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Steinpilz und Eierschwamm

The first basket full of mushrooms in the season is always something special for me. Every year I'm longing for the beginning of the mushroom season. I always watch the weather conditions, right from the end of the



Steinpilz (*boletus edulis*)

ski touring season throughout spring just to have an idea when the mushrooms might begin to grow. Most people believe mushrooms only grow in autumn, and therefore forests and alpine meadows are left pretty much alone at the beginning of the summer. By then the shepherds have moved up their stock to the



Eierschwämme (*cantharellus cibarius*)

higher alpine meadows for the short, very intense growing season. In the area where I usually go I know all the shepherds and their families by now and I always have a chat with them, bring a freshly baked bread or vegetables in exchange for a Kafi Lutz. It's still a very primitive but a most relaxing life up there, especially if you don't have to do

the hard work yourself and just are treated as a guest.

It is not an easy job to find mushrooms up in these rugged places, but in a 3 to 4 hours' hike I usually get my limit of 500 grams of Eierschwämme (*cantharellus cibarius*) and 1.5 kilos of Steinpilze (*boletus edulis*). To find the very rare Sommersteinpilze (*boletus reticulatus*) has become more difficult lately. Sepp (you would have met him in an earlier contribution) got interested in mushrooms as well and he knows some of the special spots by now as well. Sommersteinpilze grow under the same trees every year and it is just a matter of hitting the right time. Lucky for me, Sepp is very busy most of the time and so I'm still able to get what I need. Not only to find mushrooms makes my heart beat faster but also to cook and eat them. Invite a friend or two and enjoy a glass of wine with them. Who said life is all about money?

Paul Werthmüller, Luzern

Mushroom Soup

450g mushrooms
1 Tbs olive oil
45g butter
1 small onion, chopped
2 crushed garlic cloves
Salt and pepper
1 large Agria potato, peeled and chopped
Dash of white wine
1 litre chicken stock
2 tsp fresh thyme or oregano leaves
100ml cream
Dollop of crème fraîche, optional
Chopped parsley to garnish

Chop up mushrooms. Heat oil and butter in a saucepan over low heat. Add onion, garlic, mushrooms, salt and pepper. Fry about 10 minutes then add potato, wine, stock and herbs, bring to boil then simmer for about 20 minutes. Cool before blending until smooth.

Return to the pan, add cream and heat to boiling point, stirring well. Taste and season. Ladle into bowls, top with crème fraîche and some parsley.

En guete!

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will never begin.*