



CREAMY MUSHROOM SAUCE

1 teaspoon mustard (I like Gulden's spicy brown)
1 cup heavy cream
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 1/2 to 2 tablespoons shallots, finely minced
8 oz fresh mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
2 tablespoons of brandy or vermouth
2 tablespoons of flat-leaf parsley, chopped (optional)
Enough pasta of your choosing to serve two or three people

1. Pour a cup of cream into a measuring cup and then add the teaspoon of mustard. Stir until the mustard is pretty much dissolved into the cream. Add the salt and stir again. Set aside. Start boiling the water for your pasta.
2. Melt the butter over low heat. Add the shallots and sauté them until they are translucent. Don't brown them and don't let any stragglers on the edges of the pan get crispy. If anything gets carbonized or crispy, take it out of the pan, because it could ruin the taste of the sauce.
3. Add the mushrooms. Cook, stirring occasionally, until they're soft.
4. Turn the heat off and add the brandy. (If you add the brandy while the heat's on, it could catch fire.) Turn the heat back on and set it to medium and stir while you cook the mushrooms in the brandy for about a minute.
5. Add the cream-mustard-salt mixture to the pan. Set the heat under the pan between medium and high.
6. Add pasta to the boiling water.
7. Watch the sauce like a hawk and keep stirring. It should be bubbling but not burning. Turn down the heat if you think the sauce is getting brown along the edges of the pan. You want some of the water in the cream to evaporate, which will make the sauce richer and thicker. The sauce will reduce in volume, but don't worry. The flavors are being concentrated, so it's worth losing a little volume. To tell when it's ready, dip a wooden spoon into the sauce, and run your (clean!) finger down the back of the spoon. If your finger leaves a trail, the sauce is done. Turn the heat off. Throw in the parsley so it can wilt for a moment in the sauce.
8. When your pasta is done, drain it and dump it into the saucepan if there is enough room. Toss and coat with the sauce. If there isn't enough room in the pan just put the pasta into serving bowls and spoon the sauce over it.