

## Morel Bisque



In the spring, nothing is better than soup made with morels. You might be shocked to find fresh morels very expensive in the grocery store. Check out your local farmer's market for a better price or join a mushroom club to get help learning and hunting morels yourself. Since you want to get as much flavor as possible from the least number of morels, it is important to let them infuse the broth as much as possible. This bisque and most soups or chowders usually develop more flavor if made up a day or two ahead to allow the flavors to meld, and kept refrigerated. Heat when ready to serve.

6 cups chicken stock

3 ½ to 4 ounces fresh morels\*, sautéed in salted butter

2 tablespoons salted butter

1 cup yellow onion, diced

1 cup green onion, including the white and green parts, chopped

1 cup celery, diced

4 ounces unsalted butter

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup uncooked white rice

1 cup real sherry; don't use cooking sherry

Salt and ground white pepper to taste

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups heavy cream

Clean and then cut the fresh morels in half lengthwise, especially the large ones. Sauté the morels in the salted butter until soft and lightly brown, but be sure to cook morels thoroughly, otherwise they can be toxic. Set aside some of the half-sliced cooked morels for garnish.

Finely chop and add the rest of the morels to the chicken stock. Then add the onion, celery, and rice. Finally, add the sherry. Bring to a simmer for 20 minutes or until the vegetables are tender and the rice is cooked. Puree the mixture in a high-speed blender or food processor. Remove from the food processor after the mixture is creamy. Add the heavy cream.

Season with salt and white pepper to taste. If a smoother textured soup is desired strain using a chinois strainer or a metal strainer. Before straining the liquid, allow flavors to meld in the refrigerator overnight.

When ready to serve, heat the bisque, stirring occasionally. Add some of the reserved half-cut morels to each bowl, also heated, and garnish with fresh, chopped green onion, chives, or parsley, and serve immediately. If there are any leftovers refrigerate until needed. This bisque does freeze very well. Vacuum packing will preserve the flavor and texture the best.

Serves: 4-6

\*If using dried morels combine the chicken broth and dried morels and allow the morels to hydrate. The longer the mushrooms sit in the stock the

more flavor will diffuse. After hydrating the morels, being refrigerated overnight will create more flavor.

Agitate the mushrooms to remove any remaining grit, then remove the mushrooms and set aside; strain the stock through a fine strainer or chinois. If the morels are very large, chop them coarsely. If they are small they can be put in whole or use your best judgement.