



INGREDIENTS

Serves 4

- 400 g (14 oz) of shitake and oyster mushrooms, and any other wild mushrooms available
- ciabatta loaf
- olive oil to make croutons
- 2 bags of pre-washed salad leaves
- 16 rashers of dry cured bacon, cubed
- 2 cloves of peeled garlic, finely chopped
- vegetable oil, and a knob of butter for frying

Dressing

- 1 dsp English mustard
- 1 dsp caster sugar
- salt and pepper
- 5 dsp white wine/ cider vinegar
- 12½ dsp of vegetable oil
- ½ tbps of hot water

METHOD

- 1 Preheat oven to 250°C/500°F/Gas mark 9.
- 2 Remove the crust from the ciabatta and pull off pieces in irregular shapes, approximately 2/3rds the size of a golf ball.
- 3 Place enough olive oil in a bowl to coat the ciabatta croutons lightly. Then place them on a roasting tray in the oven. Cook them for about 6 minutes until crispy on the outside but doughy in the middle.
- 4 Mix all the ingredients for the dressing together in a glass jar. Put the lid on and shake the jar vigorously.
- 5 Fry the bacon cubes until crispy.
- 6 Slice the shitake mushrooms, pull apart the oyster mushrooms and prepare any other wild mushrooms you are using. Then, on a high heat, pan fry the mushrooms with the garlic and a little hot oil for 3-4 minutes. Remember not to overload the pan. Add the butter to the pan a minute before the mushrooms are cooked.
- 7 Put the salad leaves into a bowl, add the mushrooms, bacon and croutons.
- 8 Drizzle the dressing over the salad, making sure all the ingredients are coated, and serve immediately.



ABOUT MUSHROOMS



To create patterns from mushrooms, put a large mushroom, gills down, on a piece of white paper. After two hours, lift up the mushroom carefully to see a delicate pattern made by the spores which fall out.

- Although poisonings are rare, poisonous mushrooms could be said to have changed the course of history. The Emperor Claudius was allegedly poisoned by a mushroom in his favourite dish - Caesar's mushrooms - by his wife Julia Agrippina, to ensure that her son Nero succeeded to the throne of the Roman Empire. Pope Clement VII and the French King Charles VI were also alleged to have met their ends due to poisonous mushrooms being slipped into their meals.
- Mushrooms are part of the fungal kingdom, as are moulds and yeasts. A mushroom is the fruiting body of fungi - the cap of a mushroom carries thousands of spores in its gill which is how the fungi breeds.
- Most mushrooms are classified as *Basidiomycota* and produce spores in a club-shaped structure called a *basidium* or little pedestal.
- The Chinese are thought to have been the earliest people to cultivate mushrooms in the second century AD. The Chinese revere mushrooms for their therapeutic and medicinal qualities.