

Stretch Your Morels with Pizza

Morel Mushroom, Leek and Shallot Pizza.

By Jenny Nguyen

For many in Nebraska, springtime means morel mushroom hunting, a honeycomb-like fungus that is prized by cooks and mushroom hunters everywhere. Morels were one of those items that I drooled over at my local Whole Foods store in California but could never afford, dried and sold in 1 ounce packages for as much as \$25! At the store, I would look at them longingly through cellophane – these wrinkly little brown things that held so much promise. Then I would sigh and put them back on their hook to continue my shopping, but this time trying extremely hard to pretend that I never saw them.

Then I got to Nebraska to learn that people can collect them by the bucket, which made me flip a little – just a little.

Servings: 4

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

- 4 to 5 large morel mushrooms or equivalent, sliced into bite-size pieces
- 1 large shallot, sliced thinly
- 3 tablespoons of butter
- 2 to 3 sprigs of fresh thyme, snipped
- splash of dry white wine
- 1 leek stalk, white and light green parts sliced and washed thoroughly
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons of artichoke antipasto or spread
- sliced fresh mozzarella cheese, to taste
- grated Parmesan cheese, to taste
- 1 teaspoon of chives, chopped
- salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- thin crust pizza crust, homemade or store-bought.

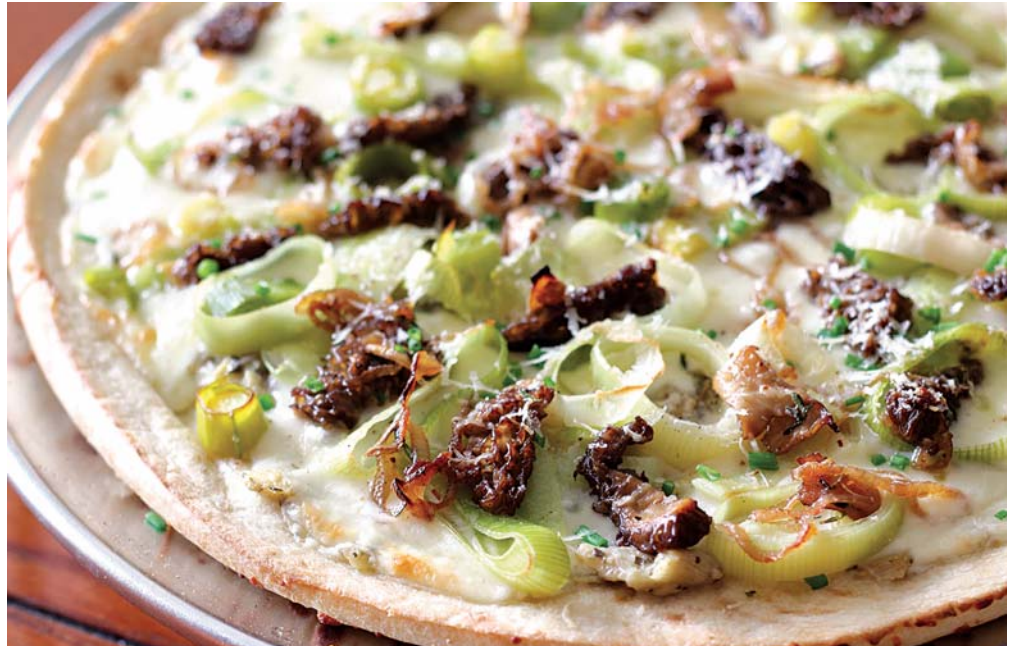


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1. Heat oven according to store-bought pizza crust directions, or for your own homemade pizza dough recipe. Heat 1 tablespoon of butter in a medium sauce pan over medium heat. Add sliced leeks, garlic, salt and pepper to taste. Cover and cook for 7-10 minutes, or until leeks are tender. Stir occasionally and do not burn.

2. In a sauté pan, heat 2 tablespoons of butter over medium-high heat. Add sliced mushrooms to hot butter and sauté for 2-3 minutes, or until mushrooms begin to soften, stirring frequently. Add shallots, thyme and a splash of white wine and cook until wine evaporates and shallots begin to caramelize, stirring frequently. Add salt and pepper, to taste. Take off heat and set aside.

3. Evenly spread artichoke spread onto pizza crust. Lay mozzarella slices over the spread, then cooked leeks and morel mushroom-shallot mixture. Grate Parmesan cheese over pizza and cracked pepper, to taste. Then bake pizza accordingly or until cheese is fully melted and pizza crust

is cooked.

Tip: I used Trader Joe's Artichoke Antipasto, but any artichoke spread will do. Buy a spread/dip with artichokes as the main ingredient, not a chip dip that's made with mostly cream. You can also make your own artichoke spread by tossing together some chopped canned artichokes (drained), minced garlic, lemon juice, extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper. Or if you don't like artichokes, pesto will work.

4. When pizza is done, grate more Parmesan cheese on top and sprinkle chopped chives over pizza. Slice and serve.

This recipe and photograph originally appeared on Jenny's blog Foodforhunters.com.

Read Jenny's NEBRASKAland blog "Midland Musings" to see other stories from this NEBRASKAland Regional Editor.

