil until golden.
3. Add a knob of butter, one chopped garlic clove and a pinch of thyme.
4. Season with salt and pepper and spoon onto thick toast.

Creamy mushroom pasta

Cook 200 g of pasta. While it boils, fry sliced mushrooms until golden, then add a chopped onion and cook until soft. Stir in a few spoons of cream or crème fraîche and a splash of the pasta water. Toss with the pasta and finish with grated cheese and black pepper.

> *Save a cup of pasta water before you drain it. It turns any sauce silky.*



CHAPTER 3

Slow Weekend Cooking

When you have more time, mushrooms can become rich soups and stews. These recipes cook slowly, fill the kitchen with a warm smell and taste even better the next day.

> *A slow pot rewards the patient cook.*

Weekend favourites

- A smooth mushroom soup
- A hearty mushroom and bean stew
- A golden mushroom pie

Slow cooking brings out the deep, savoury taste of mushrooms. Brown them well first, then let them simmer gently with stock and herbs.

Smooth mushroom soup

Fry an onion and 500 g of mushrooms until golden. Add a litre of vegetable stock and simmer for 20 minutes. Blend until smooth, then stir in a little cream. Serve with crusty bread.

Mushroom and bean stew

- Brown mushrooms and onions in a large pot
- Add a tin of tomatoes, a tin of beans and some stock
- Simmer for 40 minutes with rosemary and bay
- Serve with rice or mashed potato

A simple mushroom pie

Make the stew a little thicker, spoon it into a dish and cover it with ready-made pastry. Brush the top with beaten egg and bake until golden. It is an easy dinner to share with friends.



ABOUT THIS BOOK

Simple mushroom recipes for busy weeknights, slow weekends and everything in between. Learn how to buy, clean and cook mushrooms so they turn out golden every time.