

Wild Mushroom Ragout

serves 6-8

This ragout is rugged and elegant at the same time. Serve this over polenta, rice, pasta, or as a rich and delicious side dish all on its' own. Learn to identify wild mushrooms and gather your own for a really special treat (and a lower carbon footprint!)

2 T. olive oil
1 1/2 c. onions, 1/2" dice
1 tsp. salt
1/4 c. hearty red wine or 1 T. red wine or balsamic vinegar
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/2—2 lbs. assorted wild mushrooms or a mixture of shitake, crimini, and oyster mushrooms

1 tsp. fresh ground black pepper
3 c. fresh, local tomatoes, 1/2" chunks
1/2 c. fresh basil, 1/8" strips (chiffonade)
1/2 c. fresh parsley, coarsely chopped
1 T. balsamic vinegar

Heat the olive oil on medium high heat in a large fry pan; cast iron works great. Add the onions and salt and saute' for 10 minutes, adding drizzles of the wine or vinegar as the onions really begin to stick to the pan. You want them to stick a little and begin to brown, then add the acidic wine or vinegar to "lift the stick" (called the fond) into your ragout, adding a rich, deep, dark color and flavor to the finished dish. Reduce the heat to medium low and cook for an additional 20- 30 minutes. When the onions are fully softened and nicely brown, add the garlic and mushrooms, turn the heat up to medium high, stir well, and cook for 7—8 minutes. Add the pepper and tomatoes and cook until the tomatoes are fully softened and beginning to shed their pulp, making a thick ragout, about 12—15 minutes. Add the basil, parsley, and balsamic, scoop up a spoonful, close your eyes, and taste. What does it want to bring the dish to perfect balance? The ingredients all want to be melded, married, so that no one flavor stands out. Adjust to suit your palate.