

Somen with Maitake and Spinach

This has become one of our favorite entrees. It is quick and easy, but delicious, satisfying, and healthful.

Soak the maitake in 1½ cups tepid water for 30-40 minutes, then gently squeeze out excess water and coarsely chop. Save the soaking water for stock for soups or sauces.

Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a frying pan, add the garlic, and sauté over medium heat for about 30 seconds. Add the maitake and sauté 2 minutes, then add 1 teaspoon of the shoyu, toss, and cook 1-2 minutes more. Toss in the scallions, sauté briefly, then cover and cook 2-3 minutes. Add the spinach, sauté 1 minute, then toss in the remaining teaspoon of shoyu, cover and cook 1 minute. Drizzle the balsamic vinegar over the vegetables, toss and cook another minute. Add herb seasoning salt or sea salt to taste, if desired.

Meanwhile, bring a pot of water to a boil (add salt to the water if using angelhair pasta). Add the pasta, stirring to be sure the pasta does not stick together. Boil until just tender but cooked through, then drain. If using somen, briefly rinse the noodles in a colander under running water. Transfer the pasta to a serving bowl containing the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil, toss, then add the mushroom mixture, toss and serve immediately.

Preparation List:

Serves 3

- ¾ cup dried maitake
- 8 ounces somen or angelhair pasta
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons shoyu
- 2 bunches scallions, trimmed and cut into ¼-inch pieces
- 2 cups (tightly packed) fresh spinach leaves; rinse, remove large stems and coarsely chop
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- herb seasoning salt or sea salt to taste (optional)