

“S-U-I, S-U-I, S-U-I”

by Patrick Hamilton, [Mycochef](#)

So it's mid-October and I'm up hiking and hunting Boletes at 7000' in the central High Sierra. This is where Ponderosa pines and Incense cedars give way to Lodgepoles and Red firs which is a kinda neat transition zone and worthy of thoughtful reflection regarding the wonderment of it all but instead all I'm thinking about is babushkas and hog calling.

Yep, Russian scarf hats and Midwestern farmers yelling at pigs in my same thought balloon and maybe only I know that it's not all that weird.

You wouldn't either if you had had my clues.

I have knowledge of some of the arcane stuff that is there for us to decipher if we are curious enough, or strange enough.

“Odd,” I said to myself when I spotted the first of many cut and discarded wormy *Suillus*. “Hmm,” I hummed, and in tune too.

My 12 week old Australian Shepherd pup “Danny Boy” gave me an appreciative glance up from his own mushroom hunting as if to say, “Right on dad, you da man, orf, whatever.”

“Why, oh why, so many *Su-illi*?” *S. brevipes* are said to be the best of the Slippery Jack types but, hey I'm picking *Boletus edulis* by the bushel and I'm seeing lots and lots of cuts--but not a not very well hidden *Bo-lete* midden. Unhuh, unsightly piles of pellicly impaired shrooms--slimy and sticky and slippery and strewn every here and there. Go figure, so I did some, and not that far away either.

Just back to the babushkas. . . . There are folks from Russia and other Eastern European countries who do enjoy *Suillus* very much. I know this because I have prepared some for them sautéed with potatoes, sour cream and onions in a hard cider reduction sauce. I bet some of their family and friends have worn scarves as hats while mushroom picking.

I was thinking backwards and forwards visiting memories and possible future thoughts trying to make sense of all of this so that I could write about it and you all could easily understand just how this prose gets to paper in such an intelligent manner.

I had to suffer through way too many years of Latin in high school and besides remembering, sophomorically, that Caesar, in his salad days, was galling I recall that the word for pig was something like “*sui-llus*.”

So, when those farmers are calling their hogs by hollering, “Sui, sui,” we know now that they are actually speaking a form of Latin, maybe Pig. . . .

Maybe I’m not much of a visionary but I can’t see them wearing OshGosh coveralls and babushkas while doing so.

I wouldn’t have known that particular porcini area (nor had any idea of the aforementioned gobblygook) if not for my partner (blame her) Kathy. With her business partner Diane they “broke the key.” She knew that Boletes grew at the 5000’ elevation in Spring close by to where I ended up picking so they did some “drive by” Bolete hunting up the mountain the week before and did indeed spy some emerging buttons. And they took over 30 pounds of #1 beauties. Without me. Woe I was.

Larry Stickney (the former food writer of this column and so much more) taught us the “methode de morilles” a few years back and we have used it ever since. Kinda like fishing-- if you don’t get a bite real soon get on down the stream. If we don’t see a mushroom or suspect real strongly a good habitat from the vehicle we are likely to move on by and not waste any time.

Really, all that we have in this world is time. To use it wisely by spending most of our lives mushroom hunting is one of God’s gifts to us. Sort of. At least to me.

My editor at MushMag usually asks about now where the recipe is in this “cooking column.” Don, I don’t have the answer yet but give me a few more paragraphs. We could talk about our upcoming wild mushroom cooking contest with those swell prizes and all.

I do hope that many of you will enter, once we figure out how to do that.

Last weekend I did come home with a bunch of baby boletes and even after dropping off bagsfull at Wine Forest Mushrooms of Napa I had enough to cook for myself. What to do, what to do?

Well, I made the best sandwich I’d ever had while on a diet. So herein I present the low calorie, nutritious and delicious:

Incredible Grilled Bolete, Garden Tomato, and Asiago Sandwich

Serves 1

- 6 ea. bolete slabs, about 3' long by 2" wide, sliced 1/4"
 - 1 ea. tomato, large, warm off the vine if possible, sliced 3/16"
 - 1 tbl. Asiago cheese, freshly grated
 - 2 ea. Wheat or multi-grains bread, slices, really good
 - 4 ea. basil leaves, large, cut chiffonade
 - 1 tsp. Dijon
 - 2 tsp. mayonnaise, low fat
 - 1 tsp. extra virgin olive oil, really good
 - salt and freshly ground black pepper
1. Lightly brush the oil on each side of the boletes and grill them over medium high heat until golden brown on the sides, darker on the edges, and soft inside. about 8 minutes. keep warm and set aside.
 2. Toast the bread the way you like it. keep warm.
 3. Put the grated cheese on one slice of bread and put it in the micro (or under a broiler) just until it begins to melt and really smell good.
 4. On the other slice of bread apply the mayo and Dijon. place the boletes on this, then the tomatoes, the chiffonade (sliced thinly after rolling the leaves together) of basil, salt and pepper and deftly plop the cheesy piece of bread atop this pile of wondrous stuff.

P.S. it will not squish nor be inserted into the mouth easily and might be best eaten in the privacy of your own home.

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