

## Lobster Mushroom Bisque



The lobster mushroom is an example of a fungus attacking another mushroom. *Hypomyces lactifluorum* most commonly attacks and parasitizes the brittle white mushroom, *Russula brevipes*, and leaves the host mushroom with a bright orange coating and eventually twists the mushroom into odd shapes, transforming it into the ‘lobster mushroom.’

It has a color like cooked lobster shell, with bright, fiery orange beneath the spotted or mottled cap. The texture of the flesh is granular and brittle, but the taste benefits from the parasitic fungus intensifying the nuances of its host, making the lobster mushrooms popular for their robust flavor and aroma. The flavor of a bisque or any soup is usually improved if refrigerated overnight and then reheated before serving. The use of the quick-roux makes a soup that has some heft to it, seemingly creamy without any cream.

This bisque was recently served at the NAMA (North American Mycological Association) event in Salem, Oregon. Even people who said that they didn’t like lobster mushrooms found this recipe very tasty.

4 tablespoons salted butter

½ cup all-purpose flour

6 cups chicken soup stock or broth

9 ounces lobster mushrooms, sautéed in salted butter

1 teaspoon salted butter

½ teaspoon salt or to taste

¼ teaspoon ground black pepper or to taste

1 teaspoon fresh thyme, finely chopped, stems removed

Splash of rice vinegar

½ teaspoon toasted sesame oil

½ teaspoon ground ginger

1 teaspoon Thai curry rub from Lesley Elizabeth, Inc.\*

Garnish with fresh thyme leaves, chives/green onions, or cilantro

Make a roux by melting the butter in the bottom of a soup pot, adding in the flour while stirring. When it is smooth, add the chicken stock slowly, bringing it to a boil, then simmer, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile chop the lobster mushrooms. Sauté them in a frying pan on medium heat until crisp-tender with 1 tablespoon salted butter. Finely chop the mushrooms in a food processor then add to the roux/broth mixture. Season with salt, pepper, and fresh thyme, then a splash of rice vinegar. Now add the toasted sesame oil, ginger, and the Thai curry rub and mix together. Continue to simmer for an additional 10 minutes to blend.

Refrigerate overnight. If the bisque has become too thick add additional chicken broth. Strain the bisque. Serve warm garnished with some chopped fresh thyme leaves, chives and/or chopped green onions, or chopped cilantro or a combination of any of these. If dairy is allowed add a dollop of crème fraîche. Serve with crusty garlic bread.

Serves: 4

Note: Take the leftover mixture of lobster mushrooms that were strained out of the bisque and fry in some salted butter until crisp, but not burned. Then put in a food processor and chopped as finely as possible. Add to other dishes such as soups containing rice. The flavor of the lobster mushrooms will still be present, but the addition of rice allows the texture of the lobster mushrooms to sort of disappear and not be noticed for the chalky texture that many people don't like. If there are any left overs vacuum pack and put in the freezer for later use.

\*Sometimes a new recipe is created that comes out perfect. Then one of the ingredients is discontinued. It's the curry seasoning from Lesley Elizabeth, Inc. I called them, and it might be returned in 2019, but in the meanwhile here are the ingredients they used: black pepper, salt, curry powder, peppercorns, turmeric, paprika, chili pepper, thyme, and parsley. I will try to make the recipe again using another product that is available, or measure the individual components, but I promised many people at the NAMA (North American Mycological Association) conference that I would post this recipe as soon as possible. Probably another curry product will work. Let me know if you find one or how you changed this recipe.