



## MS. SUSIE'S CREAM CHEESE STUFFED MUSHROOMS

This savory side dish is a favorite among cowboys and staff at the Four Sixes Ranch.

STORY BY KATIE FRANK • PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRANDIE BLODGETT MUSTIAN

**P**hil Fox, the mare manager at the Four Sixes Ranch, doesn't like pasta. Nathan Canaday, DVM, one of the ranch's veterinarians, can't stand broccoli. The ladies who work at the Four Sixes Supply House down the road love spaghetti. Glenn Blodgett, DVM, the horse division manager, puts honey on everything and has steel-cut oats most mornings for breakfast.

These small details don't go unnoticed by Four Sixes cook Susie Hurt, affectionally known as Ms. Susie. Since 2011, Hurt has worked full time in the Guthrie, Texas, kitchen, serving breakfast and lunch six days a week during breeding season and five days a week in the off-season. Her mornings in the kitchen start at 4:30 a.m. preparing the crew and staff's first meal of the day. After breakfast, she dives right into preparing lunch. This includes gathering

food from 11 freezers scattered around the facility and cooking on the eight-burner stovetop. Two more ovens are located on the other side of the modest-sized kitchen.

Most days, she drives around the ranch delivering "Susie snacks," like sausage pin-wheels and other finger foods.

"If people come into the kitchen and they're not in a good mood, like maybe they're tired, we get to chitchatting," Hurt says. "And somehow, just talking makes the day a little better. And when I take them Susie snacks during the day, they're so grateful."

Before Hurt tied her apron strings at the ranch, she was a dental assistant in Las Vegas, Nevada, for 32 years. Her sister, Connie, worked at the Four Sixes cleaning bunkhouses, the offices, and such. She also cooked one day a week. Needing help,

**TOP:** One of the crew's favorite recipes is Ms. Susie's cream cheese stuffed mushrooms, and she is happy to add the savory side dish to many meals. **TOP RIGHT:** It all starts with just a few key ingredients. **RIGHT:** The mushrooms are packed with a tasty cream cheese mixture.

Connie asked Hurt if she would consider coming back to her hometown of Paducah, about 25 miles from Guthrie.

“I needed something different to do after my husband died,” Hurt says. “At first, I was helping her clean and took over her one day of cooking. I jokingly thought to myself, ‘I’m going to have to quit if they ask me to do this full time.’”

Shortly after, the full-time cook quit and Hurt stepped in.

Her reluctance to cook—mostly due to inexperience in the kitchen—didn’t last long. With some recipes passed down from the ranch and others from her own searching, Hurt has become a mainstay at the ranch.

“Everyone here is just so sweet,” she says. “There is not a day that goes by when they don’t thank me. But they take care of me just as much as I take care of them.”

One of the crew’s favorite recipes is her cream cheese stuffed mushrooms. Based on a recipe from Kraft, this savory side dish can be found at many meals, whether it’s chicken fried steak or, to Phil Fox’s chargin, spaghetti.





### Ms. Susie's Cream Cheese Stuffed Mushrooms

(Yield 10 servings)

Prep time: 20 min • Total time: 50 min

- 3 8-ounce packages mushrooms
- 2 8-ounce packages cream cheese, softened
- 1 packet Italian dressing mix
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons minced onion
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 cup parmesan cheese, grated
- 1/8 teaspoon ground red pepper (cayenne)
- 1 package stuffing mix
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Clean the mushrooms and remove the stems, then set aside. In a large bowl, mix the cream cheese, Italian dressing mix, mayonnaise, onion, parsley, parmesan cheese and red pepper. Put the stuffing mix in a separate bowl. Stuff the mushrooms with the cream cheese mixture, and then press the cream-cheese side of the stuffed mushroom



into the stuffing mix until coated. Place the stuffed and topped mushrooms on a baking pan, stuffing side up. Drizzle with melted butter and bake for 30 minutes. 🐾

**ABOVE:** This savory side dish pairs well with nearly any meal, from chicken fried steak to spaghetti.

