

Hungarian Mushroom Soup

Serves 6

Hungarian mushroom soup is what happens when cream of mushroom grows up and develops considerably better taste. Two pounds of meaty cremini, baby bella, and shiitake mushrooms give the broth its deep, earthy backbone, while authentic Hungarian sweet paprika, dill, thyme, white wine, and a touch of soy sauce build warmth and savory depth. Mushroom powder intensifies all that woodsy richness without announcing itself, and lemon zest keeps the creaminess from becoming heavy. Finished with tangy crème fraîche and a generous scattering of fresh dill, this is a velvety, paprika-blushed bowl with considerably more personality than its humble name suggests.

Ingredients

½ cup unsalted butter, divided
2 pounds mixed mushrooms, such as cremini, baby bella, and shiitake, trimmed and sliced
2 yellow onions, finely chopped, about 3 cups
1 tablespoon Hungarian sweet paprika
3 teaspoons dried dill
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves or 1½ teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon mushroom powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
¾ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 cup dry white wine
4 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock
3 to 4 tablespoons soy sauce, to taste *
1 bay leaf
Zest of 1 large lemon
1½ cups half-and-half
½ cup crème fraîche, plus more for serving
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, plus more to taste
Chopped fresh dill, for serving

1. Melt 3 tablespoons butter in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add half mushrooms in an even layer and cook, stirring occasionally, until they release their moisture and develop deep golden-brown edges, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer to a bowl.
2. Melt 3 tablespoons butter in pot. Add remaining mushrooms and cook until deeply browned, 6 to 8 minutes. Return first batch of mushrooms to pot. Reduce heat to medium, add remaining 2 tablespoons butter and onions, and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are very soft and beginning to turn golden, 8 to 10 minutes.
3. Add paprika, dried dill, thyme, mushroom powder, salt, and black pepper. Cook, stirring constantly, for about 30 seconds, just until fragrant. Do not allow paprika to scorch.

4. Sprinkle flour evenly over mushroom mixture and cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes, until flour has absorbed butter and thoroughly coated mushrooms. Gradually pour in wine, stirring and scraping bottom of pot to release browned bits. Simmer until wine has reduced by about half, 3 to 5 minutes.
 5. Gradually stir in stock. *Stir in 3 tablespoons soy sauce. Taste near the end of cooking and add the remaining 1 tablespoon if more savory depth is needed. Add bay leaf, and lemon zest. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook, uncovered, for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until soup has thickened slightly and flavors have developed.
 6. Remove and discard bay leaf. Reduce heat to low and gradually stir in half-and-half. Cook just until heated through, 3 to 5 minutes. Do not boil.
 7. Remove pot from heat and let bubbling subside. Place crème fraîche in a small bowl and gradually whisk in about ½ cup hot broth. Stir mixture back into soup until completely incorporated. Add 1 tablespoon lemon juice. Taste and add more salt, black pepper, or lemon juice as needed.
 8. Ladle into bowls and finish with a spoonful of crème fraîche, chopped fresh dill, and freshly cracked black pepper.
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Storage

Refrigerate: Store in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

Freeze: Freeze without garnish for up to 2 months. Thaw overnight in refrigerator. Texture may separate slightly after freezing.

Reheat: Warm gently over medium-low heat, stirring often. Add a splash of stock or half-and-half if needed to loosen. Do not boil.