

# Extension

## Seasonal Eating Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent

### Rainy Day Dishes April 2014

I love rainy days. Those grey days with the gentle pitter patter of drops on the roof. They're cozy, especially on a day when I'm at home where they inspire me to get into the kitchen and cook something. It gives me the time to make things that take a little more effort than a quick weeknight meal.

Sometimes it's quiche. Other times, it's soup or baking bread or making a pie. Today, however, it is stuffed mushrooms. I went to the Franklin Farmers Market this weekend and came home with several items. Although the market was smaller than in high summer, there was a nice array of booths that filled the pavilion behind the Factory in Franklin and quite a decent crowd milling around as well. The cool spring brings lettuces, greens like kale and collards, spinach, carrots, sweet potatoes and spring onions into the market. There were a few surprises such as butternut squash and apples from Alabama as well.



At the Kirkview Farm booth I purchased some collard greens, as well as some rainbow carrots and spinach. Another booth had wedges of hand crafted Asiago cheese from the Kentucky-based, Kenny's Farmhouse Cheese.

As I pondered how to use these, I remembered that there was a package of large white button mushrooms in the refrigerator just waiting to be filled with a delicious stuffing. So Collard Green Stuffed Mushrooms it was. Mushrooms are one of my favorites and a hearty, slow sautéed filling of collard greens, onions, mushroom stems with bacon and Asiago cheese sends them over the top.

There are a few tips to making great stuffed mushrooms. First, brush the mushrooms clean with a damp paper towel and remove the stems and gills. After pulling out the stem, a metal teaspoon works well to scrape down the inside of the cap to remove the gills. Keep the stems and scrapings to chop and use in the filling. A second tip is to quickly dip the caps in olive oil to help keep the mushrooms moist, flavorful and crack free. Set the mushroom caps on a baking sheet so that they do not touch each other and sprinkle with a little salt and pepper. Now you can fill the caps with your favorite filling. The last tip is to bake the mushrooms on the lowest shelf of the oven as it will help them to brown a little on the bottom in the oil. You can use the same procedure with the larger, meatier portabella mushroom caps for more of a main dish. Following these steps, no matter what filling you use, will help you have delicious stuffed mushrooms.

So the next time it rains, hit the kitchen and whip up some stuffed mushrooms. The collard filling is good even on its own as a side to pork chops or grilled chicken.

For more ideas on using seasonal produce, visit the Bedford County Extension website (<https://utextension.tennessee.edu/bedford>) and click on Seasonal Eating. The Seasonal Eating Cooking Demonstration on “Rainy Day Dishes” will be held on April 16 at 12:00 noon at the Extension Office. Call the Office at 684-5971 to sign up and bring \$7.00 to class to cover the samples.

### **Collard Green Stuffed Mushrooms**

12 large white button mushrooms  
1/3 cup olive oil  
2 cloves garlic, pressed  
8 ounces collard greens  
4 slices bacon chopped  
1/2 onion, chopped  
2 teaspoons white wine vinegar  
1 tablespoon sherry  
1/2 cup chicken broth  
5-6 dashes Tabasco sauce  
Black pepper  
1/2 cup grated Asiago cheese, divided  
Kosher salt

Brush dirt off the mushrooms with a damp paper towel. Remove the stems and place on a cutting board. Using a metal teaspoon, scrape out the gills and any extra stem left in the center of the mushroom. Place the scrapings on the board with the stems and chop. In a bowl, combine olive oil and garlic. Let stand while you make the filling.

Prepare the collards by washing well and then removing the leaf part from the stem. Chop up the leaves and discard the stems. In a large skillet, cook bacon until crispy and browned. Remove with a slotted spoon to a paper towel. Add onion to the drippings in the pan and cook until translucent. Add the chopped mushroom stems and collard greens with the vinegar, sherry, chicken broth, Tabasco sauce and a sprinkle of black pepper. Cover and cook over medium high heat for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove the lid and cook until the liquid is evaporated, stirring often, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Add the reserved bacon and all but 2 tablespoons of the cheese. Mix well.

Dip the prepared mushroom caps in the garlic oil and place on a baking sheet so they don't touch each other. Sprinkle with a little kosher salt and black pepper. Pick up a mushroom cap, spoon in the collard green mixture and return to the baking sheet. Bake on the bottom shelf of the oven at 425 degrees for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons of cheese. Let cool slightly and serve.