

MARINATED SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS WITH CHILLED VERMICELLI

TO PREPARE THE MUSHROOMS:1. In a 6-quart saucepan over medium heat, combine the tomatoes, tomato paste, balsamic vinegar, red wine vinegar, thyme, herbes de Provence (if using), sugar, salt and pepper, and Tabasco. Bring to a boil and reduce the heat to a simmer. 2. Meanwhile, heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat and add the onion slices. Cook, stirring constantly, until wilted. 3. Add the onions to the tomato mixture and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 30 minutes, or until the sauce is quite thick. Stir in the garlic and remove from the heat. 4. Remove the stems from the mushrooms and slice the caps into strips about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. There should be about 10 cups. 5. In a heavy skillet over medium heat, sauté the mushrooms in two batches in the remaining oil for 4 to 5 minutes, or until crisp. Add to the tomato mixture. Let stand at room temperature.

TO PREPARE THE NOODLES:1. Bring a large quantity of salted water to a boil in a large pot. Add the vermicelli and cook until al dente, about 3 minutes. Do not overcook. 2. Drain the noodles and run under cold water until chilled. Drain thoroughly. 3. Pour the noodles into a large bowl. Add the olive oil, scallions or chives, sesame oil, soy sauce, garlic, ginger, and five-spice powder. Toss to blend well.

TO SERVE: Make a nest of the noodles on a platter and place a mound of the marinated mushrooms in the center. Serve at cool room temperature.

Having three shiitake mushroom farms in our area has inspired us to create ideas for using them in quantity. Cooked in a marinade and served chilled or at room temperature, the mushrooms work well as a first course on noodles for a warm-weather dinner, make a wonderful buffet dish, and are perfect to take on a picnic. The mixture will keep for a good while refrigerated and is great to have on hand as a condiment to enhance anything from steak to hamburger.

MARINATED MUSHROOMS

2½ cups peeled, seeded, and cubed fresh or canned tomatoes
¼ cup tomato paste
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
½ cup red wine vinegar
2½ teaspoons dried thyme
½ teaspoon herbes de Provence (optional)
1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 cups thinly sliced onions, loosely packed
2 teaspoons minced garlic
1¼ pounds shiitake mushrooms

NOODLES

4 ounces vermicelli
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons finely chopped scallions or fresh chives
½ tablespoon sesame oil
1 teaspoon soy sauce
¼ teaspoon minced garlic
¼ teaspoon grated fresh ginger
½ teaspoon five-spice powder