



## Cajun "Étouffée" Stew

By Dylan Sabuco

**Prep Time** 10 / **Cook Time** 20 / **Serves** 4 - 6

### Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**stir:** to mix together two or more ingredients with a spoon or spatula, usually in a circle pattern, or figure eight, or in whatever direction you like!

**measure:** to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

**knife skills:** Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls) and Rock and Saw.

**chop:** to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

**sauté:** to cook or brown food in a pan containing a small quantity of butter, oil, or other fat.

**simmer:** to cook a food gently, usually in a liquid, until softened.

**sprinkle:** to scatter small drops or particles of an ingredient evenly or randomly over food.

### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Large pot
- Liquid measuring cup
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon
- Ladle

## Ingredients

### Cajun "Étouffée" Stew

- 2 C mushrooms, about 8 to 10 (the type is your choice)
- 1 bell pepper (any color works!)
- 2 green onions
- 2 garlic cloves or 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 C vegetable oil \*\*
- 1/4 C all-purpose flour \*\*(for CELIAC/GLUTEN ALLERGY sub 1/4 C gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour)\*\*
- 1 T sweet paprika
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 pinch ground black pepper
- 1 pinch granulated or brown sugar
- 1 C water

## Food Allergen Substitutions

### Cajun "Étouffée" Stew

**Soy:** Substitute canola oil or other nut-free high-smoking point oil (can heat to a higher temperature without smoking) for vegetable oil.

**Celiac/Gluten/Wheat:** For 1/4 C all-purpose flour, substitute 1/4 C gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour.

## Instructions

### Cajun "Étouffée" Stew

#### intro

Say a Cajun French "Bonjour!" (BOHN-zhoor) or "Hello!" Étouffée (AY-too-FAY) is a cajun stew, typically made with seafood. This version will use loads of vegetables instead, with some classic Cajun flavors. Cajun or Creole food is popular in the southern United States, especially in New Orleans, Louisiana. This style of cuisine is a melting pot of many cultures, such as French, Spanish, and African, that blended their recipes over time to create a new style called Cajun or Creole. Many of the ingredients used in this recipe are popular in many Cajun recipes.

### chop + sauté

Start by chopping **2 cups of mushrooms, 1 bell pepper, 2 green onions,** and **2 garlic cloves**. Add all the ingredients to a large pot and sauté with **1/4 cup of vegetable oil** over medium heat. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

### measure + sprinkle

Then, measure **1/4 cup flour, 1 tablespoon sweet paprika, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 pinch of black pepper,** and **1 pinch of sugar** and sprinkle them into the skillet with the vegetables. Stir and cook for another 2 minutes.

### simmer + stir

Add **1 cup of water** and simmer the mixture for 15 minutes or more over medium low heat. Stir occasionally. The étouffée should be thick when it's finished cooking. Make sure to simmer the stew as long as possible before serving to maximize the flavor and thickness.

### serve + enjoy

Serve the étouffée alongside Island Festival Cornbread Bites (see recipe) and wash it down with some Jamaican Punch (see recipe). Enjoy!

## Featured Ingredient: Mushrooms!

Hi! I'm Toady! I'm a Mushroom!

"I'm also a fun guy! Get it? Fun guy—fungi? I'm good in salads, sandwiches, soups, stews, on pizza, with pasta, and stuffed with other yummy foods. Plus, you can cook and use me in recipes just like you would meat!"

### History

The first mushrooms were thought to be cultivated in Southeast Asia, but it is not known why for sure.

Perhaps someone discovered that mushrooms grew by accident and sought out a growing method.

All mushrooms are fungi, but not all fungi are mushrooms! There are an estimated 1.5 to 2 million species of fungi on planet Earth, of which only 80,000 have been properly identified. There are over 250 kinds of mushrooms that people eat.

Mushrooms are a kind of fungus that look like umbrellas! They grow in places like yards, forests, fields, and gardens.

What is a fungus? It's a kind of living organism that is different from plants. In fact, mushrooms are more like humans than plants!

Fungi walls are made of a fibrous substance called "chitin," rather than cellulose, like plants. Also, plants produce their own energy from the sun from photosynthesis, but mushrooms and other fungi don't need

the sun for energy!

Many fungi eat by breaking down dead plants. However, other fungi feast on dead animals, bird droppings, manure, wallpaper paste, fruit, and living animals. So fungi are like nature's cleanup crew!

The yeast that makes bread rise is a type of fungi.

Mushrooms are sometimes called Toadstools! Can you picture a toad sitting on top of a giant mushroom?

Some mushrooms are good to eat, like portobellos, crimini, and shiitakes, while others are extremely poisonous. Never eat a mushroom you find growing outside unless you are with a mushroom expert!

The Honey Mushroom in the Blue Mountains of Oregon is the world's largest living thing. It is actually a mushroom colony and is believed to be at least 2,000 years old! It covers almost four square miles!

Some mushrooms live entirely underwater.

In the Amazon rainforest, mushrooms release spores into the air, which creates the surface for water to condense and can trigger rain. The rain then causes more fungi to grow.

Before the invention of colorful synthetic dyes, people used mushrooms for dyeing wool and other natural fibers.

Greek warriors ate mushrooms to increase their strength before battle.

Mushrooms are one of the vegetable world's substitutes for meat.

## Anatomy & Etymology

The largest mushroom you'll find in most grocery stores is the portobello. It is the fully grown version of the *Agaricus Bisporus* species and has a large, brown cap. Smaller, immature mushrooms may be brown, like the cremini, or white, like the button.

Mushrooms contain more than 90 percent water!

Some mushrooms glow in the dark! They produce light through a process called bioluminescence. People used to carry these in ancient times to light their way through the forest.

Mushrooms can grow super fast. Once they break through the surface of whatever they're growing on, they can double their size in just one day.

The word "mushroom" comes from late Middle English for any fungus with a fleshy and fruiting body. It is derived from the Old French "mousseron," from the late Latin "mussirio."

## How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Wild mushrooms can be found in many wooded areas. If you choose to harvest wild mushrooms, make certain you have a professional identify your pick. Many mushrooms may resemble safe mushrooms but are actually poisonous!

Buy mushrooms with whole, intact caps, and be sure they are not wet or slimy!

They will smell strong, sweet, and earthy when fresh.

Rinse mushrooms before you slice or cut them. Whole mushrooms won't absorb much water, while cut mushrooms will. Wait to rinse mushrooms until right before you cook them; otherwise, they'll turn slimy.

Mushrooms can be broiled, sautéed, and grilled. Mushrooms can be chopped or sliced and added to other dishes. Portobello caps are large enough to eat like a hamburger on a bun!

The mushroom cap is most often the part that is cooked and eaten. The stem can be fibrous and woody but will add flavor to vegetable or meat stock.

Mushrooms pair well with balsamic vinegar, fresh herbs (like oregano, rosemary, thyme, and cilantro), marinara, spinach, leafy greens, tomatoes, goat cheese, mozzarella, cream-based sauces, garlic, and onions.

Store mushrooms in a partially closed resealable plastic bag to ensure air circulation without drying out the mushrooms.

## Nutrition

Mushrooms are low in calories and are an excellent source of B vitamins. These vitamins are needed for healthy cell and brain function, and they help prevent cancer and stress.

Even though mushrooms don't use the sun for energy, they use it to produce vitamin D, just like humans do! Vitamin D is essential to our bones! It keeps them strong and regenerating.

Mushrooms have essential minerals such as selenium, copper, phosphorus, zinc, and potassium. Copper helps the body build red blood cells and is necessary for the health of our bones. Selenium is an antioxidant that may decrease cancer risk.

Mushrooms have been used successfully in traditional Chinese medicine for thousands of years to treat many health conditions. Western medicine is finally beginning to recognize and utilize some of the medicine mushrooms naturally contain.