



# The Educated Vegetable Newsletter

January, 2006

(805) 451-0289

[www.educatedvegetable.com](http://www.educatedvegetable.com)

---

## Secure Whole Foods Solutions

Ryan Morelli works hard..., really hard. As owner of Secure Retirement Solutions in downtown Santa Barbara, a 70 hour work week is a regular thing for him. The funny thing is he doesn't really ever look tired. What's his trick? Good food. Once a week he hires The Educated Vegetable to prepare him healthful delicious vegetarian food. After a full days work he comes home, opens his refrigerator and finds an assortment of delicious dishes; enough to feed him well for 4-5 days. Hear what he has to say about The Educated Vegetable:

**EV:** Why hire a personal chef?

**Morelli:** Are you kidding, why not? Seriously though it saves me hours of time, money, and keeps me from getting those 'hunger pains'. Not much is better than really good food.

**EV:** Let's talk food. What does good food mean to you?

**Morelli:** What's funny is I'm not even a vegetarian but good food is just that, good food. I like big time flavor. Plus I've lost 10 lbs in 3 months and I didn't think I was 10 lbs overweight!

**EV:** What are some of your favorites from The Educated Vegetable?

**Morelli:** Honestly, I like it all, but the Mediterranean and In-



dian is my favorite. Things like Pasta Puttanesca or Pulao.

**EV:** Has your health changed at all since you began eating food prepared by the The Educated Vegetable?

**Morelli:** As I mentioned I lost 10 lbs ,but even more important I never feel full, just satisfied eating Micah's food. You don't get the,'oh, man why did I eat that, I need a nap' feeling.

## Educated News

The wait is over. After months of work with long time friend, Chris Scott of CaliGreen clothing, The Educated Vegetable is happy announce the completion of its website. Educated-vegetable.com is now up and running and should prove to be a quality resource. The website includes all of the information that was formally in brochure form plus some other great resources. Be sure to check it out!

Starting at the end of January Micah Elconin will be offering cooking classes at the Santa Barbara Jewish Federation. *Healthy Jewish Food....Are you Kidding?* will meet at the federation on Tuesday night January 31 from 5:30—7:30. The class will wander the globe creating whole foods vegetarian variations

of many classic dishes. For more information contact The Educated Vegetable or The Santa Barbara Jewish Federation. Hope to see you there!

Valentines Day is around the corner! The Educated Vegetable wants to help make it special. Our special winter aphrodisiac menus are guaranteed to tempt more than your palettes. Imagine a gourmet restaurant quality dining experience in the privacy of your own home. Call soon to schedule a special meal with your loved one.

COMING SOON

*A whole new look for The Educated Vegetable. Stay Tuned!!!*

## Magic Mushrooms

Mushrooms are a favorite ingredient during the cold season. Many wild varieties are harvested this time of year. With all of the food phobias that people have, it is surprising how popular mushrooms are. These interesting life forms are not animal or plant, and their natural habitat is dead decaying matter. Much of their acceptance can only be attributed to their intense savory flavor that is most readily described as “meaty”. This is not too far a stretch actually. Much of mushrooms flavor are due to the many amino acids present in them. Many of these are exact matches with amino acids in meat



that are responsible for meats “meaty” flavor. So whether one eats meat or mushroom they are tasting the same molecule. What is extraordinary about mushrooms is that beyond tasting wonderful they possess very powerful medicinal qualities, but it’s not the amino acids (building blocks of protein) that are responsible, but rather some very special polysaccharides (carbohydrates). These polysaccharides stimulate the body in a variety of very useful ways.

Shitakes are a very well known mushroom, and for good reason. They have great texture and a savory quality that is unmatched by the common button mushroom. Shitakes are not native to the United States, but are widely cultivated. This is great news, because not only are shitakes packed with flavor, but they are one of the most powerful immune boosters on the planet. Scientists in Japan have been studying them since the late 1960’s! Because of their ability to naturally increase natural killer T cells, shitakes are now being used to treat HIV and cancer. They also have been shown to reduce the side effects of radiation and chemotherapy. Shitakes also reduce cholesterol, lower blood pressure, increase stamina, improve circulation, and are anti-viral, anti-bacterial, and anti-fungal. Unlike some other medicinal mushrooms, fresh shitakes do not lose any of their nutritional value when cooked at high temperatures. In fact it is worth mentioning that it is best to cook all mushrooms. Raw mushrooms are very hard to digest, and are actually slightly toxic.

Slightly less famous, but still well known and revered in culinary minded circles is the oyster mushroom. The name is in reference to their striking similarity to true oysters. Even more interesting, their flavor and texture seems to mimic fresh oyster. It is worth noting that there are quite a few other mushrooms that resemble other animals in look and flavor as well.

Fans of this mushroom usually don’t know about its medicinal qualities. Oyster Mushrooms naturally produce a form of Lovostatin, which is a popular drug prescribed to lower high blood cholesterol. They also have been shown to be antiviral as well as antibacterial

Quite a bit harder to find than shitake or oyster mushrooms, but well worth the high price when you do, are maitake mushrooms. And yes, their intense flavor is an indication of extremely potent medicinal qualities. Even a small amount of maitakes adds a rich

earthy flavor to any dish. Maitakes may exhibit even more powerful anti-cancer and HIV activity than shitakes. The polysaccharides responsible for this are called beta-glucans. They are known for their ability to enhance the immune system. “In one study the side effects of chemo therapy (vomiting, loss of appetite, hair loss) were improved in 90% of the patients using maitakes” (Balch 2003 168). The beta glucans in maitake have been shown to be the most active and effective when the mushrooms are heated to between 212 and 250 degrees Fahrenheit. A great way to cook them at this temperature is to add them to your favorite soup.

There are hundreds of different edible mushrooms, each with their own unique look flavor and nutritional and medicinal benefits. Many of the well studied mushrooms are available in supplement form. These can be a great asset when fresh whole mushrooms are unavailable.

As mentioned earlier, shitake mushrooms don’t lose much, if any, medicinal benefit when cooked at high temperatures. When cooked until very crispy in the oven these wonderful mushrooms begin to taste like.....bacon. See for yourself:

1 pound shitake mushrooms  
2 tbsp olive oil  
Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. De stem mushrooms and then slice thin. In a large bowl toss the mushrooms with olive oil and salt and pepper to taste. Cover a baking pan with a sheet of parchment paper and spread the mushrooms evenly on the pan. Place in oven and cook until mushrooms are slightly crispy, approx. 15 minutes. Check periodically to avoid burning.