

Fabulous fungi

Expert says mushrooms can give feelings of happiness

According to experts, the key to avoiding the "winter blues" is to set small goals, including engaging with happy friends and family, eating healthy and exercising, for a well-rounded approach to life.

United Kingdom psychologist and author Dr. Cliff Arnall and registered dietitian and author Cynthia Sass, designated Jan. 26 America's "Most Depressing Day of the Year." They have a few simple tips for staying happy and healthy during this depressing time, no matter where you live.

"With the sunless winter weather, fading New Year's resolutions and holiday bills arriving, this is a critical time to focus on ways to increase happiness. Surround yourself with positive people, choose foods with natural vitamin D, like mushrooms and keep your body moving," Arnall said. "Make the winter D-light-ful by increasing Vitamin D."

In addition to helping support a healthy immune system and possibly lowering risks for cancers, including prostate, breast, colorectal and lung, vitamin D also has been shown to enhance moods. This is especially useful during winter months, when a

lack of sunlight may lead to or worsen mood disorders, such as seasonal affective disorder that affects some 11 million Americans.

To include more vitamin D in your diet, simply toss foods with natural vitamin D, like mushrooms, in everyday meals. A recent review of mushroom varieties showed that all mushrooms have vitamin D ranging from 4 percent to 400 percent of the daily value. Similar to the way that humans absorb sunlight and convert it to vitamin D, mushrooms contain a plant sterol — ergosterol — that converts to vitamin D when exposed to sunlight.

Healthy and inexpensive dishes, such as the Mushroom and Smoked Salmon Frittata, a recipe that provides natural vitamin D for an average cost per serving of \$2.52.

Baked Mushroom Parmesan
 This recipe adds a healthy twist to the classic chicken Parmesan for an average cost per serving of \$2.78.

Mushroom and Smoked Salmon Frittata
 Visit www.mushroomcouncil.com for the full article and recipe.



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BAKED MUSHROOM PARMESAN

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 4

Average cost per serving: \$2.78

- 4 large Portabella mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup tomato pasta sauce, divided
- 4 fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red peppers flakes
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded part skim mozzarella cheese
- ¼ cup (1 ounce) grated parmesan cheese

Heat oven to broil, with top rack about 4 inches from broiler. Brush both sides of mushrooms with oil. Place mushrooms, gill side down, in a 9 inch baking dish. Broil for 4 minutes, remove and turn gill side up, broil 4 minutes.

Remove mushrooms from baking dish, drain excess liquid. Reduce oven to 400 degrees.

Spread ½ cup pasta sauce on bottom of baking dish, then place mushrooms, gill side up,

Recipes

Sprinkle with basil, red pepper flakes and the remainder of the pasta sauce. Top with mozzarella cheese and parmesan; bake 5-10 minutes, until the cheese begins to brown. Remove and serve.

Each serving provides: 230 calories, 16g fat, 6g saturated fat, 20mg cholesterol, 520mg sodium, 2g dietary fiber, 13g protein, 24 percent daily value for selenium, 10 percent daily value for vitamin A, 15 percent daily value for potassium, 4 percent daily value for iron, 4 percent daily value for vitamin C, 30 percent daily value for calcium.

Recipe courtesy of the Mushroom Council and mushroominfo.com

MUSHROOM AND SMOKED SALMON FRITTATA

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 5 minutes

Serves: 6 or 12 as an appetizer

Average cost per serving: \$2.52 (based on 6 servings)

- 1 tablespoon light butter
- 8 ounces white button or crimini mushrooms, thinly sliced
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 3 large eggs
- 6 large egg whites
- 1/3 cup green onions, thinly sliced
- 12 ounces smoked salmon, chopped*
- 2 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese

Heat oven to broil with top rack about 4 inches from broiler.

Heat a 10-inch nonstick, oven-proof skillet over medium high heat. Melt butter until foamy. Add a single layer of mushrooms and cook, without stirring, for about 5 minutes or until mushrooms become red-brown on one side. Season with salt and pepper. Flip and cook about 5 minutes more, until other side is same color. Reduce heat to medium low.

In a large bowl, whisk eggs until frothy and add onions. Pour over mushroom mixture and stir once or twice to combine, gently lifting set eggs from bottom of the pan, letting the loose mixture set on the bottom. Add smoked salmon. Cover and continue to cook, without stirring,

Happiness is contagious

A recent 20-year study found that happiness is contagious. People with the most social connections were the happiest. In addition, happiness has been shown to have an important effect on reduced mortality, pain reduction and improved cardiac function. With that in mind, Sass recommends:

- Make time for family and friends: Schedule a standing dinner date with your family at least once a week; join a new club with a friend.

- Log on and link in: Connect with long-lost friends online through one of the increasing number of online social networking sites, such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

- Exercise. Even a little exercise can go a long way in beating the winter blues. Research shows that as little as 10 to 15 minutes at a time can improve mood in the short term.

Another study found that one hour of aerobic exercise outside (even with cloudy skies overhead) had the same benefits as 2.5 hours of light treatment indoors.

- At lunch, take an extra lap around the office.
- Instead of taking a cab, walk 10 to 15 minutes to save money and improve your mood.

- Bundle up and take your pet for a walk outside or set up daily 30-minute walks around the neighborhood with a friend for an instant mood lift.

for 5 minutes, until eggs are set. Sprinkle with cheese and place pan under broiler until cheese melts, about 2 minutes.

Remove pan from oven, place a plate over the pan. Quickly turn the frittata onto the plate. Cut into wedges and serve.

Hint: This recipe also works well as a mushroom only frittata. Substitute ¾ cup shredded Swiss or herbed cream cheese for the smoked salmon.

Each serving provides: 280 calories, 11 g fat, 3.5 g saturated fat, 195 mg cholesterol, 260 mg sodium, 43 g protein, 89 percent daily value for selenium, 6 percent daily value for vitamin A, 22 percent daily value for potassium, 8 percent daily value for iron, 4 percent daily value for vitamin C, 8 percent daily value for calcium, 54 percent daily value for vitamin D

Recipe courtesy of the Mushroom Council and mushroominfo.com.