

# Lobster Mushroom Pasta

Serves 2-4 | 15 minutes prep + 30 minutes cook time

Lobster mushrooms are imposters. They're not even mushrooms, but rather parasites that grow on other mushrooms. And they may resemble cooked lobsters, but don't taste like the clawed crustaceans. However, they are tasty.

That same parasitic ascomycete fungus that takes over common milk cap and *Russula* 'shrooms does make them taste better. Once the host mushroom's been fully parasitized, the lipid or fatty acid content more than triples, and the level of amino acids increases tenfold. Both lipids and aminos contribute umami and other flavors. Along with the flavor boost, the altered funghi change texture, and lobsters are one of the only mushrooms that retains a firm, nearly crisp bite after cooking.

As with most mushrooms, lobsters are best prepared simply without too many competing flavors. This simple pasta dish borrows from classic Italian mushroom cooking and adds just garlic, wine, and a little cream.

**1 lb lobster mushrooms\***  
**2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil**  
**2 cloves garlic, chopped**  
**2 tablespoon dry white wine**  
**¼ cup heavy cream**  
**½ lb shaped pasta (we used Busiate)**  
**Kosher-style sea salt**  
**Grated Parmigiano Reggiano for serving**

**\*substitute any wild or cultivated mushrooms**

**Step 1** Fill a pot with 2-3 quarts of water, add a large pinch of salt (at least 2 tablespoons), and bring to a boil. Add the pasta and cook according to the package instructions. Drain, retaining ½ cup of the cooking water, and set aside.

**Step 2** Clean the mushrooms with a brush under cold running water; you may have to slice them to reach all the cracks. Cut them into bite-sized pieces, all the same thickness.

**Step 3** Dry sauté the mushrooms by cooking them over medium-high heat in a heavy skillet with a good pinch of salt but no added oil. Stir often until the mushrooms have given up all their liquid, from 10-20 minutes. Once the liquid has evaporated, add the olive oil and cook until the mushrooms are lightly browned, about 10 more minutes.

**Step 4** Add the garlic, cook for 2-3 minutes, then add the cream. Let it come to a boil, reduce heat to medium, and cook until the cream has thickened, about 10 minutes. Taste and add salt if needed.

**Step 5** Add the drained pasta to the mushrooms. If the sauce seems too thick, add a little of the retained pasta water a spoonful at a time. Let cook for about 2 minutes, then serve immediately with freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano.