



Conestoga College Student Chefs Declared “Masters” at “Make It With Mushrooms” Cook-off

Rosemary Mushroom Caps and Grilled Portobello Mushrooms Over Roasted Garlic and Asiago Whole Wheat Coucous captured the taste buds of judges at the Make It With Mushrooms competition sponsored by Mushrooms Canada and held October 19.

Guelph, October 23 - Clay Taylor, one of the Cook-off judges and President of Mushrooms Canada announced the winning team from Conestoga College noting the “competition was extremely close”. “All of the dishes presented to the judges were beautifully prepared and delicious but we all agreed the Conestoga appetizer and main dish was number one”.

Laura Kallay and her team of chefs, Bridget Dignard and Nathan Lavoie, under the direction of Philippe Savaria, their course director at Conestoga College, competed with teams from Fleming College in Peterborough and St. Lawrence College in Kingston. They prepared their dishes in the kitchen at PJs Restaurant at the Atrium at the University of Guelph where Chef Simon Day and his staff made sure the teams had all the necessary cooking equipment.

Judging was based on a set of criteria that tested the student chefs’ culinary skills as well as taste, nutrition, ease of preparation, family appeal and the introduction of the recipe.

As the winning team, the Conestoga team and school were each awarded certificates recognizing their achievement as well as \$1,500 for the team and \$1,500 for the school. The second place team, Fleming College received a certificate plus \$1,000 for the team and \$1,000 for the school. The third place team, St. Lawrence College also received certificates plus \$500 for the team and \$500 for the school.

This was the first ‘Make It With Mushrooms’ Competition for Community Colleges conducted by Mushrooms Canada. Six colleges accepted the challenge and submitted recipes for selection to compete in the Cook-off. “We will definitely do this again next year” said Mr. Taylor, and “we hope to get more colleges competing”. Mr. Taylor noted this was the third time Mushrooms Canada had worked with community college students. “We feel very strongly in giving students the opportunity to apply their learning to real life business challenges” he said. “Our logo, our ‘*Fresh. Simple. Good*’ slogan and the ‘Cap Crew’, an educational concept for young people, are examples of the outstanding work from the students”.

The winning recipes as well as all of the recipes submitted to the Make It With Mushrooms competition will be posted on the Mushrooms Canada website at www.mushrooms.ca.

Recipes

Rosemary Orange Mushroom Caps

This recipe is always a favourite snack before a hearty meal. With my family all gathered around the stove swapping stories of the day and napkins to wipe our faces, we find this appetizer is a quick and easy starter to satisfy any grumbling stomach.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes **Cooking Time:** 5 minutes

20	medium fresh Mushrooms	20
3 tbsp	butter, softened	45 mL
1 tsp	finely minced fresh rosemary	5 mL
½ tsp	finely grated orange rind	2 mL
3 tbsp	orange juice	45 mL
	Salt and pepper to taste	

Garnish: Rosemary sprigs and orange sections or slices (optional)

Clean mushrooms by lightly brushing or wiping with paper towel and remove stems (save to use in other recipes later use). In a small bowl mix butter, rosemary and orange rind; reserve 2 tsp (10 mL) for the sauce. Spoon remaining butter into cavities of each mushroom. Heat a medium non-stick skillet over medium-high heat; place filled mushrooms, cap side down in the skillet. Cook about 4- 5 minutes, or until caps are browned on the bottom and butter is melted.

Meanwhile in another small skillet over medium heat, cook orange juice until reduced by about half; whisk or stir in reserved rosemary butter until blended. Remove from heat; taste and add salt and pepper if desired.

Using tongs place 5 mushrooms, cap side down on each plate and drizzle with sauce.

Makes 4 appetizer servings

Tip: Chop reserved mushroom stems and sauté to add to scrambled eggs, soups or pasta sauces.

Grilled Portabella Mushrooms over Roasted Garlic and Asiago Whole Wheat Couscous

This recipe was inspired by my vegetarian friend being invited to my family's weekly steak and potatoes night. Needless to say, it was so tasty that we might have to change it to portabella and couscous night!

Preparation Time: 15 minutes **Cooking Time:** 15 minutes

2	cloves garlic	2
2 tbsp	extra virgin olive oil	30 mL
2	fresh 3 “(7.5cm) portabella Mushrooms	2
½	medium Vidalia or Spanish onion, diced	½
1	small carrot, finely diced	1
1	celery stalk, diced	1
½ cup	whole wheat couscous	125 mL
1/8 tsp	salt	0.5 mL
½ cup	boiling water	125 mL
¼ cup	grated asiago cheese	50 mL
1 tbsp	balsamic vinegar	15 mL
	Salt and pepper to taste	

Garnish: (optional)

2 tsp	balsamic vinegar reduction*	10 mL
2 tsp	minced chives or 2 garlic flowers	10 mL

Trim the root end of garlic, leaving skin on; place on a square of foil, drizzle with a little olive oil and fold and seal to form a package. Roast in 350°F(180°C) oven for about 15 minutes or until softened. Open foil to cool slightly.

Meanwhile clean mushrooms with a brush or wipe with paper towels. Remove stems from mushrooms and dice. Cut caps into thick slices; set aside.

In a small saucepan over medium heat 1 tbsp (15 mL) of the olive oil. Add onions; cook and stir for 2-3 minutes or until translucent. Add carrots, celery and diced mushroom stems. Cover and cook for 2-3 minutes or until vegetables are crisp –tender. Add couscous; slowly stir in boiling water. Remove from heat, cover and set aside for at least 5 minutes. Peel and dice cooled garlic. Stir cheese and garlic into couscous.

Meanwhile mix remaining oil with balsamic vinegar and brush on portabella slices; season with salt and pepper to taste. Place on hot barbecue grill or grill- pan; cook about 1-2 minutes per side or until grill marks appear on both sides and flesh is tender at the surface, but still firm in the center.

To serve place half of the couscous mixture in the middle of each plate and arrange portabella slices over top.

If desired drizzle balsamic reduction on the plate and garnish with chives or garlic flowers.

Makes 2 servings

*Balsamic vinegar reductions can be purchased in some specialty stores and sometimes are called balsamic glaze OR slowly boil regular balsamic vinegar with a little honey or brown sugar until it becomes syrupy and the quantity has reduced to about half

Tips: For convenience roast whole cloves of garlic a few days before and refrigerate covered until needed.
For a heartier meal, add grilled tofu or chicken.

Team Biographies

Laura Kallay was raised just outside of Guelph near rural Lake Belwood. Cooking with her grandmother and mother, Laura grew up having a keen interest in exposing friends and family to new recipes. Spending years in the hospitality industry, with experience spanning all over Southern Ontario, and even New England, she finally realized that her passion for food would out way any other career choice. Hoping to eventually become a personal chef and master caterer, Laura feels this competition will be a great opportunity to meet other hopeful chefs such as herself, as well as gaining some exposure amongst her peers and mentors.

Nathan Lavoie who is originally from Thunder Bay, came to Waterloo to take part in the Culinary Arts Program at Conestoga College. He was previously a math and physics student, but decided that cooking was a more appropriate career path. In the long term, Nathan hopes to become a chef because of his passion for food and love for learning. He hopes to learn a lot from this cooking competition, as it is his first experience in a competitive cooking atmosphere.

Bridget Dignard. With a strong appreciation for the art of cooking and a thirst for knowledge, Bridget came to Conestoga College, from her home near Owen Sound, Ontario, in hopes of gaining the experience and knowledge she would need to find her way in the culinary industry. With a perceptive Chef, and the opportunity to be a part of this competition, Bridget feels that she is off to a great start.

Philippe Saraiva was raised and trained in the North of France in St Quentin; half way from Paris and the Champagne region. During the past 25 years he has worked in many aspect of the Hospitality industry. From fine dining to large volume operations, from managing a restaurant supply store to Teaching at Conestoga College. Philippe has been teaching Food and Beverage Management students and Culinary Arts students for the past 8 years.

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