

# RACHAELRAY™

## Mushroom Ragu

This is a meatless alternative to Bolognese sauce, and yet it is every bit as beefy in flavor due to the rich combination of meaty cremini and dried porcini. Serve the sauce over pappardelle, egg tagliatelle, spaghetti squash, gnocchi, or gnudi.

4 cups chicken stock  
A fat handful of dried porcini mushroom slices (about 1/2 cup)  
1/4 cup olive oil  
1 1/4 pounds cremini mushrooms, chopped  
3 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves, chopped  
1 small carrot, finely chopped  
2 shallots, chopped  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
4 large cloves garlic, chopped  
Salt and pepper  
3 rounded tablespoons tomato paste  
1/2 cup dry sherry or Marsala  
1 fresh bay leaf  
1 cup milk  
Rind from a small wedge of Parmigiano-Reggiano or Grana Padano cheese  
Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano or Grana Padano cheese, for serving

In a small saucepan, heat the stock with the dried porcini to soften the mushrooms, 10 to 15 minutes. Scoop out the porcini, reserving the soaking liquid, and chop.

In large pot, heat the oil (4 turns of the pan) over medium-high heat. Add the fresh mushrooms and brown well, 15 minutes or so. Add the thyme, carrot, shallots, onion, garlic, and salt and pepper and cook until the vegetables are tender, 5 to 8 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste and cook for 1 minute. Add the sherry, bay leaf, and porcini. Carefully pour in the porcini soaking liquid, leaving the last few spoonfuls in the pan as grit may have settled there. Add the milk and cheese rind, reduce the heat to low, and simmer for 30 minutes to reduce. Discard the bay leaf and cheese rind.

To serve, cook 1 pound pasta to al dente. Drain, reserving 1/2 cup of the cooking water. Toss the cooked pasta with the starchy water and a few ladles of the ragu. Top the pasta with additional ragu and cheese.

Serves 6

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## Spaghetti with Peppers and Onions

When I make this for myself and my husband or my mom, I serve it with sweet and hot Italian sausage links alongside. However, the point of this sauce (now a family tradition) lies with my sister, Maria. Maria doesn't like pork or sausage, so one night I had to adapt a sausage ragu my mom and husband really liked for Maria. The result (this sauce) has become a staple. With fennel seeds, fresh fennel, chiles, peppers, and onions, you quite honestly do not miss the sausage; all the same flavors are there.

1/4 cup good-quality olive oil  
4 cloves garlic, very thinly sliced  
1 teaspoon fennel seeds  
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes  
1 bulb fennel, or 3 to 4 bulbs baby or wild fennel, trimmed and thinly sliced  
1 large yellow or red onion, quartered and thinly sliced  
2 cubanelle peppers, halved and thinly sliced  
2 tablespoons tomato paste  
1/2 cup dry vermouth or dry white wine  
1 cup chicken stock  
1 (28- to 32-ounce) can San Marzano tomatoes (look for DOP on the label)  
A few fresh basil leaves, torn  
1 pound spaghetti  
2 tablespoons butter  
Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, for serving

In a large skillet, heat the oil (4 turns of the pan) over medium heat. Add the garlic and stir for 2 minutes. Add the fennel seeds and red pepper flakes and stir for 30 seconds. Add the fresh fennel, onion, and peppers, partially cover, and cook to soften the vegetables, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the tomato paste and stir for 1 minute, until fragrant. Stir in the vermouth to deglaze the pan and add the stock. Hand-crush the tomatoes as you add them to the pan, then add the juices from the can and the basil. Simmer for 15 to 20 minutes to thicken.

Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Salt the water and cook the pasta to al dente. Before draining the pasta, ladle out about a cup of the starchy pasta cooking water. Drain the pasta and return it to the pot. Add the starchy water and butter, tossing with tongs to melt the butter. Add half the sauce and toss to combine.

Serve in shallow bowls and top the pasta with the remaining sauce and lots of Parm.

Serves 4 to 6

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## Shrimp Scampi

I line a platter with charred or toasted bread before I serve the shrimp and sauce. The sauce seeps into the bread, and it's like a sweet dessert when you are done devouring the shrimp. This is also makes a terrific appetizer and will serve 12 to 16.

1/4 cup olive oil  
2 pounds large shrimp, peeled (tails left on), deveined, and butterflied  
Salt and pepper  
2 lemons: 1 thinly sliced, 1 halved  
5 or 6 cloves garlic (to taste), chopped  
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes  
Leaves from 2 small sprigs fresh oregano, finely chopped  
1 cup dry vermouth  
3 tablespoons butter, cut into small pieces  
A generous handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley tops, finely chopped  
6 to 8 slices ciabatta or crusty Italian bread, charred or toasted

In a large skillet, heat the oil (4 turns of the pan) over medium-high heat. Add the shrimp and season with salt and pepper. Add the lemon slices and toss until they begin to firm up and start to brown at the edges, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic, red pepper flakes, and oregano, and toss for 2 minutes more. Add the vermouth and cook until reduced by half. Melt in the butter, stir in the parsley, and squeeze in the lemon juice from the halved lemon.

Arrange the toasted bread on a platter and top with the shrimp. Pour the sauce over the top and serve.

Serves 6 to 8

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## Chicken Milanese

The most basic of dishes, a crispy breaded piece of meat can be so incredibly satisfying. Serve simply with a wedge of lemon or choose the more traditional raw sauce.

4 pieces boneless, skinless chicken breast (6 to 8 ounces each)  
Salt and pepper  
Flour, for dredging  
3 large free-range organic eggs, beaten  
1 cup fine dry bread crumbs  
1/2 cup panko bread crumbs or homemade coarse bread crumbs  
1/2 cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese  
Freshly grated nutmeg  
Olive or canola oil, for shallow-frying  
2 lemons or Meyer lemons, halved and caramelized (see Tip) or cut into wedges

Butterfly and pound the chicken breasts into cutlets. Season the cutlets with salt and pepper on each side.

Preheat the oven to 250°F. Place a wire rack on a baking sheet to keep the cutlets warm while preparing them in batches.

Set up a breading station: Line up 3 shallow bowls on the counter. Spread the flour out in one, beat the eggs in the second and season with salt and pepper, and mix the fine bread crumbs, panko, Parm, and a few grates of nutmeg in the third.

In a very large skillet, heat 1/8 to 1/4 inch of oil over medium to medium-high heat. Coat the chicken in the flour and shake off the excess, then coat in the egg and drain the excess, and finally coat evenly in the crumb mixture. Working in batches of 1 or 2 at a time, shallow-fry the cutlets on each side until deep golden. Keep warm in the oven while you fry the remaining chicken.

Serve the chicken with caramelized lemon or lemon wedges for squeezing and topping of choice.

Serves 4

TIP: Brown the halved lemons, cut sides down, in a small skillet to caramelize their sugars and get the juices to flow.

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## Green Beans with Shallots

I was a customer of the Montcalm restaurant in the Lake George region of New York from the time I was a little girl until the restaurant closed, when I was 45. I always ordered the same meal: roast chicken with no potatoes and extra green beans. They were the most delicious green beans ever in the history of green bean preparation. Dino, the owner, told me it was about the slow-cooking of shallots or onions in lots of butter. Now I am famous for the green beans, too. We make these for every single holiday.

6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) butter  
6 large shallots, chopped  
2 cups chicken stock  
Salt  
1 1/2 pounds haricots verts

In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the shallots, partially cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until very soft and sweet but not browned, about 20 minutes. If the shallots start to brown, reduce the heat. Add the stock and turn off the heat.

Fill a bowl with ice and water. In a deep skillet, bring 3 inches water to a boil. Salt the water, add the green beans, and cook for 3 to 4 minutes. Drain the beans and cold-shock them in the ice water. Drain them well.

Add the green beans to the shallots and cover until ready to serve. Reheat over medium heat until just hot through.

Serves 6 to 8

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## Orange-Rosemary Braised Carrots

My mom always placed carrots in a pot with chicken stock, a pat of butter, and a drizzle of honey. It's a perfect dish and a great base—sometimes she'd add a little curry powder and ginger, sometimes citrus and herbs. I love orange and rosemary with mine.

4 tablespoons (1/4 stick) butter  
3 large shallots, chopped  
3 tablespoons fresh rosemary leaves, coarsely chopped  
2 large strips of orange zest  
1 1/2 pounds carrots, thinly sliced crosswise on an angle  
Salt and pepper  
1/2 cups chicken or vegetable stock

In a large saucepan, heat the butter over medium heat. Add the shallots, rosemary, and orange zest. Cover and cook to soften, about 5 minutes.

Stir in the carrots and season with salt and pepper. Add the stock, bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook until tender, 15 to 20 minutes.

Serves 6