K’s Kitchen: Wild mushroom pasta

By Kathryn Reed

By day three of eating the same thing I’m usually ready to move onto something else. Not with this recipe. I could have eaten it multiple times a day and for a week or more if I had had enough.

For those who think mushrooms are just the white ones found in salads and relish trays, this dish will show you how rich fungi can be. (Of course you might be poor by the time you figure this out! – they aren’t cheap.)

In the vegetarian world, mushrooms are often the hearty, protein-rich answer to meat. Like animal proteins, mushrooms come in a variety of choices. This recipe blends several of them together. The Raley’s at the Y in South Lake Tahoe sells a preassembled mix of wild mushrooms that was perfect.

For the wine lovers out there, start letting a full bodied red open up. This dish will hold up just fine to that bottle.



Wild Mushroom Pasta

2 pounds mixed fresh wild mushrooms, chopped

½ C olive oil

12 large garlic cloves, peeled and halved

8 thyme sprigs

1 tsp pepper

1 tsp kosher salt, divided

12 ounces bow tie pasta

1½ C reduced-sodium vegetable broth

1/3 C loosely packed flat-leaf parsley leaves, divided

1/3 C loosely packed tarragon leaves, divided

¾ C parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 475 degrees with a rack in top third of oven and another in lower third.

Combine mushrooms, oil, garlic, thyme, pepper, and ½ tsp salt in a large bowl. Place mixture on rimmed baking sheet. Bake mushrooms 15 minutes.

Cook pasta according to package instructions. Drain, reserving at least ½ cup pasta water.

Warm broth on stove.

Combine mushroom mixture, pasta, half of parsley, half of tarragon, and remaining 1/2 tsp salt in a large bowl. Divide pasta into four shallow bowls, then drizzle with broth and pasta water if needed. Top with remaining parsley, tarragon, and the parmesan.

Feasting on potatoes while in Idaho



It’s hard to find a menu in Idaho without some form of potato. Photo/Kathryn reed

By Kathryn Reed

KETCHUM, Idaho – I can’t move to Idaho. It’s all because of the potatoes.

I have a problem with French fries. I think they are food group. I think they can be eaten at any time of day. I think they can be a meal unto themselves.

Not that potatoes can’t be found in every state, but they do seem to be on the menu a bit more in Idaho – and in other forms than French fries.

“Idaho’s growing season of warm days and cool nights, ample mountain-fed irrigation and rich volcanic soil, give Idaho potatoes their unique texture, taste and dependable performance,” according to the Idaho Potato Commission.



Fries and potato skins at Whiskey Jacques in Ketchum. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Potatoes are Idaho's No. 1 crop, with 13 billion pounds harvested each year. The Idaho Farm Bureau says, "About 60 percent of Idaho's potato crop is processed into French fries, tater tots and other fried products, or dehydrated into flakes and various other forms. Statewide, the crop is valued at between $550 million and $700 million per year."

Russet, red, fingerling and gold are what this state grows. Most are grown in the southern half of the state, which includes Sun Valley. When I was there last month I tried to eat as many potatoes as possible.



Potato salad at Cristina’s in Ketchum tastes almost as good as mom’s. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Even on the mountain at Sun Valley ski resort baked potatoes are served for lunch. A loaded potato – sour cream, bacon, chives, sharp cheddar – cost $11.50, while the chili cheese loaded potato was $12.50. A side of fries was $5, while sweet potato fries were $6. All of these were available at Seattle Ridge Day Lodge.

At River Run Lodge, at the base, deli sandwiches came with two sides – choices included twice baked potato, mashed potatoes and gravy, and sweet potato mash. From the grill there were cheese fries ($5.75), Idaho fries ($4.50), chili cheese fries ($8.50), and sweet potato fries ($5.50).



Mashed potatoes complement the steak at Sawtooth. Photo/Kathryn Reed

At Whiskey Jacques it was time for potato skins. It had been years, maybe decades, since I last had potato skins. Cheesy good, but felt like I could be rolled out of there.

At Cristina's I ordered potato salad as a side with my sandwich. My sister and I are potato salad snobs, probably because mom makes the best, but we both admitted this restaurant in Ketchum got high marks. They used red potatoes and were light with the mayo.

At the Pioneer restaurant a baked potato with sour cream and chives was dinner – and only $4.95. It was so big that I could not finish it. Those wanting a potato with dinner could pay $2.95. Everyone passed on the Jim Spud – a filet inside of a potato with cheddar and sour cream. ($12.95)



Fries for lunch on the slopes of Sun Valley. Photo/Kathryn Reed

I so wanted to have the homemade potato leek soup at the Sawtooth, but the bacon in it had me dining on a non-potato item. But those who ordered it said it was tasty. I did have a bite of the garlic mashed potatoes – wow – could have had that and wine, and called it a meal.

I'm not sure I could have endured such a highly intensive carb diet for more than a week. While potatoes are not super unhealthy, it's all the crap we put on them and then if they are fried that gives them such a deservedly bad reputation. Still, I'm not quitting my French fry habit, but I might start asking if they are Idaho potatoes.

Calif. may extend last call by 2 hours

By Associated Press

Closing times at bars in California could go later if proposed legislation gets passed.

The bill proposed Tuesday by state Sen. Scott Wiener, a Democrat who represents San Francisco, would let municipalities set their own last call times. The *Los Angeles Times* reports communities could decide to go as late as 4am.

Currently, the last call time across the state is 2am.

Wiener's predecessor in the Legislature, former Sen. Mark Leno, tried in 2013 to give cities more flexibility in setting last call times. But his bill didn't get enough votes to move out of committee.

Big winners among NorCal wines

By Mike Dunne, Sacramento Bee

At the start of a new year, I customarily find myself seated with two to four other judges in a curtained cubicle of a barny building on the Citrus Fairgrounds in Cloverdale in Sonoma County. We usually constitute one of about 20 panels at the annual San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, the nation's largest such judging, which in recent years has drawn around 7,000 wines, all made in the United States.

This January, however, I took on a new role at the competition. Seated by myself at a desk in a back room far removed from other judges, my assignment was to taste every wine declared to be the best of its class and then write a few remarks about each.

Unlike other judges, who taste blind, I was handed the bottle from which their pours had been drawn, so I knew the producer, vintage, appellation and so forth.

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Mushroom Bolognese to die for

By Kathryn Reed

Without a doubt, this was one of the best dishes I have made in a long time.

It is such a perfect winter meal because it is so hearty. I’m such a fan of mushrooms I know I’ll be making this year-round.

The rich, earthy flavors of the mushrooms demand a bold red wine be served with it.

It’s not complicated, so it could be a weeknight meal. But even better is that it’s so delicious it would be great to serve to guests. And by using spaghetti squash instead of pasta it is makes it that much healthier.

I had extra of the Bolognese that was good just by itself for lunch



Mushroom Bolognese

½ C hot water

½ ounce dried porcini or oyster mushrooms
1 3 pound spaghetti squash, halved lengthwise and seeded
2 T olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped

1 C celery, diced

1 C carrot, diced
1 tsp dried oregano
¼ tsp crushed red pepper
8 garlic cloves, minced
8 ounces cremini mushrooms, finely chopped

8 ounces white button mushrooms, finely chopped

2 T unsalted tomato paste
1 T reduced-sodium soy sauce
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper

¼ tsp kosher salt
8 ounces extra-firm tofu, drained and cubed

15 ounce can unsalted diced tomatoes, undrained

Place dried mushroom in half cup hot water and let stand 20 minutes. Reserve liquid. Finely chop mushrooms.

Place one squash half, cut side down, in an 8-inch square glass baking dish. Add water to a depth of 1 inch. Microwave for 8 minutes or until tender when pierced with a fork. Remove squash half; cool. Repeat with remaining squash half.

Heat oil in a large pan over medium-high. Add onion and next 7 ingredients (through button mushrooms); cook 12 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in tomato paste; cook 2 minutes. Stir in reserved dried mushrooms, reserved soaking liquid, soy sauce, and next 4 ingredients (through tomatoes); reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes.

Scrape inside of squash halves with a fork to remove spaghetti-like strands. Divide squash among 4 plates; top evenly with mushroom mixture.

UC Davis may start selling student made wine

By Loretta Kalb, Sacramento Bee

UC Davis no longer needs to dispose of thousands of gallons of wine that students produce each year, thanks to a state law clearing the way for nonprofit wine sales.

A new California law, Senate Bill 683 by former Sen. Lois Wolk, D-Davis, authorizes the state Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to license a university-associated nonprofit mutual benefit corporation that can accept up to 20,000

gallons of wine.

The corporation, in turn, would sell the wine in bulk to winemakers who would package and sell it, said UC Davis Chief Campus Counsel Jacob A. Appelsmith. The bill applies only to UC Davis.

Read the whole story

U.S. wine shipments, sales increase in 2016

By Bill Swindell, Santa Rosa Press Democrat

Continuing an expansion that has lasted more than 20 years, U.S. wine shipments grew 2.8 percent in volume last year even as competition increased from cheaper-priced imports, according to industry figures released last week.

Revenue from domestic wine sales jumped 4 percent last year as Americans continued to trade up for higher-priced wines, according to data published by BW 166, a Santa Rosa consulting firm. The price for the average bottle of wine sold in the U.S. surpassed $10 for the first time, a reflection of consumers' willingness to pay more for better wines.

U.S. wineries sold a record 383 million cases of wine in 2016, according to preliminary figures released by BW 166.

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Sweet potato crust quiche

By Kathryn Reed

Crusts are one of those things that often keeps people from making pies or quiches. This recipe will make you rethink that dreaded crust.

Not only is this easy, but it’s healthier than most crusts.

The best thing for cutting the sweet potatoes would be a mandolin. I’m still struggling to figure out how to use mine, so the slices were not all uniform. It didn’t matter. But you will want them to be a similar thickness and not even a quarter inch thick.

The flavor of this quiche is outstanding. It’s a medley in the mouth with the sweetness of the potatoes, the tanginess of the cheese and the smooth, richness of the egg-spinach concoction.

Don’t reserve this just for breakfast. It’s good for lunch and dinner, too. And reheated, just as good as fresh out of the oven.



Sweet Potato Crust Quiche

Cooking spray

2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into thin slices

1 tsp canola oil

½ C onion, diced

5 ounces baby spinach

½ C milk

¼ tsp kosher salt

¼ tsp pepper

¼ tsp red pepper flakes

4 large eggs

2 large egg whites

1/3 C feta cheese, crumbled

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Coat a 9-inch pie plate with cooking spray. Layer sweet potatoes in plate – on the bottom and sides. Coat potatoes with cooking spray. Bake 20 minutes or until potatoes are slightly tender. Remove from oven.

Increase oven temperature to 375F.

Over medium heat sauté onion in oil until opaque. Add spinach. Cook until wilted.

Combine milk and next 5 ingredients (through egg whites) in a medium bowl.

Arrange spinach mixture in crust, then pour egg mixture over spinach. Sprinkle with feta. Bake for 35 minutes or until egg mixture is set. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

Truckee couple creates dining app

By Alexandra Spychalsky, Moonshine Ink

A craving for crab cakes is to thank for the creation of a new dining app that stands to revolutionize the restaurant industry. Truckee residents Thao Doan and John Doolan were in San Francisco with their family, when their daughter, a notoriously picky eater, decided she wanted to try crab cakes for dinner. Fisherman's Wharf would seem to be the perfect place to satisfy a seafood craving, but when they tried to search online for specific restaurants in the area that had crab cakes on the menu, they were disappointed – a 42-minute search was fruitless. It was from that crustacean-based struggle that the idea for Kynbo was born.

Kynbo is an app that links restaurants and customers like never before. The service Kynbo provides is two-fold. For locals and visitors, the app provides an easy one-stop shop to view restaurants' menus, and even search menus for exactly the type of food they are in the mood for. For restaurant owners, Kynbo offers access to a back-end portal that grants a direct line of communication with customers, and provides unprecedented analytics about their restaurant and clientele.

The first step for Doan and Doolan was to get Tahoe restaurants on board.

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Toasted quinoa soup

By Kathryn Reed

One of the nice things about living where there is a long winter is the opportunity to have soup over and over again. While I have my go-to recipes, there are times when I want something new.

Being a vegetarian I often don’t have protein in my soup except for beans. This was a first for me to have quinoa and soup together. It was great.

The quinoa would be a welcome addition to whatever your normal vegetable soup is. It could also be a substitute for whatever protein you usually use.



Toasted Quinoa Soup

1 C uncooked quinoa

2 T olive oil

½ C red onion, diced

1 large carrot, diced

1 red pepper, diced

8 cloves garlic, minced

1½ T fresh rosemary, minced

1 tsp ground cumin

8 C vegetable broth

1 medium potato, cubed

1 parsnip, chopped

1 medium zucchini, diced

8 Brussels sprouts, cut in half

½ C flat leaf parsley, chopped

Kosher salt

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Spread quinoa in a thin layer on a rimmed baking sheet; bake at 325 degrees until browned, about 30 minutes. Stir every 10 minutes.

Heat a large stockpot over medium. Add oil. Add onion, carrot, bell pepper, and garlic; cover and cook until vegetables are tender, stirring occasionally.

Uncover and stir in rosemary and cumin; cook 1 minute.

Stir in stock, potatoes, parsnip, and toasted quinoa. Bring mixture to a boil, then cover and reduce heat to medium. Cook 12 minutes.

Stir in zucchini and Brussels sprouts; cook until vegetables and quinoa are tender.

Stir in parsley and salt. Adjust seasonings as needed.