

Pasta with Rich Mushroom Sauce

serves 6

This is a hearty and delicious entrée. It is easy to prepare, with a full, deep flavor. I find it particularly satisfying in fall and winter. And it's good for feeding a crowd.

4 T. butter, preferably unsalted
1–2 large onions, 1/2" dice
6 T. hearty red wine
2 sweet red peppers, 1/2" dice
1 1/4 lbs. mushrooms, 1/4" slices
2 tsp. tamari or soy sauce
2 T. brown sugar or maple syrup

1/2 tsp. Tabasco or other hot sauce
1 1/2 tsp. salt
3/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 1/2 tsp. dry basil or 3 T. fresh
1 lb. linguine
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan

Bring 1 gallon of water to a rolling boil in a large pot. Melt the butter in a large frying pan over medium high heat. Add the onion and sauté, stirring frequently, until the onions turn a deep, rich brown color, about 20–30 minutes. Add red wine, 1 T. at a time, throughout the whole cooking time, when the ingredients stick to the pan. The wine will release the stuck bits adding tremendous flavor to the finished dish. Add the red peppers and sauté for another 5–10 minutes, until well softened. Add the mushrooms and sauté for another 5 minutes, turning the heat up to high. Then add the tamari, sugar/syrup, hot sauce, salt, pepper, and basil, reduce heat to medium, and continue cooking until the mixture is juicy and slightly thickened, about 20–30 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the linguine in the pot of boiling water. Stir frequently. When the pasta is tender but still firm, drain in a colander. Place the linguine in a large bowl, toss with the sauce, and sprinkle the Parmesan on top. Pass the pepper mill at the table for those who like a bit of extra bite. Serve with salad, crusty bread, and your favorite fruit dessert.

The sauce for this linguine is wonderful served as a side dish. Cook until the juice has thickened quite a bit, and serve along with a pasta or rice entrée. My favorite way to eat this is to eat the chunks, then dip crusty bread into the remaining sauce. Its rich flavor is deeply satisfying.