



## Magical mushrooms

Nature's gifts combine a delicate bouquet with great taste and texture

**M**y friend Lizzie is a dedicated vegetarian. She refuses to eat meat as a matter of principle, and since she was my housemate, it posed quite a few problems initially.

And then we discovered a common love – mushrooms! We started swapping recipes. She taught me how to make the creamiest mushroom soup (she's Scots but her family's in Devonshire) and I shared with her the secret of the Chinese mushroom.

I believe her Soya Sauce Braised Shiitake was an instant hit with her new family back in the UK.

Lizzie also loved instant noodles, which she thinks is the next best thing after sliced bread.

Her problem was that, being a strict vegetarian, she had to throw away all those tasty sea-

soning packs because she wasn't sure they were vegetarian. She would have loved MAGGI's new Vegetarian Instant Noodles which has just been launched. Come to think of it, I may just send her a carton.

This week's recipe is dedicated to those fun in the sun days in which Lizzie and I shared laughter and tears working in radio in Hong Kong.

I've combined her two favourite foods in a fail-proof recipe – mushrooms and MAGGI Vegetarian Instant Noodles.

You can use any combination of mushrooms you like, but I chose the three used here for their taste, texture and fragrance.

Fresh shiitake is fleshy and gives a satisfying bite. The enoki is my favourite. It has a wonderful bouquet that is slightly musky and sweet. It's also got a wonderful texture, chewy yet smooth.

The oyster mushrooms add bulk to the dish as well as act as a contrast to the darker shiitake.

I've used caramelised or browned onions to add a deep rich colour to the dish, and added sweet sugar snap peas for contrasting colour and texture.

There are also whole garlic cloves added to the stew. They give the mixture a stronger body in terms of taste. If you don't like garlic, add less or just leave them out.

I prefer my noodles dry because I'm often too impatient to wait for my soup to cool. But you could use the mushroom mixture to top your piping hot bowl of MAGGI Vegetarian Instant Noodles.

Cooking is all about understanding the ingredients you use and making the changes to suit your tastes and preferences.

Don't be afraid to experiment, and if you have questions about this recipe or the ingredients, you can always send me an email.

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### Recipe

#### Vegetarian Mushroom Maggi Mee

##### Ingredients:

- 4 pkts MAGGI Vegetarian Instant Noodles
- 1 pkt shiitake mushrooms, halved
- 1 pkt enoki mushrooms, trimmed
- 1 pkt oyster mushrooms, sliced
- 200 gms sugar snap peas
- 1 brown onion, sliced
- 10 cloves garlic, peeled

##### Method:

1. Heat a little oil in a non-stick wok. Brown onion slices and whole garlic cloves over medium fire, about five minutes.
2. Add the mushrooms and a packet of the seasoning from the MAGGI noodles with some water.
3. Lower fire and braise mushrooms for five minutes
4. In another pot, boil water for noodles. Remove noodles as soon as they soften. Place on large

- platter or individual plates.
5. Add sugar snap peas to mushroom mixture. Add MAGGI Seasoning or salt to taste. Turn up heat. When the stew bubbles, remove from heat and serve over the noodles.

(Total cooking time: 15 minutes. Serves four.)

- Grocery List/Price Guide:  
 4 pkt MAGGI Vegetarian Instant Noodles (\$1.50)  
 Shiitake mushrooms (\$1.00),  
 Enoki mushrooms (\$1.50)  
 Oyster mushrooms (\$1.20)  
 Sugar snap peas (\$1.00)  
 Garlic & brown onion (\$0.50)  
**Total cost: \$6.70**



### MUSHROOM AS MEDICINE

MUSHROOMS have always been valued as both food and medicine. The Chinese have used them as herbal remedies for thousands of years.

Recent studies have shown scientifically that extracts from mushrooms can help cure cancer, boost the immune system and reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

This applies especially to the shiitake or Chinese black mushroom. Their restorative powers are legendary.

In Asia, it's used as a panacea for colds and flu, poor circulation, upset stomachs and even physical fatigue.

Now studies also show these mushrooms have beta-glucans (mega-sugar molecules) that help kick-start the body's immune system cells into action in the fight against infection and the spread of carcinomic cells.

Another extract from mushrooms, eritadenine, may also help prevent heart disease risk by reducing blood lipids, cholesterol levels and lower blood pressure levels.