

# Strata-sphere

Serve this variation of the popular strata dish hot or at room temperature. Vegetables and cheese may be varied. Other mushrooms are fine, though the morel is a Michigan springtime delicacy.

ANNABEL COHEN



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSH SCOTT

## Asparagus-and-Morel Mushroom “Bread Pudding”

(12-16 servings)

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups chopped sweet onion
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 4 ounces fresh morels (or other mushrooms), quartered
- 4 cups milk
- 8 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- ¼ cup fresh chopped parsley
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 pound fresh asparagus, cut diagonally into ¼-inch slices
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 2 cups grated Swiss cheese

- **12** cups cubed French bread (baguettes)
- **1** cup fresh-grated Parmesan
- Spray a large, attractive ceramic or glass baking dish with nonstick oil. Set aside.

Melt butter in large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions and garlic and cook 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until mushrooms exude liquid and liquid evaporates, about 15 minutes (the mixture must be dry). Remove from heat and cool.

Whisk milk and eggs in large bowl until smooth. Whisk in sugar, parsley, salt, pepper, and cayenne. Add vegetables and Swiss cheese and stir to combine. Add bread cubes and toss. Transfer to baking dish and sprinkle with Parmesan. Cover with plastic wrap and chill 2 hours up to overnight.

Preheat oven to 350. Place baking dish on a baking sheet (to catch drips) and bake uncovered 60-80 minutes, until hot and puffy. The “pudding” will deflate as it cools).