

Strength in Plants *By Kate Murray*

Stuffed mushrooms get a vegan upgrade



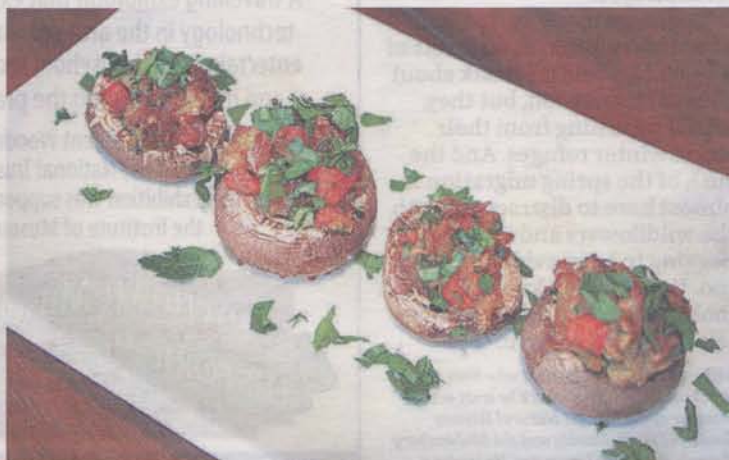
ONE OF the most rewarding aspects of writing this column is the feedback I get from our readers. Not only have I received handwritten thank you notes and emails, I received an entire plate of home-cooked food!

It was actually my soon-to-be brother-in-law who brought me the plate of food, but the underlying message is that the inspiration to celebrate plants reaches far beyond what I ever imagined.

Today, I share with you a recipe developed by the gentleman behind the entire plate of food. In fact, he's a person whom I've yet to meet in person — Michael Clancey. He lives in the Lehigh Valley, and over the past year he's made some important changes to what he chooses at the grocery store.

An avid cook and an award-winning barbecue chef, he brings to the table a taste for home-cooked meals made with fresh ingredients. His mother, Jan, happens to be an avid reader of the column and after years of cooking with traditional fare, was inspired to make some changes herself. She then introduced the rest of her family to plant-based cooking.

Michael soon discovered that by making just a few key changes



Mushrooms stuffed with onions, flax seed, spinach, white wine and other plant-based goodies make for a tasty vegan appetizer.

in favor of plant-based ingredients, his health improved, he felt better, lost weight, and he became convinced it was the right decision.

He recently prepared an entirely vegan dinner for his extended family, and his brother was so moved that he actually brought me a sample of each and every one of the courses. I couldn't be more thrilled that the reach of this column, from label reading to food dye to biological symphonies, can have such a profound effect not only on the local folks who read it,

but the extended audience we gain when people share our enthusiasm for healthy living.

Recipes that are versatile enough to serve to the family on a weeknight as well as bring to a dinner party are always at the top of my list. Appetizers such as this one, a traditional favorite remade with healthy, plant-based ingredients, is especially terrific because the vegan version can sit out for several hours and remain perfectly intact. I have a confession to make though — I changed the recipe just a little. Enjoy.

Stuffed mushrooms

2-3 pounds whole mushrooms (white button or baby portabella work well.)

1 turnip

2-3 garlic cloves, minced

1 medium Vidalia onion, diced

¼ cup dry white wine

2-3 tablespoons tamari (or low sodium soy sauce)

6 cups of baby spinach

1 tablespoon ground flax seeds

¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

1 red pepper, seeded and finely minced

Chopped parsley for garnish

1 package of cream cheese (optional)

PREP: Roast the turnip at 375 on parchment paper (salt and pepper if desired) for about 30 minutes. While it cooks, remove stems from mushrooms. Leave the caps intact and chop the stems. Sauté diced onion and mushroom stems with white wine and soy sauce, and cook until vegetables become tender (about eight minutes), adding the garlic in the last two minutes. Turn off the heat and stir in the spinach.

Transfer vegetable mixture to a food processor. Add turnip and pulse roughly to combine. Transfer to a bowl and stir in red pepper, ground flax and cayenne. This is the vegan version. For the vegetarian version, mix cream cheese with the vegetables now. Set mushroom caps topside down in a baking dish or sheet pan. Add a spoonful of the filling to each cap, mounding filling slightly over the top. Bake 30 minutes. Garnish with parsley. ☺

Kate Murray is certified in plant-based nutrition and the author of "A Silent Cure in My Back Yard." Find more recipes at: asilentcure.org.

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