

Black Trumpet Mushroom Velouté with Brioche Croutons

- 2 Tbs. Butter
- 2 cloves Garlic, sliced
- 1 ea. Leek, white part only, roughly chopped and well washed
- 1 # Black trumpet mushrooms, brushed clean
- 1 # Button mushrooms, brushed clean, quartered
- ¼ C. White wine
- 1 pint Heavy cream
- 3 sprigs Fresh thyme, picked
- 2 Tbs. Amontillado sherry
- ¼ loaf Brioche (Any rich, dense bread will do. Square loaves are great for this, too.)
- ¼ C. Clarified butter (I buy Ghee at the Indian market instead of clarifying butter at home.)
- 1 Tbs. Olive oil
- 3-4 ea. Chives, cut into ½" lengths
- 1 tsp. Sherry vinegar
- Splash of very good olive oil
- Kosher salt
- Black pepper

1. Melt butter on low heat in a non-reactive pot. Add leeks and garlic and cover with a lid. Cook without browning until soft.
2. Add half the black trumpets and all the button mushrooms. Cook on medium heat with stirring until mushrooms begin to get soft and aromatic (20 minutes or so).
3. Add wine and cook until all alcohol is evaporated and there is little moisture in the bottom of the pot.
4. Add cream, bring to a simmer. Cook with stirring for about 10 minutes. Remove from heat.
5. Add thyme. Puree in batches in a blender and strain through a coarse strainer. Season well with salt and pepper. Stir in Amontillado. Cover and set aside.
6. Cut crust off bread. Dice into even ¼" dice.
7. Heat a wide skillet over medium heat. Add clarified butter and allow to get hot (a crouton should sizzle gently on the edges when placed in the fat.)
8. Prepare a plate with a few layers of paper towels.
9. Add croutons and toss so that all sides get lightly browned. (You may want to do a little pilot batch of these to get the feel for it. Getting the heat correct so that the croutons get neither soggy with oil nor burned takes a little touch.)
10. Spoon out of pan with a slotted spoon and set on paper towels. Lightly season the croutons with salt while they are still warm. Set aside.
11. Wipe out skillet. Heat over high heat. Add oil and sauté remaining black trumpet mushrooms for a minute or two. Season with salt and pepper.
12. Place in a small bowl. Dress with sherry vinegar and very good olive oil. Toss in chives.
13. Half fill four soup bowls with soup. Place a mound of black trumpets in the center of each. Sprinkle with croutons. (You may need to adjust the soup consistency with water or stock if it sits for any length of time.)