



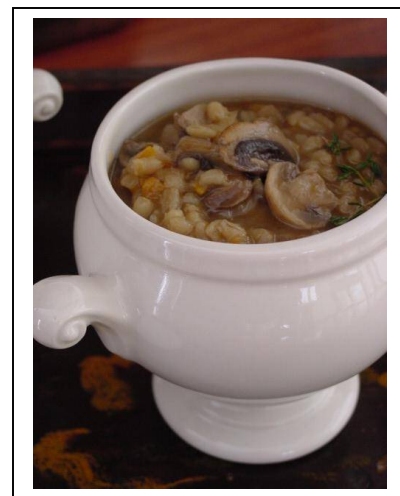
Mushroom Barley Soup

Serves 6

Winter time is soup time and there's nothing a swarm and welcoming as a hearty bowl of hot soup. My recipe combines the earthy and exotic, by using 3 kinds of mushrooms and the rich mellow sweetness of Sherry.

Ingredients:

6 cups chicken stock
3/4 cup pearled barley, rinsed
1/4 cup dried porcini mushrooms (.25 oz)
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon butter
3 cups coarsely chopped sweet onion
2 tablespoons dry Sherry
8 ounces baby Portobello mushrooms, sliced
8 ounces Cremini mushrooms, sliced
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1/3 cup chopped carrot
4 to 6 sprigs of fresh thyme
Coarse salt, to season
Sherry Vinegar Syrup, for garnish (optional)
White Truffle Oil, for garnish (optional)



Preparation:

Place the stock and barley in a large, heavy-bottomed pot. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, partially covered, for about 40 minutes, until the barley is tender.

Place the dried porcini mushrooms in a heatproof container. Pour 2 cups boiling water over them. Set aside and allow the mushrooms to soak and re-hydrate for at least 15 minutes. When ready to use, remove the porcinis from the liquid squeezing any excess liquid back into the container; reserve the liquid. Coarsely chop the re-hydrated porcinis. Reserve.

Place a large skillet over high heat. Add the olive oil and butter. When the butter has melted add the onions. Season with coarse salt. Reduce the heat to low and caramelize the onions stirring frequently, about 20 to 25 minutes. When the onions are nicely caramelized, add the Sherry and deglaze the skillet. Add the fresh mushrooms and season with coarse salt. Toss to combine the mushrooms and caramelized onions. Allow the mushrooms to sauté, about 5 minutes.

Add the garlic. Sauté for a minute or two until the garlic softens.

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Remove the lid from the stock and barley mixture. Strain the reserved porcini liquid through a coffee filter into the stock. Add the chopped porcinis and the carrots. Raise the heat and return the mixture to a simmer. Add the onion and mushroom mixture and stir in the sprigs of thyme. Simmer for about 10 to 15 minutes until the flavors are well-combined and the soup is warmed through.

Service:

Remove the thyme sprigs. Ladle the soup into heated soup bowls. Drizzle with a few drops of Sherry Vinegar Syrup (made by reducing 1/2 cup Sherry vinegar over medium-low heat to about 2-3 tablespoons). Garnish with about 1/2 tablespoon of White Truffle Oil. Serve immediately.

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