

## Stuffed Mushrooms

While eating mushrooms goes back to ancient times, stuffing mushrooms can definitely be traced to Italy. Taking the idea from stuffing Zucchini flowers, the Italians started stuffing mushrooms between the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Today they are a popular appetizer during the holiday season. I like to use cremini mushrooms, as they are more flavorful than white mushrooms.

### Ingredients

1 ½ lbs. Cremini mushrooms  
2 tablespoons butter  
2 cloves garlic  
¼ cup breadcrumbs  
4 oz. softened cream cheese  
Salt  
Black pepper  
1 tablespoon thyme  
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese  
Extra grated Parmesan cheese for topping  
Parsley for garnish (optional)  
Spray olive oil

### Cooking Utensils

Knife and cutting board  
Measuring spoons  
Measuring cup  
Frying pan  
Spatula  
Mixing bowl  
Wooden spoon  
Teaspoon  
Cheese grater  
Baking sheet

Preheat the oven to 400°. Mince the garlic and finely chop the thyme and parsley. Grate the parmesan cheese. Remove the stems from the mushrooms and roughly chop them. Spray the baking sheet with olive oil and place the mushroom caps gill side up onto the baking sheet.

Place the butter in the frying pan and melt it over medium heat. Add the chopped mushroom stems and cook until most of the moisture is out, about 5 minutes. Add the minced garlic and cook an additional 1 minute. Add the breadcrumbs and lightly toast them for 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove the frying pan from the stove and let cool.

Place the mushroom stem mixture in a large mixing bowl and add the softened cream cheese, ¼ cup of the Parmesan cheese, the chopped thyme, and salt and pepper to taste.

Stuff the mushroom caps with the filling mixture and sprinkle a thick layer of Parmesan cheese on top of the filled mushroom caps.

Place the baking sheet in the oven and bake for 20 minutes or until the mushrooms are soft and the tops are golden brown. Remove the baking sheet from the oven. Place the stuffed mushrooms on a serving plate and sprinkle the chopped parsley.