

# What's Cookin': Tips on handling mushrooms

Portobello mushroom chowder is the recipe of the week today.

**Lori Gysel & Gerry Kentner**



For those of you who don't know, cremini mushrooms— which are the same size as regular white mushrooms, except they are more brown in colour— would have been portobello mushrooms one day if someone had allowed them to grow up!

It's important if you are using the creminis or the portobellos in a soup or sauce to remove the black gills first. All you have to do is take a paring knife and just cut— like you would if you were peeling a potato— until you've reached the white part of the mushroom and all the black is gone.

The reason is that those black gills easily absorb liquid and then they leech the liquid back into your soup or sauce— except because the gills are black, the liquid comes out grayish. These delicious little mushrooms can totally ruin the look of an otherwise fabulous sauce!

Also, don't be afraid to use the stems of the portobellos. They are quite large and such a waste to throw out. If you don't want them in the dish you are making, then save them to chop up for soup or with any other mixture of fried veggies that you might be making.

While we are on the topic of mushrooms, you should know that shitake mushrooms are amazing— they are one of my favourites. Perfect for Asian dishes, the only trick you need to know is that the stems are very woody and you want to be sure to remove the stem right from where it attaches at the mushroom cap. I wouldn't use the stems to cook with, but you could use them

for a stock if you were cooking up a vegetable stock.

Have fun and keep cooking!

Email your questions and comments to Lori and Gerry at [whatscookin@independentfreepress.com](mailto:whatscookin@independentfreepress.com)

# Can you help Acton Cancer Society?

Acton branch of Canadian Cancer Society needs a co-ordinator for the April residential campaign.

This position requires a person who has organizational skills and who would be available to attend most of the branch's monthly meetings from September to June.



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FORTE EX SHOWN



CAR OF THE YEAR\*

## Portobello Mushroom Chowder

Serves 8

### Ingredients



- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 cup diced white onion
- 6 portobello mushrooms, remove stems, but save
- 2 potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1/4 cup flour
- 8 cups chicken stock
- 12 fresh thyme stems, leaves removed
- freshly ground black pepper and coarse salt
- 1/3 cup 35% cream

### Method

Heat oil and butter till bubbling. Add onions and sauté until translucent. Remove black gills from mushrooms, then slice thinly the mushrooms and stems. Add mushrooms to onion mixture and sauté on medium-low heat for 10 minutes. Add flour and cook for 1 minute. Add chicken stock, thyme and potatoes. Simmer for 20 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Turn heat to low and add 35% cream. Serve!

"It's definitely 'kool'"  
Russ Bond, Toronto Sun



FORTE KOUP SX SHOWN

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