

## Green Bean Casserole


Serves 8 to 10

All the components of this dish can be cooked ahead of time. The assembled casserole needs only 15 minutes in a 375 degree oven to warm through and brown.

### Topping

4 slices high quality white sandwich bread, torn into quarters  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened  
1/4 teaspoon table salt  
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper  
3 cups canned fried onions (about 6 ounces)

### Beans

Table salt  
2 lbs green beans, ends trimmed, cut on the diagonal into 2 inch pieces  
1/2 ounce dried porcini mushroom  
6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter  
1 medium onion, minced  
3 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)  
12 ounces white button mushrooms, wiped clean and sliced 1/4 inch thick  
12 ounces cremini mushrooms, wiped clean and sliced 1/4 inch thick  
2 tablespoons minced fresh thyme leaves  
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper  
2 tablespoons unbleached all purpose flour  
1 cup low sodium chicken broth  
2 cups heavy cream 

1. FOR THE TOPPING: Pulse the bread, butter, salt and pepper in a food processor until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs, 10 to 15 pulses. Transfer to a large bowl and toss with the onions; set aside.

2. FOR THE BEANS: Heat the oven to 375 degrees. Bring 4 quarts water to a boil in a large pot. Add 2 tablespoons salt and the beans. Cook until bright green and slightly crunchy, 4 to 5 minutes. Drain the beans and plunge immediately into a large bowl filled with ice water to stop cooking. Spread the beans out onto a paper towel lined baking sheet to drain.

3. Meanwhile, cover the dried porcini with 1/2 hot tap water in a small microwave safe bowl; cover with plastic wrap, cut several steam vents with a paring knife, and microwave on high power for 30 seconds. Let stand until the mushrooms soften, about 5 minutes. Lift the mushrooms from the liquid with a fork and mince using a chef's knife (you should have about 2 tablespoons). Pour the liquid through a paper towel lined sieve and reserve.

4. Melt the butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium high heat. Add the onion, garlic, button mushrooms, and cremini mushrooms and cook until the mushrooms release their moisture, about 2 minutes. Add the porcini mushrooms along with their strained soaking liquid, the thyme, 1 teaspoon salt, and the pepper and cook until all the mushrooms are tender and the liquid has reduced to 2 tablespoons, about 5 minutes. Add the flour and cook for 1 minute. Stir in the

chicken broth and reduce the heat to medium. Stir in the cream and simmer gently until the sauce has the consistency of dense soup, about 15 minutes.

5. Arrange the beans in a 3 quarts gratin dish. Pour the mushroom mixture over the beans and mix to coat the beans evenly. Sprinkle with the bread crumb mixture and bake until the top is golden brown and the sauce is bubbling around the edges, about 15 minutes. Serve immediately.