

ROARING FRENCH TOAST DUMPLINGS

Truth—part of this is just to say that you did it. But then again, it's amazing. Biting into the crispy dumpling gives an explosion of creamy deliciousness. But it's a mushroom?!?!?. My husband, who knows I cook with mushrooms all the time, asked me what this was made of. This was inspired by a mycophile who makes marshmallows out of puffballs, and by someone who tasted lion's mane for the first time and was amazed to find it sweet. She thought she could even make French toast out of it! I appreciate the inspiration for my first mushroom dessert dish.—KC

INGREDIENTS

8oz Lion's Mane mushroom
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup water
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
Oil for frying

FOR BATTER

1/3 cup flour
2 Tbsp corn starch
1/2 tsp cinnamon*
1/2 cup of ice cold seltzer water



*Omitting the cinnamon will give you a more mild flavored, and lighter colored dumpling. Sprinkle it on afterwards if you prefer.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Cut the Lion's Mane into 1 inch cubes. Combine the sugar and syrup in a saucepan and heat at medium low until it comes to a simmer. Add vanilla and stir to mix. Submerge the cubes and simmer for 5 minutes. Do them in batches rather than overcrowd the pot. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Pat the tops dry with another towel. You can save the infused simple syrup for cocktails, dipping, or new ideas! Let these cool while you prepare the batter.

Whisk together the flour, cornstarch, and cinnamon. Add the *ice cold* seltzer (I measure the seltzer, ice it, then pour it into the dry ingredients through a sieve.) and stir extremely lightly, until barely combined. Do not try to incorporate all of the ingredients into a smooth batter, it is by nature a thin and lumpy batter. Be careful not to over mix as it will become chewy, not crispy. Let this rest while you get ready to fry.

Heat enough oil to partially fill your fry pan. Make sure you use a thermometer! The oil is ready for frying at 350-365 degrees. Any less and the dumplings will be oil-logged, any more and they will scorch. When the oil reaches temperature, dip a cube into batter, then carefully drop it into the hot oil. Fry on each side for 30 seconds (total of 1 minute) until golden. Remove from oil with a slotted utensil to a paper towel or newspaper to drain.

These are really delicious sprinkled with cinnamon and served on top of vanilla ice cream.

Reheat in the oven, rather than the microwave.

