Truffled Mushroom Lasagna

Don't be mad at me, but this recipe is rather expensive on your wallet and your waistline. For Valentine's Day you want something special, right? Well, here is something pretty special. It takes a little while to put it together, but it can be done the day before then popped in the oven while you're enjoying your champagne and hors d'oeuvres. This is enough for 6 people. If there are just two of you, feel free to reduce the recipe to one third quantity and use a smaller baking dish. But, who wouldn't want more of this in the freezer for another day?

.7 ozs. dried porcini mushrooms
3 cups boiling water
2 tblsp. white truffle butter
1/4 cup all purpose flour
2 tsp. truffle salt
3 cups heavy cream
1/4 cup grated Pecorino Romano cheese
1 large shallot, peeled and minced
3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
2 tblsp. olive oil
1 lb. mixed mushrooms (I used oyster mushrooms, chanterelles, shiitake and creminis)
more truffle salt for seasoning
1-9 oz. pkg. Oven -ready Lasagne noodles (I used Barilla)
2 tblsp. white truffle oil
4 ozs. Soto Cenere, or any other firm truffle cheese, grated
6 ozs. Fontina, grated
6 ozs. Champignon cheese

Put the dried porcinis in a 4 cup vessel and pour the boiling water over them. Let sit 30 minutes, then remove the mushrooms from the liquid, reserving the liquid for the next step. Chop the mushrooms very fine and set aside.

Heat a medium saucepan over medium/high heat. Add the truffle butter to the pot, and when it is melted add the flour. Whisk to combine and cook for a couple of minutes. Pour in the cold cream, whisking until smooth. Add the mushroom soaking liquid, whisk again and bring to a simmer. Add 2 teaspoons truffle salt. Reduce the heat to low and simmer about 10 minutes, until thickened. Whisk in the Pecorino cheese. Remove from heat and set aside.

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Heat a large saute pan over medium heat. Add the 2 tablespoons olive oil, the the chopped shallots and garlic and saute a minute or two until soft. Add the mushrooms, increase the heat a little and saute until tender, stirring occasionally and seasoning with truffle salt - about 10 minutes.

Full disclosure. I made a mess of the kitchen doing this. (See photo, left.) You don't have to do that.

Okay, lets put this sucker together. First, get out your fancy lasagne pan. Or any 9" x 13" baking pan. Put about 1 1/2 cups of the sauce in the bottom of the pan, spreading it evenly. Place a layer of lasagne noodles over the sauce. I used 4 sheets, breaking one in half to cover the entire surface. It doesn't have to be perfect.

Sprinkle half the mushrooms evenly over the noodles. Sprinkle half of the grated truffle cheese and fontina over the mushrooms. Drizzle 1 tablespoon truffle oil over this. Ladle 1 1/2 cups sauce evenly over the cheese.

Spread another layer of noodles over that, putting the broken bits at the opposite end of the pan as you did with the first. Sprinkle the remaining mushrooms over the noodles, then (this gets messy) pull dollops of the Champignon away from the rind, or not if you don't mind soft cheese rind, and spread them evenly over the mushrooms. Drizzle another tablespoon truffle oil over this, then top with another cup and a half of sauce.

Spread one more layer of noodles over this, then top with the remaining grated cheese and sauce.

At this point, you could cover and refrigerate as long as 24 hours until you are ready to bake, or you could just go ahead and pop it in the oven.

Bake for 1 hour at 325° Fahrenheit. Let sit for at least 20 minutes before cutting and serving.

There you go. Enjoy!

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