



## Mushroom & Lentil Ragout (serves 4)

I think my favourite days of all are the crisp clear ones when the sky is blue and the sun still beats through but you feel them getting shorter and you know that winter is beckoning. Warmer foods start to feel more inviting in this change of season and lovely hotpots and stews start to surface in the kitchen. This is a recipe I created with some of my favourite ingredients – mushrooms, lentils, tomatoes, garlic and herbs. The result is rich, warming and hearty. This could be served on rice or quinoa but in this case, I have chosen to lay some golden polenta under it and punctuate it with some home-made tomato sauce. Gorgeous!

### Ingredients

- a few splashes of olive oil
- 1 large or 2 medium onions, sliced
- 5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 150g Portobello mushrooms, sliced
- 200g white button mushrooms, sliced, small left whole
- 300ml Rapunzel vegetable stock
- 1 generous cup tomato passata (home-made or quality bought) or a tin of finely diced tomatoes
- ½ tsp salt, black pepper to taste
- ½ cup red wine (optional, or more stock)
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- a jiggle or two of tamari
- 1 cup Puy lentils or brown lentils, soaked overnight
- Baked golden polenta to serve on (\*prior recipe)
- Parsley to garnish



### Method

1. If serving on polenta, have it baking in the oven during this time so it is ready to serve on later. Or otherwise, put some brown rice or quinoa on to serve it on.
2. Place the olive oil in a large saucepan and add the sliced onions and sauté them on medium heat for at least ten minutes, stirring regularly until soft and slightly browned.
3. Add garlic and all the mushrooms and stir for 5 more minutes or until the mushrooms are coated and browned.
4. Add all other ingredients including the rinsed lentils and bring to the boil.
5. Once boiling, simmer on a low heat for 45 – 60 minutes or until lentils are soft to bite and liquid has reduced and slightly thickened. If you feel the need to add more water, do so.
6. Serve the ragout on a bed of quinoa or on two slices of freshly baked golden polenta with some slow-cooked tomato sauce drizzled around the edges if you wish.

This tasty ragout lasts well and is great the next day or the day after! It is best to bake the Polenta and serve it immediately while hot and crispy. Enjoy!

### Chefs Hint

This recipe lends itself well to being cooked in a slow cooker – the slower the better. For added veggies, feel free to add some grated (or finely diced) carrots during the cooking process and/or fold in some baby spinach close to the end or just before serving. This dish is also great on a potato or kumara mash.

