SERVES
10

BEEF WELLINGTON

And now for the grand finale! This spectacular dish gained recent international notoriety when Australian woman Erin Patterson was found guilty of murdering three lunch guests by serving them beef wellington that she had deliberately laced with deathcap mushrooms that she herself had knowingly foraged. Prior to that catastrophic lunch, the true origins of this dish are also somewhat controversial, with some claiming the British stole it from the French in honour of the Duke of Wellington's victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo.

I've watched many videos on the laborious process of putting this masterpiece together, with lots of people cutting corners here and there – such as using shop-bought puff pastry, for instance – but I really wanted to do it justice and go the whole way. It's worth it, believe me. I almost hyped myself out of it, but after making the puff pastry the day before and leaving it in the fridge overnight to rest and chill properly, I thought, how hard can this be? Now you just need to make some crepes. And the duxelles (finely chopped mushrooms, sauteed with onion, herbs and butter until reduced to a flavoursome paste). And sear a log of beef. Then put the layers together and throw it all in the oven.

And to make the whole elaborate process much more manageable, you can whip up the crepes and duxelles the day before, or on the morning of your dinner party, keep them in the fridge and simply bring them to room temperature when you're ready to roll.

When her guests presented to hospital, Erin Patterson claimed she had bought the mushrooms from an Asian grocery store and from a supermarket. This claim alone had quite an effect on the mushroom-growing industry due to the wider population's lack of mushroom knowledge. It was easy for people to worry about the possibility of deathcap mushrooms accidentally making it into the food system.

Let me squash any aspersions Erin Patterson may have caused you.

Deathcap mushrooms are mycorrhizal. As you've learnt in this book mycorrhizal mushrooms have a relationship with a living tree and cannot live without that connection. The majority of mushrooms we commonly find at grocery stores and supermarkets are saprotrophic mushrooms grown in sheds on dead and decaying matter. You cannot grow a deathcap mushroom in a shed without a connection to a living tree-root system. It is just not possible that you could accidentally grow a deathcap mushroom.

So, don't let the 'mushroom murders' put you off beef wellington! Let's reclaim mushrooms and this magnificent dish! Challenge yourself. I dare you.

PREP TIME
15 MINUTES + 3 HOURS FREEZING + OVERNIGHT CHILLING

300 g (10½ oz) salted butter

450 g (3 cups) white bread flour, plus extra for dusting

½ teaspoon Celtic sea salt

300 ml (10 fl oz) water, chilled

MAKE YOUR PUFF PASTRY

If making your own pastry from scratch, start the day before.

Freeze your butter for at least 3 hours; the butter needs to be really cold.

Pour the flour onto a clean workbench and mix the salt through. Grate the frozen butter on top, then use a fork to just coat the butter bits with the flour. Drizzle in the cold water, bit by bit, using the fork to mix it through. Without kneading the dough, use your hands to press it together into a rectangle shape. Wrap the dough in baking paper, then transfer to your fridge for 1 hour to cool and rest.

Dust your workbench with flour. Working in one direction, roll the chilled dough into a bigger rectangle, about 8 mm (⅜ in) thick, using a rolling pin. Fold the top edge into the middle, then the bottom edge over the top – like folding a letter – so there are three layers. Rotate the dough 90 degrees, then roll the dough again into a large rectangle, about 8 mm (⅜ in) thick. Once again, fold each outer edge into the middle over one another, into three pastry layers.

Repeat this folding and rolling process once more, to create all those lovely pastry layers. After the third roll, fold the dough into thirds again, wrap in baking paper and leave to rest in the fridge overnight.

PREP TIME
5 MINUTES

COOK TIME
10 MINUTES

2 eggs

150 g (1 cup) plain (all-purpose) flour

375 ml (1½ cups) milk

butter, for pan-frying

MAKE THE CREPES

Beat the eggs in a mixing bowl. Add the flour and milk and mix until combined into a smooth, runny batter.

Heat a 25 cm (10 in) non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Once hot, coat the base with butter. Pour in about 125 ml (½ cup) of the batter, tilting the pan so it thinly coats the entire base, then cook for about 1 minute, until the batter changes colour. Flip and cook for about another minute, until the crepe starts turning golden. Transfer to a plate to cool.

Repeat with the remaining batter. You should end up with about six crepes, but you'll only need four crepes for the wellington. Enjoy the leftovers as a bonus treat!

PREP TIME
10 MINUTES
+ 1 HOUR SOAKING

COOK TIME
20 MINUTES

2 dried shiitake mushrooms

370 g (13 oz) fresh shiitake mushrooms

370 g (13 oz) fresh oyster mushrooms

30 g (1 oz) butter

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 large onion, finely chopped

3 large garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 tablespoon finely chopped soft rosemary leaves

2 tablespoons port

1 teaspoon Celtic sea salt

1½ teaspoons freshly ground black pepper

½ beef stock (bouillon) cube

MAKE THE DUXELLES

Place the dried shiitake in a small bowl. Cover with 125 ml (½ cup) of boiling water and leave to rehydrate for 1 hour.

Once rehydrated, transfer the shiitake to a food processor, reserving the soaking water. Add the fresh shiitake and oyster mushrooms and blend into small bits, just before the mushrooms start turning into a paste.

Place a large pot over medium heat. Add the butter and olive oil. Once the butter has melted, saute the onion, garlic and rosemary for about 2 minutes, until the onion turns translucent. Add the blended mushrooms, port, salt and pepper. Crumble in the stock cube, then stir in the reserved mushroom soaking water, along with 125 ml (½ cup) fresh water.

Cover the pot with a lid and cook over low heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove the lid and cook for a further 5 minutes, until all the moisture has reduced.

Remove the pot from the heat and set aside to cool.

PREP TIME
20 MINUTES

COOK TIME
1–1¼ HOURS
+ 10 MINUTES RESTING

20 g (¾ oz) butter, plus extra for greasing

1 tablespoon olive oil

1kg (2 lb 3 oz) beef eye fillet (choose a piece that's the same width all the way along)

1 tablespoon finely chopped rosemary leaves

1 teaspoon Celtic sea salt

1½ tablespoons dijon mustard

1 teaspoon hot English mustard

4 very large thick-cut prosciutto slices

1 egg, beaten

LET'S PUT THIS MASTERPIECE TOGETHER!

Take the pastry out of the fridge about 1 hour before you plan to put the wellington together.

Preheat your oven to 220°C (430°F). Grease a large baking tray with butter.

It's time to sear the beef. Place a large frying pan over medium–high heat. Once hot, add the butter and olive oil.

Coat the beef in the rosemary and salt, then place in the hot pan. Sear on each side for 6–8 minutes, or until golden but still rare inside. Transfer to a large plate and smear the mustards over the warm beef.

Cut off and reserve one-third of the pastry for the decorative lattice.

Lay a 60 cm (24 in) length of baking paper on your bench. Place the larger pastry portion on top, then roll it out into a rectangle about 3 mm (⅛ in) thick and large enough to wrap perfectly around your beef.

Arrange the crepes on top of the pastry, side by side and slightly overlapping, so that most of the middle section of the pasty is covered, leaving a 1 cm (½ in) pastry border around the crepes.

Lay the prosciutto slices over the crepes, side by side. Cover the prosciutto layer with the mushroom duxelles. Place the beef fillet on top, in the middle of the pastry.

Use the baking paper to roll the pastry firmly around the beef, sealing all the filling inside and holding the wellington together. Use your fingers to pinch and seal the pastry edges.

Place the wellington on the buttered baking tray, carefully sliding it off the baking paper.

To create the decorative lattice, roll the reserved pastry portion out so it's about 5 mm (¼ in) thick, roughly 15 cm (6 in) wide, and about 4 cm (1½ in) longer than your wellington.

We're now going to cut a series of evenly spaced slits across the pastry sheet, running in a series of parallel rows.

Starting at a long edge of the sheet, about 1 cm (½ in) in from the top edge, cut a 2 cm (¾ in) long slit every 1 cm (½ in) along the length of the pastry sheet. Now add another row of slits about 1 cm (½ in) below the first row, but this time offset them, so the slits sit below the uncut sections of pastry above. Now simply repeat this two-row pattern over the entire pastry sheet.

Brush the beaten egg over the beef wellington. Now carefully pick up the pastry lattice and gently stretch it over the top of the wellington, wrapping it around the pastry and tucking in the edges underneath. Lastly, brush the pastry lattice with the beaten egg.

Transfer to the oven and bake for about 45 minutes, or until the internal temperature of the beef registers around 50°C (122°F) on a meat thermometer.

Take the wellington out of the oven and allow it to rest for 10 minutes. The internal temperature will continue to rise in this time.

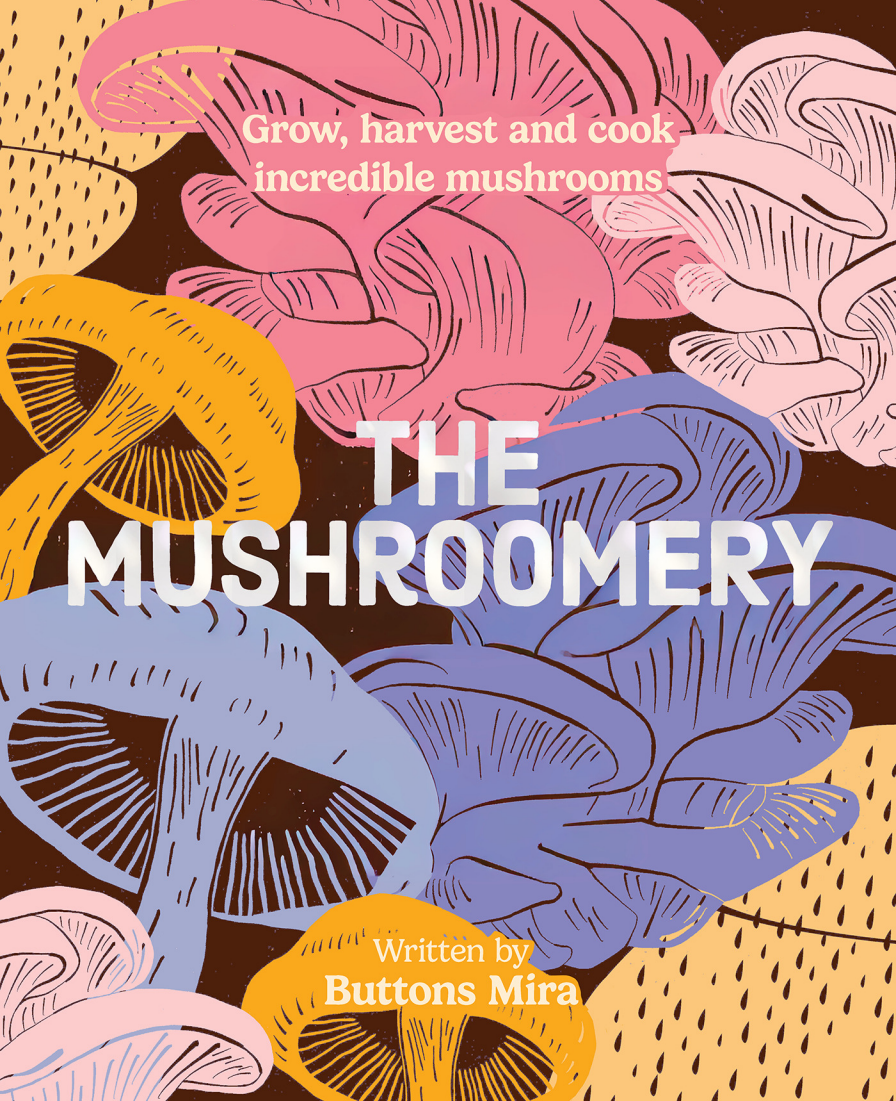
Enjoy your epic meal with mash and greens.










Grow, harvest and cook incredible mushrooms
THE MUSHROOMERY
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