

Everyday Healthy! Everyday Delicious!

From the Kitchen of Janice Feuer Haugen

Wild Rice Soup w/ Cremini Mushrooms & Cashew Cream

Even with a number of healthful modifications to the recipe, the soup tastes very similar to the classic Minnesota Wild Rice Soup. Though, this recipe is for a soup that is gluten-free and vegetarian. There is a little butter for flavor, however if you prepare the soup without it, it will be both vegan as well as dairy-free with silky Cashew Cream replacing the more traditional cream or half and half.

When you prepare your own Mushroom Stock, allow an extra two hours as this is the stock in which the wild rice cooks. The good news, of course, is that this stock can be prepared a few days in advance. And, for that matter, the wild rice could also be prepared a few days in advance, as can the secondary stock.

Makes about 17 cups

1½ cups raw cashews
¾ cup wild rice
11 cups *unsalted mushroom stock, divided (recipes follow)
½ teaspoon salt
2 ounces butter plus 2 tablespoons olive oil
(OR ¼ cup olive oil for a vegan soup)
2 cups ¼-inch diced onion
2 cups 1/3-inch diced carrots
1½ cups 1/3-inch diced celery
2 large cloves garlic, crushed
2 teaspoons salt
Dozen twists freshly ground pepper
3 cups (½ pound) 1/8-inch sliced cremini mushrooms
2/3 cup 1/8-inch diced red pepper
½ cup brown rice flour
Additional stock or water to thin the soup if necessary
Salt and pepper to taste
Garnish
Finely chopped fresh parsley or a few whole leaves

Directions

Place the cashews in a bowl and cover them with cold water. Set them aside while you prepare the soup.

Wash the wild rice and put it along with 8 cups of the mushroom stock and ½ teaspoon salt into a pot. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat so the stock simmers, covered, for about 45 minutes until the rice is tender. Turn off the heat and keep the pot covered while you prepare the soup.

Heat the butter/olive oil or just olive oil in a large soup pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, cover the pot and cook about 5 minutes until the onion is translucent. Stir in the carrots, celery and garlic. Sprinkle with 2 teaspoons salt if you are using unsalted stock. (With salted stock, sprinkle with only ½ teaspoon salt.) Cook the vegetables uncovered for another 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

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Stir in the sliced mushrooms and diced red pepper and cook another 2 minutes. Add the rice flour and cook two more minutes, stirring continuously to prevent the flour from sticking.

Remove 4 cups of stock from the cooked wild rice. Turn down the heat under the vegetables to very low. Slowly pour the stock into the vegetables, stirring continuously and scraping the bottom of the pot to incorporate any flour that did stick to the pan. When the soup is smooth and lump free add the wild rice and the rest of the stock in which it was cooked. Raise the heat so that the soup gently simmers.

Cashew Cream

Drain the cashews. Place half of them in the blender along with 1½ cups of the reserved mushroom stock and process on high for about three minutes until completely smooth. Pour into the soup and repeat with the remaining cashews and 1½ cups reserved stock.

Once all the cashew cream is stirred into the soup, add additional stock or water to thin the soup if necessary. Adjust the salt and pepper to taste.

Serve, garnished with finely chopped fresh parsley or a few whole leaves.

*If you use salted stock or broth, do not add salt when cooking the wild rice, and use only ½ teaspoon salt when sautéing the vegetables. Taste and adjust the seasonings after you add the Cashew Cream and any additional stock or water.

Mushroom Stock

Primary and Secondary Stocks

The idea of two stocks comes from the Japanese preparation of *dashi*, the basis of Japanese miso soup. As the ingredients still have flavor they are used a second time to create a secondary stock. The primary stock will be the stronger of the two.

The idea for a secondary mushroom stock came to me when I saw how beautiful and flavorful the shiitakes still were when I strained the stock. I combined them with the trim from the soup vegetables and simmered this secondary mushroom stock at the same time the wild rice was cooking. Again, this could be made in advance of preparing the soup.

Primary Mushroom Stock

Makes 8 cups

1½ cups yellow onion, unpeeled and coarsely chopped
1½ cups leek, coarsely sliced
1 cup celery, coarsely sliced
1 cup carrots, coarsely sliced
1 large clove garlic, peeled and smashed with the side of a knife blade
1 cup dried whole shiitake mushrooms (or other dried mushrooms)
½ pound cremini mushrooms, coarsely sliced (3 cups)

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2 tablespoons olive oil
¾ teaspoon curry powder
9 parsley stems
1 large sprig fresh thyme
2 bay leaves
12 cups water

Heat the oil in a large soup pot. Stir in the vegetables and curry powder and cook over medium heat about 8 minutes until softened. Add the parsley stems, thyme, bay leaves and water. Bring the mixture to a boil, partially cover the pot and lower the heat so the stock gently simmers. Cook for one hour. Strain the stock through a fine strainer, pressing down on the solids. Discard all but the whole shiitakes. This stock can be made and refrigerated up to three days in advance or frozen for up to 6 months.

Secondary Mushroom Stock

Makes 3 cups

Combine the shiitakes from the primary stock in a pan with trimmings from vegetables you cut for the soup (except for the red pepper) along with 4 cups of water. Bring the stock to a boil. Partially cover the pot and lower the heat so the stock gently simmers. Cook for 45 minutes. Strain the stock through a fine strainer, pressing down on the solids before discarding them. Use this secondary stock for blending the Cashew Cream.

