

chicken breasts with mushroom sauce

I've said it before and I will say it again: mushrooms—with all their earthiness—are great comfort food for me. I love experimenting with different mushroom types, and tossing them into everything from eggs to burgers to sauces. Shiitakes are indeed a favorite of mine, and though part of their name sounds like a less-than-flattering four-letter word, their taste (to me) is very far from that and this recipe is proof positive.

A word on using alcohol in cooking: I know that sherry and really any kind of alcohol is Neolithic and would not have been available to a caveman. Why sherry is okay (for our standards) in this recipe: before the sherry is reduced, it comes out to about 2 teaspoons per serving. Once the sherry is cooked, it loses most (not every single little ounce though) of its alcohol content (which evaporates), and what's left is the nutty flavor of the sherry—a flavor I have a hard time replicating with something else. However, feel free to substitute with additional stock if you are a no-sherry kind of person or cooking with alcohol is something you choose not to do.

1½ pounds (700 g) chicken breasts
½ cup (75 g) almond flour
½ teaspoon tarragon
½ teaspoon onion powder
½ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon paprika
¼ teaspoon black pepper
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon clarified butter
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup (125 g) shiitake mushrooms, de-stemmed and sliced
¼ cup (60 mL) dry sherry
¾ cup (180 mL) chicken stock
2 teaspoons fresh chives, chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. If chicken breasts are exceptionally thick, pound to about ¾ inch (1.75 cm) thickness.
3. On a large plate, combine almond flour with tarragon on through black pepper. Dredge chicken breasts in seasoned flour and shake off excess.
4. Preheat large stainless steel skillet over medium-high heat. Add in olive oil and once oil is slightly smoking, gently place chicken breasts in skillet. Sear for 4–5 minutes per side, or until browned. Remove chicken and place on sheet pan or other oven-proof dish and place in oven. Bake for 10–12 minutes or until chicken is cooked through.
5. Reduce skillet heat to medium. Add butter to skillet, scraping up the browned bits from the chicken. Stir in the garlic and sauté until fragrant (but not burned), then stir in mushrooms. Sauté for 1–2 minutes, then add in sherry and chicken stock. Let simmer until reduced slightly and mushrooms are cooked. Add in chives just before serving.
6. Serve mushroom sauce over chicken.

Ingredient Notes—*If you are going with the sherry, make sure it is “real” Sherry. Preferably from Spain. Do not use cooking wine. Most cooking wines are loaded with salt.*