

## BLUE CHEESE & HAZELNUT-STUFFED MUSHROOMS

Stuffed mushrooms are a party food classic. Here they're reborn with sassy blue cheese and toasty hazelnuts.

Makes about 30 pieces

1/4 cup toasted hazelnuts, finely chopped  
30 large (1 1/2-inch-diameter) mushrooms, about 1 pound  
1 tablespoon butter  
1/4 cup finely chopped onion  
2 teaspoons minced garlic  
1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme  
2 tablespoons dry sherry  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup cream  
Dash Tabasco  
1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire  
1/4 cup crumbled blue cheese  
3 tablespoons grated high-quality Parmesan cheese  
2 tablespoons dry unseasoned bread crumbs

Remove the stems of the mushrooms; set caps aside. Finely chop the mushroom stems.

In a large nonstick skillet, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Add the chopped mushroom stems and onion and sauté for about 3 to 4 minutes, or until mushrooms are soft. Add the garlic and sauté for 30 seconds. Add thyme, sherry, and salt, and cook mixture until dry. Add the cream, Tabasco, and Worcestershire. Cook, stirring often, until cream is reduced and thickened and the liquid is almost all cooked out. The mixture should be paste-like.

Remove from heat, transfer mixture to a bowl, and let cool to room temperature. When cool, stir in the toasted chopped hazelnuts, blue cheese, Parmesan, and bread crumbs.

Stuff the mushroom caps, dividing the filling evenly (about 2 teaspoons per mushroom). Press the filling in well and mound it up.

Lightly spray a rimmed baking sheet with nonstick vegetable spray or oil it with olive oil. Place the mushrooms, not touching, on the baking sheet. (If desired, cover tightly and refrigerate up to 1 day in advance. Let come to room temperature before baking.)

Preheat oven to 400°F. Bake mushroom caps for about 10 minutes, or until they are just getting tender and lightly browned and filling is gooey. Serve immediately.

### ***Chef's Tips:***

Sprinkle the greased baking pan lightly with salt and pepper before placing the mushroom caps on the pan to season the bottoms of the mushrooms.