



the edible mushroom book



a guide to
foraging and
cooking

Anna Del Conte
Thomas Læssøe

the
edible
mushroom
book





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**Anna Del Conte
and Thomas Læssøe**

**With Susan Campbell
and Andrew Sartain**





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If you are in any doubt about the edibility
of a mushroom, do not eat it.

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It could be said that there are three motivations for those who enjoy gathering wild, edible mushrooms. The first is primitive: we love to hunt for free food. The second is commercial: some species can be sold for astonishingly high prices. The third is the one that I think applies to most mushroom gatherers and, I hope, to the readers of this book: it is aesthetic. The object is not just to find the ingredients for a tasty meal or to make a small addition to the bank balance, for the search for mushrooms can take us into incredibly beautiful places, where we will be captivated by their perfection, the strangeness of their life-cycle, and their unpredictable habits.

The pastime is given an extra edge by the uncertainty of their appearing at all. There are days when we just know that any chance of a haul is slight. On other days, we can sense that mushrooms will be there, ready for the picking. And when we find a bumper crop, it is thrilling. We tell everyone about it, and even share our bounty—but we keep its location a secret, to be told only to our families or our closest friends.

Susan Campbell

Susan Campbell

All my recipes have a strong Italian flavor: I learned to cook in Italy, and I love Italian food. This applies even more so when fungi are concerned. I have always gone on fungi forays, starting as a child on the slopes of the Alps or the Apennines, and then later in England when I went with my children to Wimbledon Common, Richmond Park, Hampstead Heath, and the New Forest. Those were the glorious days before foraging became fashionable in the UK, the days when we had to compete in our hunt only with a handful of others and we could come home with pounds and pounds of Boletes.

Now the scene has somewhat changed. I rarely come home with that amount of mixed mushrooms, let alone Boletes. But the foray is still fun, and I can make some of my favorite dishes with my finds. The important thing—apart from learning to recognize the edible species—is cooking what you have gathered in the most suitable way. A Chanterelle or a Morel, for instance, is wonderful with cream, while a Cep cries for olive oil. But enjoy the preparation of all the tasty species included here and enjoy, even more, the eating of them.

Anna Del Conte

Anna Del Conte

Visual index



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Semifree morel
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St. George's mushroom
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Summer truffle
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Chicken-of-the-woods
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Horn of Plenty
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Fairy ring champignon
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In the field



Foraging notes

Foraging for edible fungi is utterly absorbing and, once you experience it, you are likely to be smitten by the hunting fever. However, it is not without rules. There are very few, but they must be followed if the outcome of your foray is to be a happy one.

1 If in doubt, DO NOT EAT IT.

You must know for sure that the mushrooms you intend to eat are not poisonous. A few species are lethal; many more cause severe stomach upsets. If you have any doubt about the safety of any species, do not eat it. Accurate identification can be obtained from a mycologist or from a reliable mushroom book. To discover a mushroom's identity, note its habitat and look at the whole of it, from the top of its cap to the base of its stem. If the cap is ripe, a spore print can be taken as well (*see p36*).

2 Don't take fungi from a protected habitat.

Some national parks and other places open to the public have regulations regarding the collecting of fungi. These rules are posted at prominent points and should not be ignored if you wish to avoid prosecution.

3 Respect the ownership of private land.

If you wish to hunt in fields, woods, golf courses, or parks, you should always first ask the landowner's permission.

4 Behave thoughtfully.

Don't trample on plants or flowers, rake the forest floor, or break branches and fences. Keep dogs under control, and voices down—the quietness of the habitat is one that should be revered. Above all, take only what you need and leave something for fellow hunters to pick.

< **The search for fungi** can take you into beautiful places

What to take

Before you go on your foray, gather up some basic equipment. **A light, wide-bottomed basket** is the best receptacle for your haul. Plastic bags are useful in an emergency, but they tend to squeeze the fungi together and damage the more fragile specimens. Their lack of porosity also makes the mushrooms sweat. A large hat or handkerchief is better than a plastic bag.

A knife is needed for cutting the mushrooms free from tree trunks and scraping them clean before adding them to the basket. The best knives are those specially designed for mushroom hunting. They fold like pocketknives, have one curved, sharp, stainless steel blade with a serration on the back to scrape off dirt, and a little brush at the end of the cover to get rid of debris on or inside the mushroom. A regular pocketknife or small vegetable knife will do if you can't find a mushroom knife.

A tall walking stick is also useful, not just for helping you in and out of ditches or up and down hillsides, but also for gently pushing aside leaves and ground-cover, and marking the spot where you found something. It can also be used with a knife strapped to the end, for cutting mushrooms free, high up a tree.

It goes without saying that it helps to wear comfortable **waterproof boots** and to take a **raincoat**. Even the most experienced mushroom hunter can be seduced by the hunt, and end up with a heavy haul, hours after setting out, miles from the starting point, and with no idea of where that point may be. It is a good idea to travel light, take a **snack** and a **drink**, and add a **map** and a **compass**. Cellular phones tend not to work in forests, and getting lost is wearisome. If you do get lost and you can hear traffic, head for that road.



Take a knife for cutting and cleaning fungi



The basic toolkit for mushroom hunting

When to look

Mushroom identification books, including this one, will tell you when species are most likely to appear, but this information is bound to be general and in recent years the changing climate has, depending on locality, tended to extend, reduce, or even eliminate the times of year in which certain mushrooms could be counted upon to turn up. It is a good idea to keep a journal of your mushroom finds for future reference, but bear in mind that fungi do not keep journals themselves, and they are always liable to spring surprises.

Weather conditions

The weather affects the growth of fungi as much as the time of year. Suitable humidity and temperature are the main triggers to fruiting, but mushrooms are also influenced by light and day-length. Prolonged drought is as much a disincentive to their growth as heavy rain. In spring and summer months, a spell of warm, mild weather after a few days of penetrating, steady rain is the best time to start looking. Mild, damp autumn and winter days should prove fruitful too. Frost and snow are enough to put a stop to most fungal fruiting, but there are some species, such as Trumpet chanterelles, that survive in icy spells.

Early risers

The idea that the early morning is the best time to look for mushrooms has its basis in common sense. The light, especially in winter, is with you for longer in the day,

and the mushrooms that have sprung up overnight will be less likely to have been damaged by grazing animals or passing feet. Above all, early risers have a better chance of finding something if they are the first foragers on the scene.



Early morning is the best time to look for fungi.



Where to look

The mushrooms we collect are only the fruits of the parent fungus but, unlike an apple tree or gooseberry bush, they lack chlorophyll. Fungi live instead on organic matter, either as parasites (such as the Honey fungus, which flourishes on the trunks of living trees) or as saprophytes (such as Field mushrooms, which live on decayed or rotting turf and manure).

Tree association

The mushroom is all we see of a fungus that actually consists of a web or mat of tiny, subterranean threads called mycelium. It therefore helps if you know the type of rotting or organic matter that suits a fungus. Some fungi have a mycorrhizal association with the roots of certain trees; that is to say they live with the roots of these trees, so the fruits may well appear at some distance from the tree itself.

Preferred habitats

Besides the general variety of habitats chosen by fungi, all seem to have a distinct preference for the type of soil they live on, the inherent moisture of their habitat, and the intensity of light that falls on them. It also seems as though they prefer a certain contour within a habitat. A few feet above or below a certain level will yield nothing, but the same contour will provide rich pickings. Often the presence of other, inedible fungi is a good sign that you will

find what you are looking for. The most common mushroom habitats are hardwood forests, softwood forests, mixed forests, pastures, parkland, and, in the right circumstances, the urban environment. In the following pages (pp20–9), we illustrate the main habitats and show some of the mushrooms you might find within them.

Lady luck

In the world of mushrooms, nothing is guaranteed, but keep your wits about you, trust in lady luck, and you might find some choice specimens to take home and enjoy.



Some fungi live with the roots of certain trees

< **Fungi can be found** in a variety of habitats

1 High up on the bark



Chicken-of-the-woods
(*Laetiporus sulphureus*),
p44. Also look out for Jelly
ear (*Auricularia auricula-
judae*), p91.

**2 Underneath living
hardwood trees**



Gypsy
(*Cortinarius caperatus*), p58.
Also look out for Chestnut
bolete (*Gyroporus
castaneus*), p62, and
Summer truffle (*Tuber
aestivum*), p43.

3 Among leaf-litter or moss



Horn of plenty
(*Craterellus cornucopioides*),
p46. Also look out for
Chanterelle (*Cantharellus
cibarius*), p45, and
Hedgehog fungus (*Hydnum
repandum*), p71.

Where to look

Hardwood forest – Autumn

Hardwood, or deciduous, forests are home to trees such as oak, birch, and beech. Look for fungi that live in association with the roots of these trees.

1 High up on the bark

Look up, as well as down, in the forest and you could find fungi growing high up on living trees. The bright yellow-orange Chicken-of-the-woods is easy to spot, and you may also find the tan-brown Jelly ear.

2 Underneath living hardwood trees

Close to trees such as beech, birch, and oak, you could find certain species that grow with hardwood trees. Look above ground for the Gypsy and the Chestnut bolete, and among the roots for the Summer truffle.

3 Among leaf-litter or moss

Part the leaf-litter on the forest floor and you could reveal large numbers of Horn of plenty, otherwise camouflaged by their dark coloring. Chanterelles and Hedgehog fungi sometimes grow in troops here, too.

4 In small grassy areas

Green patches are worth checking for grass-loving species of fungi, such as Parasol mushrooms and Fairy ring champignons.

5 On dead or dying trees

Inspect dead or dying trees and fallen logs and you could spot Oyster mushrooms growing on the bark. Check living but weakened trees for the Velvet shank.

4 Small grassy areas



Parasol mushroom

(*Macrolepiota procera*), p53.

Also look out for Fairy ring champignon (*Marasmius oreades*), p49.

5 Dead or dying trees



Oyster mushroom

(*Pleurotus ostreatus*), p86.

Also look out for Velvet shank (*Flammulina velutipes*), p88.

1 Tree stumps



Cauliflower fungus
(*Sparassis crispa*), p47.

2 Among leaf-litter



Red-staining mushroom
(*Agaricus silvaticus*), p80.
Also look out for Horn of plenty (*Craterellus cornucopioides*), p46.

3 Damp areas under two-needled pines



Saffron milk cap
(*Lactarius deliciosus*), p79.

4 Underneath pine trees



Bovine bolete

(*Suillus bovinus*), p67.

Also look out for Slippery

jack (*Suillus luteus*), p66,

Hedgehog fungus

(*Hydnum repandum*),

p71, and Trumpet

chanterelle (*Cantharellus*

tubaeformis), p85.

5 On rich soil



Wood mushroom

(*Agaricus silvicola*), p57.

Where to look Softwood forest – Autumn

Softwood, or coniferous, forests are mainly composed of needle-bearing trees, such as spruce or pine. Look out for fungi growing in association with the roots of these trees.

1 On tree stumps

Keep an eye out for softwood tree stumps, where you could find the Cauliflower fungus, with its sponge-like appearance, growing as a large single clump.

2 Among leaf-litter

Carefully inspect the softwood debris on the forest floor to spot troops or rings of the Red-staining mushroom and, occasionally, the Horn of plenty.

3 In damp areas under two-needled pines

Check underneath two-needled pines, such as Scots Pine, for Saffron milk caps. You can often find them growing in damp locations.

4 Underneath pine trees

Look underneath and around pine trees for fungi that live with the roots of softwoods. You could find Bovine boletes, Slippery jacks, Hedgehog fungi, or Trumpet chanterelles, to name but a few.

5 On rich soil

Scan areas of rich woodland soil and you are likely to locate Wood mushrooms. You will usually find a few growing together, and they occasionally appear in rings.

2 Dead, fallen tree trunks



Trumpet chanterelle
(*Cantharellus tubaeformis*),
p85. Also look out for
Oyster mushroom
(*Pleurotus ostreatus*), p86.

1 Edge of woodland path



Cep
(*Boletus edulis*), p60. Also
look out for Deceiver
(*Laccaria laccata*), p70.

3 Mossy ditch-banks



Hedgehog fungus
(*Hydnum repandum*), p71.

Where to look Mixed forest – Autumn

Mixed forests include both hardwood (deciduous) and softwood (coniferous) trees. They can harbor a wide variety of species of edible mushrooms.

4 Oak tree trunks



Beefsteak fungus
(*Fistulina hepatica*), p48.
Also look out for Jelly ear (*Auricularia auricula-judae*), p91.

5 In thick forest litter



Wood blewit
(*Lepista nuda*), p74. Also
look out for Shaggy
parasol (*Chlorophyllum
rhacodes*), p54.

1 On the edge of a woodland path

When walking through the forest, keep your eyes peeled for the much sought-after Cep, growing singly or in troops along woodland paths. The Deceiver can often be found here too, growing on damp soil.

2 Alongside dead, fallen tree trunks

Look out for fallen trunks and you could find Trumpet chanterelles growing in large troops close by – the bright yellow stems give them away. You can also find Oyster mushrooms growing along the bark.

3 On mossy ditch-banks

In mossy woodland, look for the Hedgehog fungus. It is easily spotted because of its cream color, and grows in troops, clusters, and oval rings.

4 On oak tree trunks

Oak tree trunks are good places to look for the striking, blood-red Beefsteak fungus. The Jelly ear can also be spotted here.

5 In thick forest litter

Nutrient-rich habitats, such as forest litter and well-established compost heaps, are often home to small groups of Wood blewits, as well as troops of Shaggy parasols.

1 Bare soil



Common puffball
(*Lycoperdon perlatum*), p84.

2 Rich grassland



Field mushroom
(*Agaricus campestris*), p55.
Also look out for Field
blewit (*Lepista saeva*), p75,
and, in the spring and
summer, St George's
mushroom (*Calocybe
gambosa*), p42.

3 Horse-grazed pastures



Horse mushroom
(*Agaricus arvensis*), p56.
Also look out for Meadow
puffball (*Vascellum
pratense*), p69, and Parasol
mushroom (*Macrolepiota
procera*), p53.

Where to look

Pasture – Autumn

A pasture is grassland used for grazing animals, such as cows and horses. It is often abundant in fungi, especially when it has been intensively grazed.

1 On bare soil

Check patches of bare soil, especially those on the edge of pastures close to woodland, for Common puffballs. You'll often find them here, growing in dense groups and clusters.

2 On rich grassland

Carefully scour the grassland when walking through open pastures and you're likely to come across Field mushrooms and Field blewits. Both species grow in troops or fairy rings. In spring and summer months, the St. George's mushroom also grows here.

3 On horse-grazed pastures

In horse-grazed pastures, you could find the Horse mushroom, usually growing in rings. You could also spot troops of Parasols or Meadow puffballs.

4 On or around decaying hardwood trees

Inspect dead or dying hardwood, including fruit trees, for Honey fungus. It can usually be found growing in large fused clusters on or around the trunk.

5 On disturbed soil

Keep an eye out for areas of highly disturbed soil, as the Giant puffball often grows here. It is also worth looking among stinging nettles at the edge of pastures or woodland for this distinctive mushroom.

4 Decaying hardwood trees



Honey fungus
(*Armillaria mellea*), p73.

5 Disturbed soil



Giant puffball
(*Langermannia gigantea*), p68.

1 Deep in the grass



Meadow puffball

(*Vascellum pratense*), p69.
Also look out for The miller
(*Clitopilus prunulus*), p77.

2 Golf course



Field blewit

(*Lepista saeva*), p75. Also
look out for Parasol
mushroom (*Macrolepiota
procera*), p53.

3 Disturbed soil



Clustered domecap

(*Lyophyllum decastes*), p76.
Also look out for Giant
puffball (*Langermannia
gigante*), p68, and Lawyer's
wig (*Coprinus comatus*), p78.

4 Decaying trees



Stump puffball

(*Lycoperdon pyriforme*),
p87. Also look out for
Oyster mushroom
(*Pleurotus ostreatus*), p86.

Where to look

Parkland – Autumn

Parks in both urban and rural settings can provide rich pickings of many types of edible fungi.

1 Deep in the grass

In grassy areas, keep your eye out for small white bumps – on closer inspection these may be revealed as Meadow puffballs, partially hidden in the undergrowth. The miller also prefers to live in grassy habitats.

2 On a golf course

Open areas such as golf courses are good places to look for Field blewits. These lilac-stemmed mushrooms usually grow in small troops or well-developed fairy rings. You are also likely to find scattered troops of Parasol mushrooms living here.

3 On disturbed soil

Examine patches of disturbed soil for the Clustered domecap, which, as its name suggests, usually grows in dense clusters. You could also come across rings of Giant puffballs or troops of the Lawyer's wig.

4 On decaying trees

Inspect rotting trees and you could find large numbers of Stump puffballs, forming conspicuous clusters on the bark. The Oyster mushroom can also often be located growing on decaying hardwood.

5 Among larch tree litter

Look underneath or around larch trees to find Larch boletes. These brightly colored mushrooms are fairly easy to spot, growing in troops among grass and leaf-litter.

5 Among larch tree litter



Larch bolete

(*Suillus grevillei*), p83.

Picking wild fungi

After finding a mushroom, it is essential to identify it. Check the whole fruit, from cap to base; note its habitat, color, smell, size, and shape. You should understand that the appearance of a mushroom changes with every stage of its fruiting life.

Removing the mushroom

Some foragers believe that it is better to remove the whole mushroom (if it has a stem), either by gently pulling or easing it out with the point of your knife, rather than slicing it off, so that you can then better examine the whole fruit. However, you may need to slice through particularly stubborn stems. Whatever you do, never tear the mushroom out of the ground, because this can damage the mycelium, and prevent it from forming new fruitbodies.

Prime specimens only

Once you are certain the mushroom is safe to eat, make sure that it is not past its prime—soft, mushy, or riddled with maggots. Specimens like these are best left where they are, to spread their spores and generate new fungi. Only take home fungi in prime condition: firm, good-smelling, and not too maggoty.



Gently ease out the mushroom with a knife



Check the whole mushroom from cap to base

Clean as you go

To keep the dirt from falling into the gills of your collection, clean each specimen as much as you can before placing it in your basket. Brush or wipe off soft debris, slice off tough stem bases (but hide the evidence, since this is a clue for other mushroom hunters), and try to keep each species separate from another.



Only take home specimens in prime condition





Identification notes

To identify your mushroom and help you assess its edibility, you must study every aspect of it. The shape, texture, and size of the fruitbody, the appearance of the stem and the gills, and the color of the spores are all keys to identification. This visual glossary illustrates the precise terms used by mushroom experts, or mycologists, to describe the physical characteristics of caps, stems, and gills.

Caps

A cap raised on a stem is often the first feature of a fruitbody to attract your attention. There are four obvious features to note: color; shape; surface texture; and surface appearance.



Convex Cap shape rounded or domed



Conical Tapers to a central point



Funnel-shaped Depressed center



Folded Brain- or honeycomb-like



Umbonate Raised boss in center



Loose scales Veil scales, loose



Scaly Scales part of cap skin



Translucently striate Gills seen through cap



Striate Lightly grooved



Concentric zones Irregular growth



Shaggy Long, fibrous scales



Inrolled margin Overlaps gills



Sticky Skin in gelatinous matter

Stems

Examine the size and shape of the stem. Note the presence or absence of a ring, veil, or volva (*see Glossary pp 186–187*). Touch the stem to see if it is dry or sticky, and cut it in half to observe if it is solid, hollow, or chambered.



Rooting Stem base roots in soil



Clavate Swollen club-shaped base



Tapered to base Narrows



Stem and ring Both present

Gills

Fruitbodies with caps or brackets have spore-producing tissue on the underside. The tissue can be arranged on gills, spines, in a tube layer—the openings of which can be seen as pores—or it can be smooth. It is crucial to examine the underside. Many fungi look gilled when viewed from above, but when you turn them over, you may find spines, pores, or a smooth layer instead of gills. To tell gilled fungi apart, examine how the gills radiate from where the cap is attached to the stem.



Equal All gills full-length



Varying lengths Irregular lengths



Forked Split in two toward margin



Crowded Close together



Widely spaced Far apart



Joined to collar Short and far apart



Radiating Radiate from cap margin



Spines Covering underside



Pores Tubes with pore openings



Maze-like pores Branching plates, covered in hymenium

Gill sections

Small details, such as the way gills are attached to the stem or are “free” of the stem, also provide very important clues when trying to identify gilled species of mushroom. Sometimes all of the species within a mushroom genus, or family, have exactly the same type of gill attachment.



Free Not joined to stem



Notched Indented



Decurrent Run partly down stem



Sinuate notched Curved and notched



Adnate Broadly attached



Adnexed Narrowly attached

Spore color

On arriving home from a foray, it is a good idea to take the spore deposit of any unidentified fungi. This enables you to establish the spore color, helping to identify your finds. Always use fresh specimens, as dried-out mushrooms do not deposit spores.

Taking a spore deposit

Using a sharp knife, remove the cap. Place it gill-side down on white or black paper (black will show pale spores). If you are not sure whether the spores are pale or dark, place the cap half on white paper and half on black. The best deposits are obtained if the cap and paper are under glass. Place a

drop of water on the cap before covering it. Leave the cap for several hours or overnight—the longer you leave it, the thicker the spore deposit. On inspection, the “print” left by the spores on the paper will mirror the spaces that exist between the gills.



1 Carefully position the fresh cap on two-tone paper. Place a drop of water on the top and cover with a glass bowl.



2 Leave the cap overnight. Then gently lift off the bowl and cap to reveal the deposit.

Color categories

For true spore color, you need to obtain a thick spore deposit and you should observe it in natural light. The color of the spores can be categorized as follows: pinkish to red; ocher to clay; rust-brown; purple-brown; black; white to cream. There are some exceptions to these categories, because a few gilled fungi, such as the False parasol, produce green spores. Spore color varies only a little within a genus.



Pinkish to red



Ocher to clay



Rust-brown



Purple-brown



Black



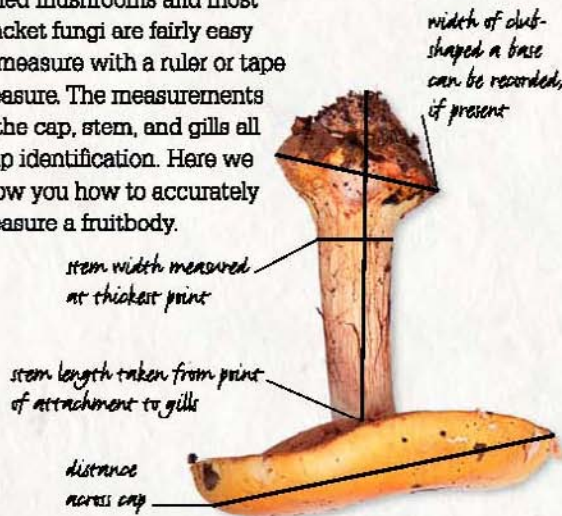
White to cream

Fruitbody size

Fruitbody size can also aid identification. Fruitbodies can vary a great deal in size. This is due to environmental factors and the quality of the chosen substrate, among other elements. However, size is still an important identification feature.

Measuring fruitbodies

Gilled mushrooms and most bracket fungi are fairly easy to measure with a ruler or tape measure. The measurements of the cap, stem, and gills all help identification. Here we show you how to accurately measure a fruitbody.



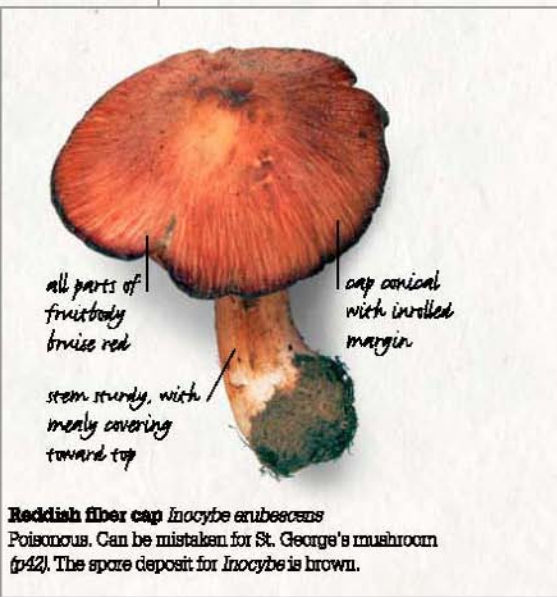
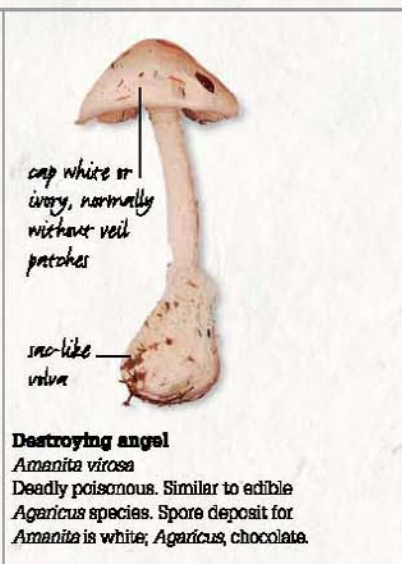
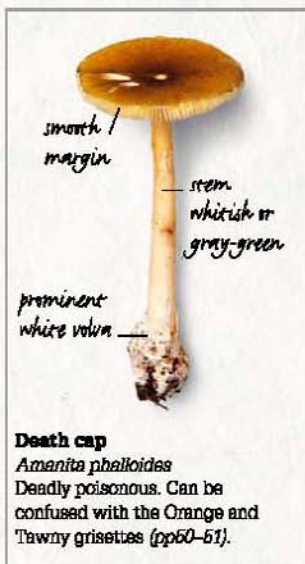
Size guide

The fungi in this book vary in dimension. It is impossible to display them in proportion to one another. The symbol that appears next to each entry provides an at-a-glance guide that compares the average size of a fruitbody with a man's hand (8in/20cm long).



Poisonous fungi – Top 10 species to avoid

A small number of poisonous mushrooms are fatal, and many more species will cause stomach upsets. Here are ten of the most common poisonous species, with their best identifying markers. Study them carefully. Remember, if you are in any doubt about what you have picked, throw it away.

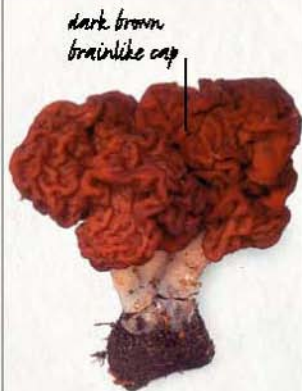


**Foxy-orange web cap***Cortinarius rubellus*

Deadly poisonous. Don't confuse with the edible Chanterelles and Horn of Plenty (pp45-46 and p86).

**Lawn funnel cap***Clitocybe rivulosa*

Deadly poisonous. Be sure not to mistake for Fairy ring champignon (p49) or The miller (p77).

**False morel***Gyromitra esculenta*

Deadly poisonous. Similar to edible Morels (pp40-41), but note that the cap has folds rather than pits.

**Brown roll rim** *Paxillus involutus*

Deadly poisonous. Its inrolled cap is a good marker.

**Yellow stainer** *Agaricus xanthodermis*

Poisonous. Don't confuse with other, edible *Agaricus* species (pp55-57).

**Liberty cap** *Psilocybe semilanceata*

Poisonous. The best-known strongly hallucinogenic mushroom.

Morel *Morchella esculenta*

A distinctive species with a light brown-gray, honeycomb-like head and pale yellow stem, the Morel varies considerably in shape and size. It is one of the most prized culinary fungi, and is expensive to purchase both fresh and dried. Be sure not to confuse it with the poisonous False morel with its brain-like head (see p39).

The field

- **When to look** Spring.
- **Where to look** Among herbs and grass in hardwood and softwood forest. Also where fires have occurred, and on bark chippings and mulch beds in shrubberies and gardens.
- **How it grows** Singly or in troops.
- **Color** Light brown-gray (cap); pale yellow (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2–8in (5–20cm) high; stem 2–5in (5–12cm) high x ¾–4in (2–10cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Cream to pale brown.
- **Around the world** Almost cosmopolitan, but less common in northern regions.

The kitchen

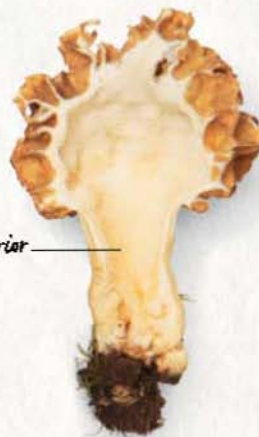
- **Flavor** Choice. Rich, with a hint of bacon.
- **Cooking tips** Never eat raw.
- **Recipes** Morel pie (pp116–117), Morels with yellow peppers (pp152–153).



Often grows in troops among herbs.



SIDE VIEW



SECTION



Semifree morel *Mitrophora semilibera*

A smaller species than the Morel (*see opposite*) with a less developed, darker brown head with a free cap rim, and a longer, paler stem. Although the Semifree morel tastes quite similar to its relative, it is not so highly prized because it is thinner-fleshed. Typically, its fruiting season lasts longer than that of the Morel.

The field

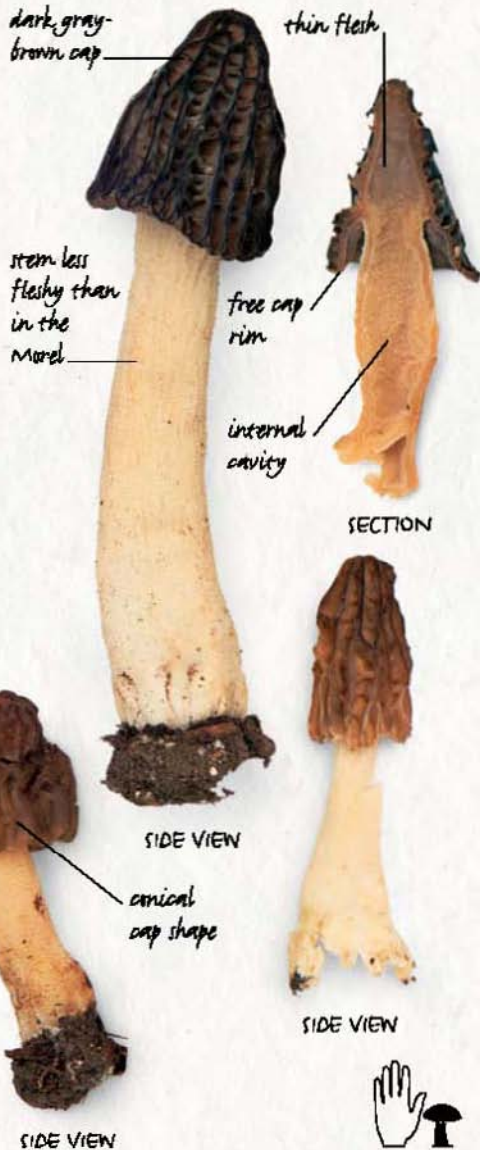
- **When to look** Early spring.
- **Where to look** In dense grass in woodland, and along paths in damp places.
- **How it grows** Often in troops.
- **Color** Dark gray-brown (cap); pale yellow (stem).
- **Size** Cap ½–1½in (1–4cm) high; stem 1¼–4in (3–10cm) high x ½–¾in (1–2cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Cream.
- **Around the world** Widespread; more common in warmer regions of Europe.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Delicate.
- **Cooking tips** The chambered head needs careful cleaning. Never eat raw.
- **Recipes** Morel pie (*pp116–117*), Morels with yellow peppers (*pp152–153*).



Often grows in troops in dense grass.



St. George's mushroom *Calocybe gambosa*

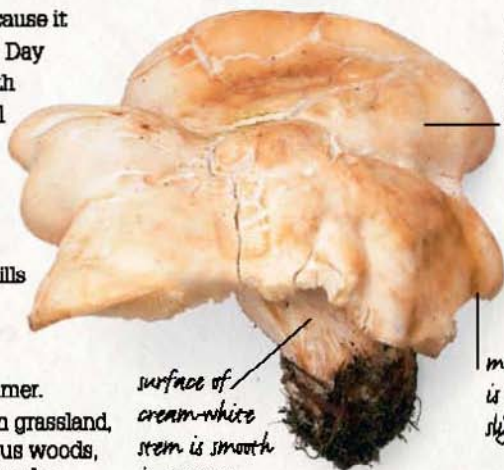
A familiar fungus, so-called because it appears on or near St. George's Day (April 23rd). It is very fleshy, with a strong mealy smell. Be careful not to confuse it with spring-fruiting species of *Kentoloma*, which are often poisonous. They can be identified by their pink spore deposits, and pink gills when mature.

The field

- **When to look** Spring to summer.
- **Where to look** On rich soil in grassland, hedgerows, roadsides, calcareous woods, and quite often in gardens and parks.
- **How it grows** In troops or fairy rings.
- **Color** Cream-white to brown.
- **Size** Cap 1¼–5in (3–12cm) wide; stem ¾–2¼in (2–7cm) high x ½–1in (1–2.5cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Cream-white.
- **Around the world** Temperate regions. Throughout Europe, North Africa, and adjacent parts of Asia. Worldwide distribution uncertain.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Choice. Meaty.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).

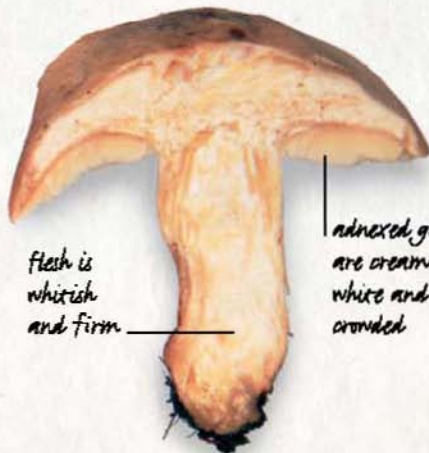


very fleshy cap is cream-white to brown, and slightly greasy

surface of cream-white stem is smooth in texture

margin of cap is smooth and slightly inturned

SIDE VIEW



adnexed gills are cream-white and crowded

flesh is whitish and firm

SECTION



Often grows in troops among grass.



Summer truffle *Tuber aestivum*

The least expensive of the true edible tubers, the Summer truffle grows in association with the roots of hardwood trees. It is similar in appearance to the Périgord truffle (p90), but is covered with pyramidal, rather than polygonal, black warts. It also has a distinct but faint aroma. Flies attracted to the Summer truffle and other *Tuber* species help collectors pinpoint Truffle sites.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** Below soil level among roots of beech and birch trees.
- **How it grows** Singly.
- **Color** Black.
- **Size** Fruitbody ¾–2in (2–5cm) wide.
- **Spore color** Yellow-brown.
- **Around the world** Temperate regions. Throughout Europe, including northern Italy, Central Europe, and Turkey. Also found in North Africa. Rare in the UK. Worldwide distribution uncertain.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Baked eggs with Summer truffle (p128), Pan-fried turbot with Truffle sauce (pp142–143).



Grows below soil level among tree roots.



SIDE VIEW

pyramidal
black warts
on surface



SECTION

solid brown flesh
with white veins



Chicken-of-the-woods *Laetiporus sulphureus*

This is an easily identifiable fungus. It breaks out of living trees and quickly produces large yellow and orange fruitbodies. Only edible when young, it becomes crumbly and then leathery and woody as it matures. Although considered flavorful, be advised that some can develop an allergic reaction, especially if found on conifers or Eucalyptus.

The field

- **When to look** Early summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** High up in living hardwood trees, especially oak.
- **How it grows** Mostly in tiers.
- **Color** Yellow or yellow-orange.
- **Size** Brackets 4–20in (10–50cm) wide x 4–12in (10–30cm) deep x ½–2in (1–5cm) thick.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe and North America. Also in Asia.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Usually mild. Can be bitter.
- **Cooking tips** Use only tender, succulent specimens. Prepare by cutting into thin slices or julienne strips.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Often found high up in living trees.

fruitbody grows in overlapping tiers

lustrous yellow or yellow-orange, dulling with age



SIDE VIEW

soft fruitbody turns crumbly with age



UNDERSIDE

pores strikingly yellow



Chanterelle *Cantharellus cibarius*

This species can vary slightly in color, but is often yellow with a hint of red. It smells similar to dried apricots. Found mainly in summer, it needs high rainfall and will not appear if there is a drought. Be careful not to confuse it with the Jack O'Lantern, a poisonous look-alike that grows over the base of dying tree trunks. Also known as Girolle.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** On well-drained soil near spruce and pine, but also near hardwood trees, such as oak.
- **How it grows** In troops.
- **Color** Yellow, with a hint of red.
- **Size** Cap $\frac{3}{4}$ -5in (2-12cm) wide; stem $\frac{3}{4}$ -4in (2-10cm) high x $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ in (0.4-1.5cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Pale cream.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe and North America. Also other cold and warm temperate regions of the world.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Choice. Peppery when raw.
- **Recipes** Chanterelle and king scallop salad (p114), Chanterelle and spinach pie (p132), Roast wild mallard with Chanterelles (pp150-1), Chanterelle and mascarpone sauce (p155).



Grows in troops on well-drained soil.



SIDE VIEW

fruitbodies often grow in tight groups



SIDE VIEW



UNDERSIDE



Horn of Plenty *Craterellus cornucopioides*

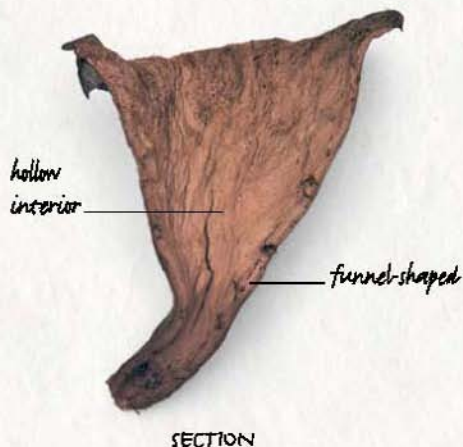
Despite the German and French common names, both of which mean “death trumpet,” this is a culinary delight, particularly with fish. Its dark coloring makes it difficult to spot in its habitat. But it occurs *en masse*, so a basketful can be picked.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** In leaf litter or moss on fairly rich soil in hardwood forest, especially beneath holly. Also near softwood trees.
- **How it grows** In troops or small clusters.
- **Color** Dark gray-brown to black.
- **Size** Cap 1¼–4in (3–10cm) wide; stem 2–5in (5–12cm) high x ¼–¾in (0.5–2cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Temperate regions. Widespread throughout the UK and mainland Europe. Also North America and Canada.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Fairly strong.
- **Cooking tips** Can be tough, so slice thinly. More flavorful after drying (see p108).
- **Recipes** Horn of Plenty with squid, clams, and egg noodles (p124), Prawn, scallop, and Horn of Plenty sauce (p149).



Often found in clusters in leaf litter.



Cauliflower fungus *Sparassis crispa*

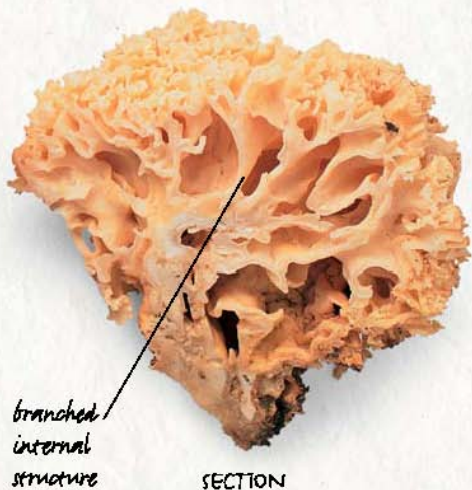
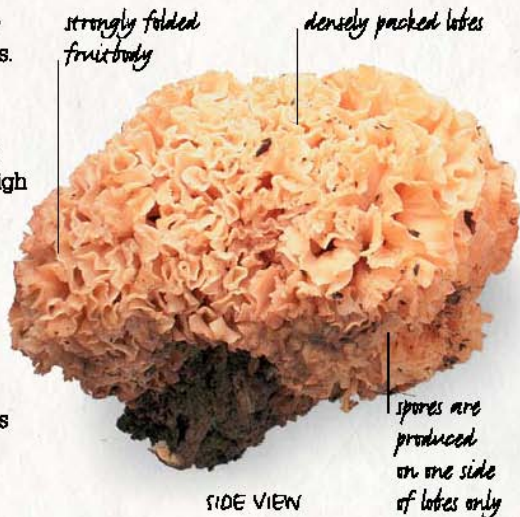
Its pleasant taste and impressive size make the Cauliflower a very popular edible fungus. It is, however, only edible when young or just mature; old specimens have a very unpleasant flavor. The cream-white fruiting body rests on a short, thick stem. It can weigh up to 30lb (14kg) in record specimens, but 2–20lb (1–9kg) is the average weight. Also known as Wood cauliflower.

The field

- **When to look** Late summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** At the base of softwood trunks or stumps, mostly pine, in plantations and native woodland.
- **How it grows** Often solitary.
- **Color** Cream-white.
- **Size** Fruitbody 4–16in (10–40cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Temperate regions. Widespread throughout the UK, mainland Europe, and North America.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Cooking tips** Wash well and dry as much as possible before cooking.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Grows at the base of softwood trunks.



Beefsteak fungus *Fistulina hepatica*

This blood-red fungus produces a tongue-shaped bracket, sometimes on a short stem. The upper surface is moist or sticky, and the spore-bearing underside consists of separable short tubes. The cut flesh has the appearance and the texture of beef or liver, hence its common name, and even contains a red juice resembling blood.

The field

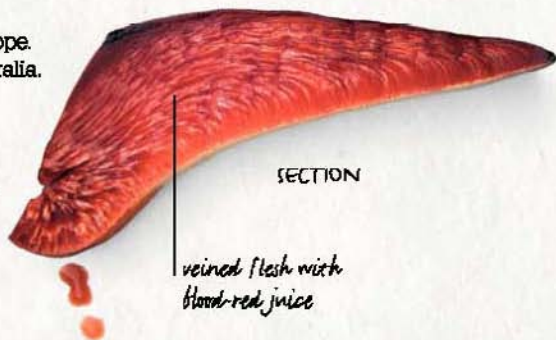
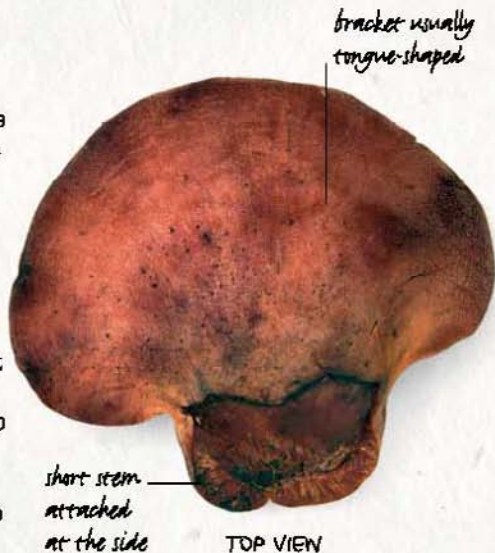
- **When to look** Late summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** On oak and sweet chestnut tree trunks in woods and parks.
- **How it grows** Singly; more rarely with two or more overlapping fruitbodies.
- **Color** Blood red.
- **Size** Bracket 4–10in (10–25cm) wide x up to 8in (20cm) deep x up to 2½in (6cm) thick; tubes ½–¾in (1–1.5cm) long.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Widespread in Europe. Less common in North America and Australia.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Strong and slightly acidic.
- **Cooking tips** Cut into slices and cook as you would meat.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Often grows on the trunks of oak trees.



Fairy ring champignon *Marasmius oreades*

The Fairy ring champignon is often found on garden lawns, where it causes characteristic circles in the turf. It is hygrophanous, meaning that it changes color through loss of moisture. Since they grow in the same habitat, it is important to know the difference between this and the deadly Lawn funnel cap (see p39), recognizable by its decurrent gills.

The field

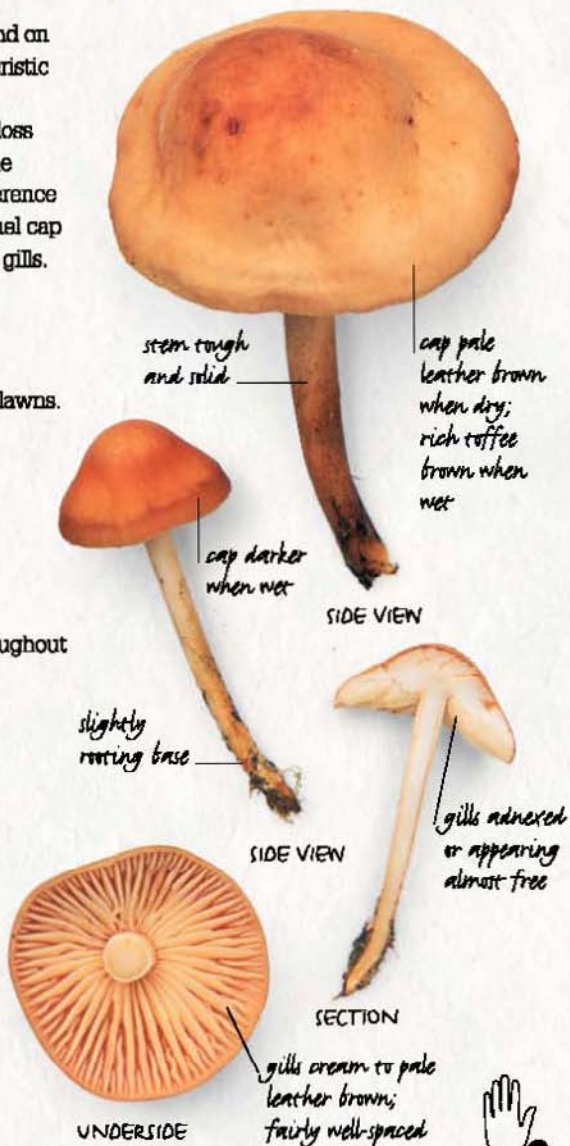
- **When to look** From early summer to mid-autumn.
- **Where to look** Grassland, including lawns.
- **How it grows** In fairy rings.
- **Color** Pale leather brown (cap); creamy-white to brown (stem).
- **Size** Cap $\frac{1}{2}$ –2in (1–5cm) wide; stem $1\frac{1}{4}$ –2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in (3–6cm) or up to 4in (10cm) high x $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{3}{8}$ in (0.3–0.8cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Whitish.
- **Around the world** Widespread throughout Europe and North America.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Cooking tips** Great as a flavoring for soups and stews when dried.
- **Recipes** Fairy ring champignon and poached egg on toast (pp136–137).



Grows in fairy rings in grassland.



Tawny grisette *Amanita fulva*

The Tawny grisette belongs to the *Amanitaceae* family, famous because it includes some of the deadliest gilled mushrooms, such as the Death cap (see p38). This species has a deep tawny cap and an almost smooth, slightly paler stem. The whitish color of the volva, which stains orange-brown, is important for identification.

The field

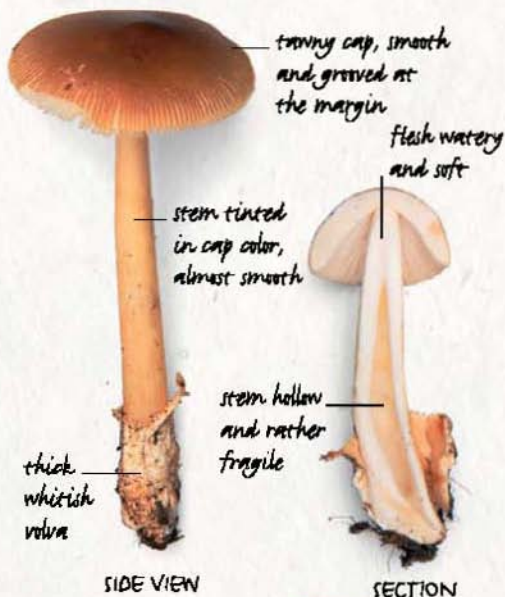
- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** In woodland, in association with the roots of birch trees.
- **How it grows** Singly or in small troops.
- **Color** Deep tawny (cap); white to light orange (stem).
- **Size** Cap 1¼–3¼in (3–8cm) wide; stem 2¾–6in (7–15cm) high x ¾–½in (0.7–1.2cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Whitish.
- **Around the world** Widespread in north temperate zones.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Cooking tips** Before eating this species, it is important to cook it thoroughly.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–186).



Often grows in troops under birch.



Orange grisetta *Amanita crocea*

This striking Grisetta differs from the Tawny grisetta (see opposite) in having a shiny, orange-brown cap and especially in having thin, orange tufts on the stem. The white volva is thick and prominent. Although both the Tawny and Orange grisettes are often found near birch trees, the Orange grisetta prefers much richer soils.

The field

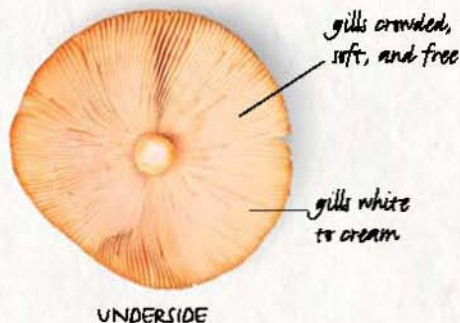
- **When to look** Early summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** Under birch and possibly spruce, on fairly rich soils, in lowlands and near the timber line.
- **How it grows** Singly or in small troops.
- **Color** Rich orange-brown (cap); orange, scaled (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2½–5in (6–12cm) wide; stem 4–8in (10–20cm) high x ½–¾in (1–2cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Whitish.
- **Around the world** Widespread in north temperate zones.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild, sweet, and nutty.
- **Cooking tips** Never eat raw.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Often grows in troops under birch.



Caesar's mushroom *Amanita caesarea*

A legendary, delicious fungus that is found in warm regions. The golden-orange cap and the prominent, loose volva are striking. Known by the Ancient Greeks as "Boletus," the Italians call it "Ovolo," and the French "Orange." Be careful not to confuse Caesar's mushroom with the poisonous Fly agaric, which is usually red with white spots, but sometimes the same orange color. The Fly agaric can be recognized by its white gills.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to early autumn.
- **Where to look** On sandy soils under hardwood trees, especially oaks.
- **How it grows** Single fruitbodies or in troops.
- **Color** Gold-orange (cap); yellow-orange (stem).
- **Size** Cap 3¼–8in (8–20cm) wide; stem 3¼–6½in (8–16cm) high x ¾–1¼in (2–3cm) wide; volva up to 2in (5cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Whitish.
- **Around the world** Mainly Mediterranean in distribution. Not present in the UK.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Choice.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Often grows in troops on sandy soils.



UNDERSIDE



SECTION



Parasol mushroom *Macrolepiota procera*

A spectacular large mushroom, known for the beautiful snakeskin pattern on its stem, which also has a large, movable ring. Unlike the Shaggy parasol (see p54), the flesh does not change color when bruised. Some consider this to be one of the best edible mushrooms, but be careful not to confuse it with the similar-looking but poisonous False parasol, identifiable by its green spores.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** On sandy grass or soil on dunes and dry grassland. Also small, grassy areas in woods and parks.
- **How it grows** In scattered troops.
- **Color** Gray-brown (cap); brown snakeskin pattern (stem).
- **Size** Cap 4–16in (10–40cm) wide; stem 6–16in (15–40cm) high x $\frac{3}{8}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ in (0.8–2cm) wide; stem bulb up to 1½in (4cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White or pinkish.
- **Around the world** Widespread and fairly common in Europe and North America.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Choice.
- **Recipes** Stuffed Parasol caps (p125), Large fungi caps a cotoletta (p145).



Often grows in troops on sandy grass.

large cap is egg-shaped at first, then umbrella-shaped or flat with raised center



SIDE VIEW



SIDE VIEW

center of scaled cap is dark gray-brown

delicate snakeskin pattern on very tall stem

white or cream gills are crowded and free



UNDERSIDE



Shaggy parasol *Chlorophyllum rhacodes*

This species is similar in many ways to the Parasol mushroom (see p53), but it is smaller and lacks the snakeskin stem pattern. Its flesh turns a bright carrot-red when bruised, and very young specimens resemble flower bulbs. Some varieties are known to cause stomach upsets, so it should only be eaten in small amounts, at least initially. Be careful not to confuse it with the False parasol, which can be identified by its green spores. Previously known as *Macrolepiota rhacodes*.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** In hedgerows, parks, forests, and gardens. Also on compost heaps.
- **How it grows** In troops.
- **Color** Pale brown (cap); stripy brown (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2–8in (5–20cm) wide; stem 4–8in (10–20cm) high x ½–¾in (1–2cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Widespread throughout Europe and North America.

The kitchen

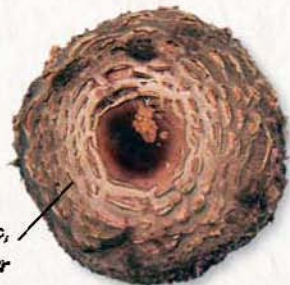
- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–186).



Grows in troops, mostly on good soils.



SIDE VIEW



TOP VIEW



UNDERSIDE



Field mushroom *Agaricus campestris*

A familiar edible mushroom with flesh that faintly reddens when bruised. With age its white, slightly scaly cap turns pink-gray and its pink gills turn brown. It lacks the distinctive almond smell found in some of its relatives (see pp56–57). The ring is small, single, and has no scales on the underside.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** In the open, often in rich, manured grassland grazed by horses or cows.
- **How it grows** In large troops or rings.
- **Color** White to pinkish-gray (cap); white (stem).
- **Size** Cap 1½–4in (4–10cm), up to 5in (12cm) wide; stem 1¼–2¾in (3–7cm) high x ¾–5⁄8in (0.8–1.5cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Chocolate-brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe and North America. Also reported in Hawaiian Islands and Australia.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Choice.
- **Recipes** Radicchio leaves filled with Field mushrooms (pp122–123).



Often grows in troops in grassland.



smooth fleshy cap may develop yellowish spots

SIDE VIEW

gills pink when young, then chocolate-brown; crowded



UNDERSIDE

white flesh eventually turns pink



young pink gills in "button stage"

SECTION



Horse mushroom *Agaricus arvensis*

A close relative of The prince (*see p81*), but without the distinctive cap scales. The stem has a drooping, hanging ring with a wheel-like pattern on its underside. The flesh slowly stains ochre-yellow, and it smells similar to almonds. The Horse mushroom should be eaten in small amounts, since it contains cadmium, a toxic element. Be sure not to confuse this with the poisonous Yellow stainer with its inklike smell (*see p39*).

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** In horse-grazed pasture, lawns, and parkland.
- **How it grows** Mostly in rings.
- **Color** Whitish to ochre-yellow.
- **Size** Cap 2¼–6in (7–15cm), up to 8in (20cm) wide; stem 2¾–6in (7–15cm) high x ½–1¼in (1–3cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Chocolate-brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe, North America, and other temperate regions of the world.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Strong.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (*pp162–185*).



Grows mostly in rings in grassy areas.



SIDE VIEW

crowded gills, pinkish to chocolate-brown



UNDERSIDE



SECTION



Wood mushroom *Agaricus silvicola*

This species is a woodland form of the Horse mushroom (*see opposite*), but it is usually less robust. Its yellow-white cap has tiny gray scales at the center, and the bulb is flattened. It also has an almondy smell. Eat only in small amounts, as it contains cadmium, which is potentially carcinogenic. Do not confuse with the poisonous Yellow stainer, which has an odor similar to ink (*see p39*).

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** On rich woodland soil mixed with debris, under soft and hardwood trees.
- **How it grows** A few together or occasionally in rings.
- **Color** Yellow-white to pale brown.
- **Size** Cap 2½–5in (6–12cm) wide; stem 3¼–5in (8–12cm) high x ½–¾in (1–2cm) wide; bulb up to 1¼in (3cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Chocolate-brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe, North America, and other north temperate zones.

The kitchen

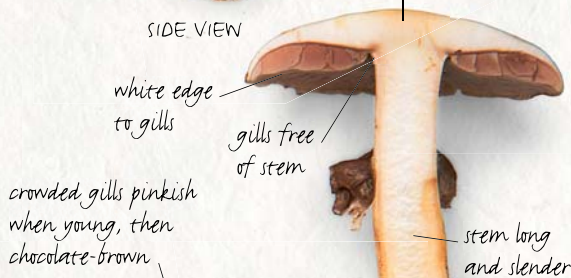
- **Flavor** Strong.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (*pp162–185*).



Often grows on rich woodland soil.



SIDE VIEW



SECTION



UNDERSIDE



Gypsy *Cortinarius caperatus*

The Gypsy's wrinkled cap is referenced by its Latin name—*caperatus* means "corrugated." When young, this cap is egg-shaped, and looks as if it is covered in white cobwebs. The stem is pale ocher, with a narrow white ring. The adnexed, or narrowly attached, gills have toothed edges. Previously known as *Rozites caperatus*.

The field

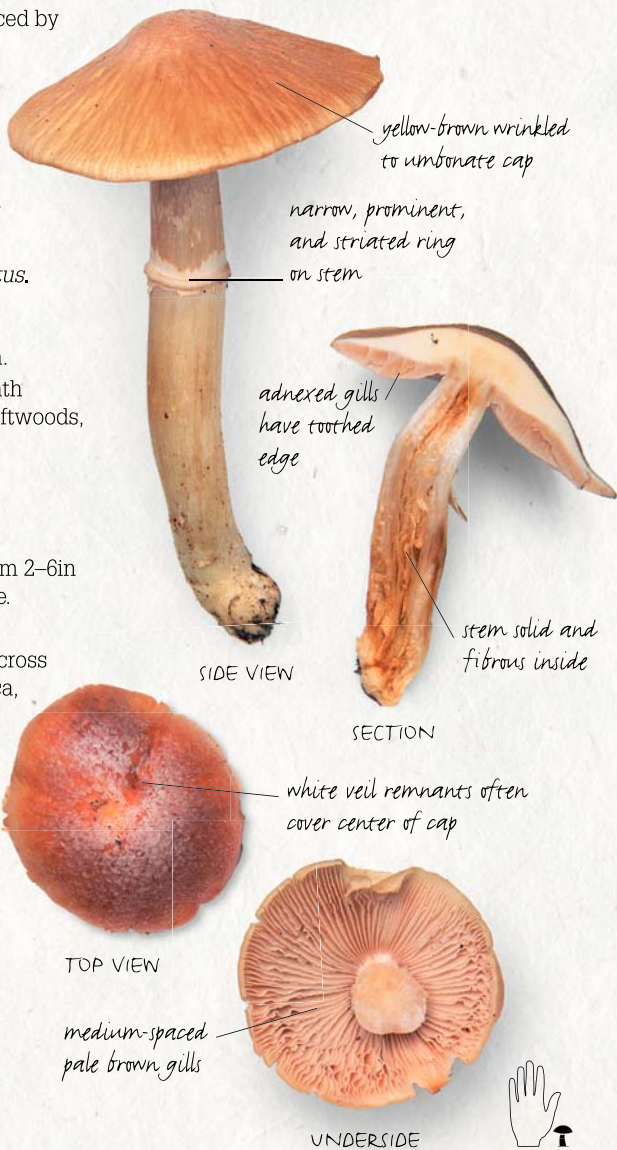
- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** On acid soil beneath hardwood trees (often beech) and softwoods, such as pine and spruce.
- **How it grows** In troops.
- **Color** Yellow-brown (cap); pale ocher (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2–5in (5–12cm) wide; stem 2–6in (5–15cm) high x ½–¾in (1–2cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Pale brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe, north and east North America, and other north temperate zones.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Often grows in troops on acid soil.



Charcoal burner *Russula cyanoxantha*

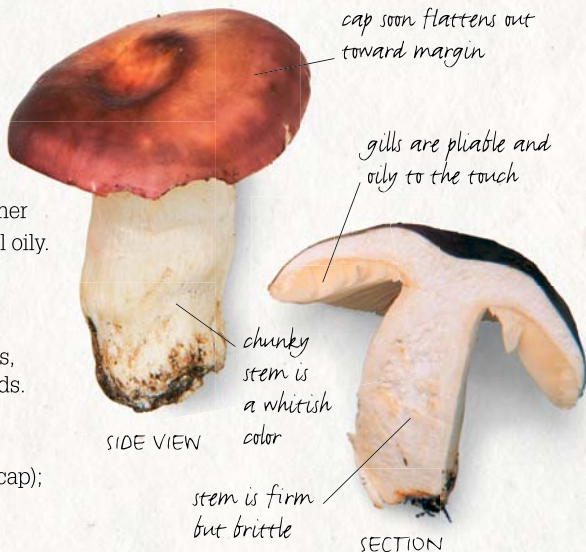
This odd name comes from the French *charbonnier*. The cap (which can be half-peeled) is a mixture of colors varying from purplish browns to olive greens, making it difficult to identify with confidence. Unlike many other *Russula* species, the gills are pliable rather than brittle, and when handled, they feel oily.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** Under hardwood trees, especially beech, but also with softwoods. It prefers acid soil.
- **How it grows** Singly or in troops.
- **Color** Purplish brown to olive green (cap); whitish (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2–6in (5–15cm) wide; stem 2–4in (5–10cm) high x ½–1¼in (1–3cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Across north temperate zones. Widespread across Europe; less common in North America.

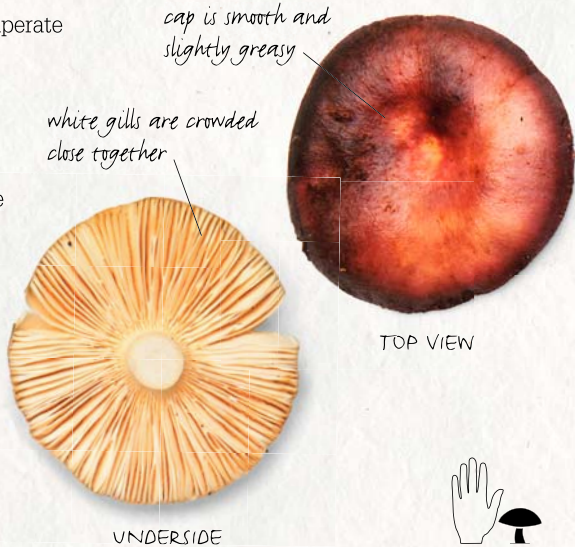
The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



cap is smooth and slightly greasy

white gills are crowded close together



Often grows in troops on acid soil.



Cep *Boletus edulis*

One of the most sought after of all edible fungi, the Cep is closely related to several other similar, equally edible Boletes. Good markers include the bun-shaped cap, the barrel or club-shaped stem with a faint net pattern on the upper part, and the spongellike pores. Also known as Porcini or Penny bun.

The field

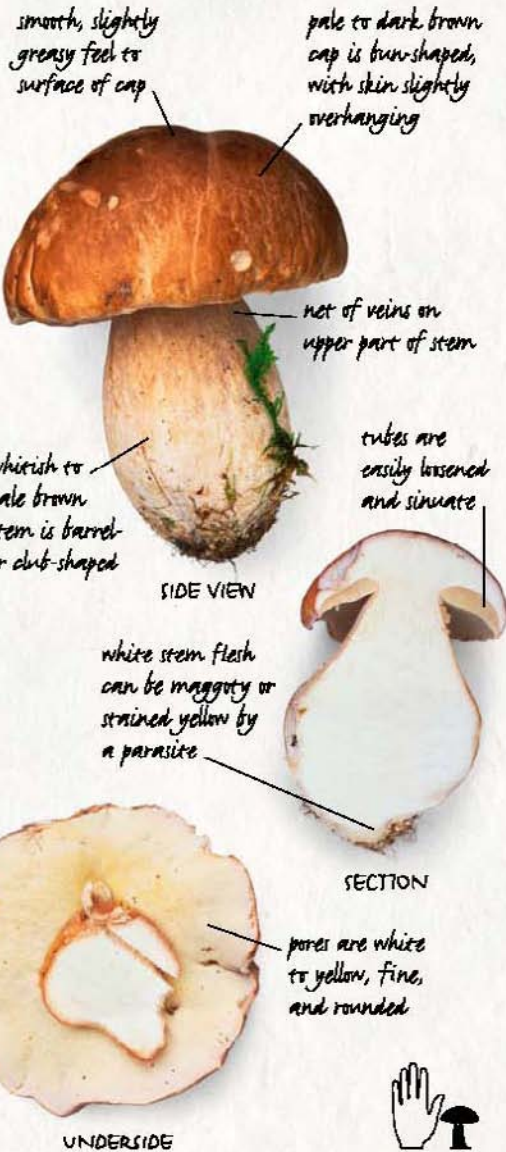
- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** In moss-rich woodland, under both hardwood and softwood trees.
- **How it grows** Singly or in troops.
- **Color** Pale to dark brown (cap); whitish to pale brown (stem).
- **Size** Cap 4–10in (10–25cm), down to 2in (5cm) wide; stem 4–8in (10–20cm) high x 1¼–4in (3–10cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Olive-brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe, North America, and other north temperate zones. Also found in parts of New Zealand and South Africa.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Choice.
- **Recipes** Petit sale with winter root vegetables and Porcini (pp118–119), Potato, celeriac, and Cep hats (p139), Mushroom bruschetta (pp146–147).



Often grows in troops in woodland.



Summer bolete *Boletus reticulatus*

In shape and size, the Summer bolete is similar to the Cep (*see opposite*), but the buff-brown cap skin cracks and is a paler color. The stem net is also more extensive. The Summer bolete occurs some weeks before the main flush of the Cep, and continues fruiting well into the autumn.

The field

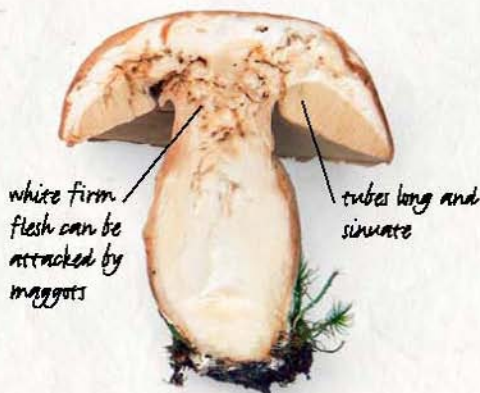
- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** In woodland, under hardwood trees, such as beech and oak.
- **How it grows** In troops or a few together.
- **Color** Warm buff-brown (cap); pale brown (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2¾–6in (7–15cm), up to 10in (25cm) wide; stem 2½–6in (6–15cm) high x ¾–2in (2–5cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Olive-brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread across north temperate zones.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Choice.
- **Cooking tips** Young Boletes are best for pickling and eating raw in salads.
- **Recipes** Mushroom bruschetta (pp146–147), Boletes with balsamic vinegar (p159).



SIDE VIEW



SECTION



Grows underneath hardwood trees.



Chestnut bolete *Gyroporus castaneus*

The Chestnut bolete has a rich orange-brown cap and a fragile, chambered paler orange-brown stem. Its flesh does not stain when it is cut and, unusually for a member of the Bolete family, it is quite brittle. The taste is pleasantly nutty.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** Under hardwood trees, especially oaks, but also near pines. Often found on sandy soil.
- **How it grows** Singly or a few together.
- **Color** Rich orange-brown (cap); pale orange-brown (stem).
- **Size** Cap 1¼–3¼in (3–8cm) up to 5in (12cm) wide; stem 1¾–2¾in (4–7cm) high x ½–1¼in (1–3cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Pale yellowish.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe and North America. Also recorded in New Zealand and Australia.

The kitchen

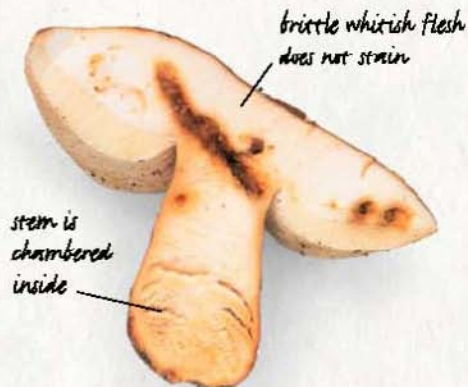
- **Flavor** Mild and nutty.
- **Cooking tips** As with all Boletes, it is best to use firm specimens for cooking.
- **Recipes** Mushroom bruschetta (pp146–147), Boletes with balsamic vinegar (p159).



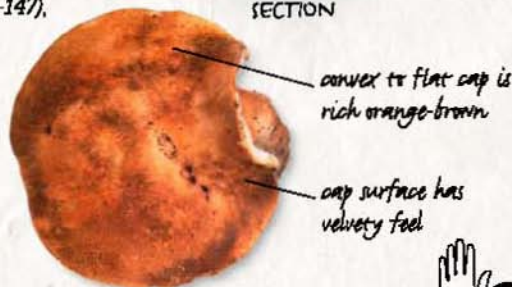
Often found on sandy soil in woodland.



SIDE VIEW



SECTION



TOP VIEW



Red aspen bolete *Leccinum aurantiacum*

The Red aspen bolete belongs to a complex, red-capped group of *Leccinum* species. As the name implies, this mushroom is associated with aspen trees, although it can also be found with poplar, birch, and oak. It is distinguished by having reddish brown scales on its stem—an important marker for identification. The flesh eventually darkens to gray-black when cut.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** In woodland under aspen trees. Also under poplar, birch, and oak trees.
- **How it grows** Typically a few together.
- **Color** Orange-brown (cap); reddish-brown scales (stem).
- **Size** Cap 3¼–6in (8–15cm), up to 8in (20cm) wide; stem 4–6in (10–15cm) high x ¾–1¼in (1.6–3cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Ocher-brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread in Europe.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Mushroom bruschetta (pp146–147), Boletes with balsamic vinegar (p159).



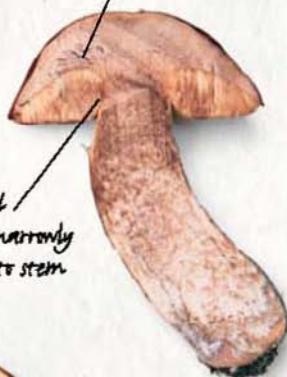
orange-brown cap skin is overhanging

almost cylindrical stem, widens at base, and is covered with reddish brown scales



SIDE VIEW

firm white flesh stains blackish



pale colored tubes are narrowly attached to stem

SECTION



fine pores are pale ocher

UNDERSIDE



Often grows in woodland under aspen



Orange birch bolete *Leccinum versipelle*

A very handsome *Leccinum* species, whose orange cap contrasts with its tall, black-scaled stem. The flesh stains gray-black. The stem is rather tough; the cap is more tender, but as an edible mushroom, the Orange birch bolete lacks the choice quality of many of its relatives.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** In damp woodland, under birch trees.
- **How it grows** Singly or a few together.
- **Color** Bright orange (cap); black scales (stem).
- **Size** Cap 3¼–6in (8–15cm), up to 8in (20cm) wide; stem 4–7in (10–18cm) high x ½–1½in (1.5–4cm), up to 2in (5cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Ocher-brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe, but rare to endangered in the Netherlands.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Cooking tips** Turns black when cooked. Use only the cap if the stem seems tough.
- **Recipes** Mushroom bruschetta (pp146–147), Boletes with balsamic vinegar (p159).



Grows in damp woodland under birch.

Brown birch bolete *Leccinum scabrum*

Gray-white pores, gray-black scales on a tall, whitish stem and a domed brown cap identify this birch-associated species. The flesh of the cap is soft and the stem is fibrous. In some specimens of Brown birch boletes, the flesh can turn pink when cut.

The field

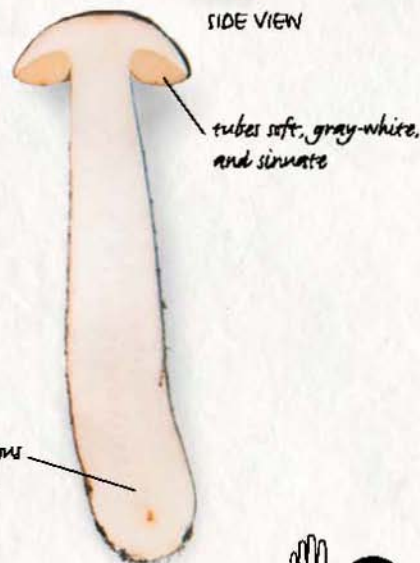
- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** Under birch trees, often on damp ground.
- **How it grows** Singly, a few together, or in troops.
- **Color** Brown (cap); Gray-black scales (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2½–6in (6–15cm), up to 8in (20cm) wide; stem 4–8in (10–20cm) high x ½–1½in (1–3cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Ocher-brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe, North America, and other north temperate zones.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Cooking tips** Eat as soon after collecting as possible, as it does not keep well.
- **Recipes** Mushroom bruschetta (pp146–147), Boletes with balsamic vinegar (p159).



Grows underneath birch trees.



SECTION



Slippery Jack *Suillus luteus*

A short-stemmed Boletes with a slimy cap, whose skin can easily be pulled off. Lemon-yellow pores and a stem ring with a dark underside are also good field marks. The stem becomes purplish with age. Pick in dry weather to avoid excess slime and eat with caution as reports indicate some people may be allergic.

The field

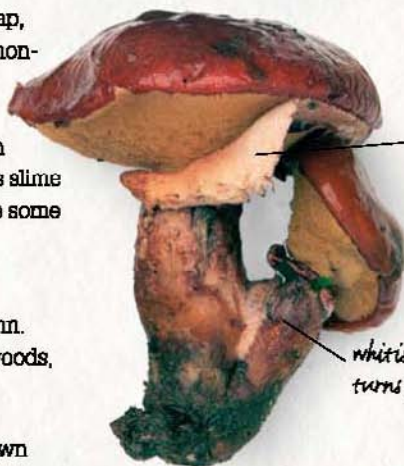
- **When to look** Late summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** Under pine trees in woods, plantations, and gardens.
- **How it grows** Typically in troops.
- **Color** Purple-brown to chocolate-brown (cap); whitish to purplish (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2–4in (5–10cm), up to 6in (15cm) wide; stem 2–4in (5–10cm) high x ½–1½in (1.5–3cm), down to ½in (1cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Ocher-brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread in Europe, North America, and other north temperate regions. Also Australia and New Zealand.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Cooking tips** The slimy cap can be peeled before cooking if necessary.
- **Recipes** Mushroom bruschetta (pp146–147), Boletes with balsamic vinegar (p159).



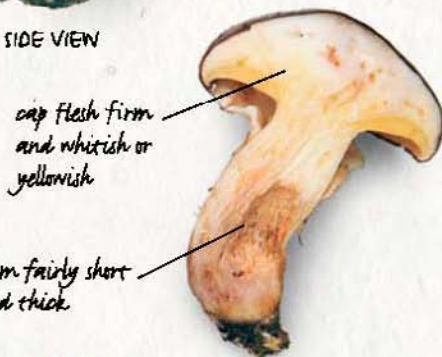
Often found in troops beneath pines.



prominent stem ring is whitish above and purple underneath

whitish lower stem turns purplish with age

SIDE VIEW



cap flesh firm and whitish or yellowish

stem fairly short and thick

SECTION



fine pores are a pale lemon-yellow

UNDERSIDE



Bovine bolete *Suillus bovinus*

The name *Suillus bovinus* translates roughly as "cow fungi" and dates back to Roman times. The Bovine bolete is usually a small species with olive-hued, subdivided pores. It has an orange to rusty brown cap. The ringless pale brown stems are very short and often barely visible before picking.

The field

- **When to look** Late summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** In moss and pine tree litter on a variety of soils, often sandy. Generally associated with Scots Pine and other two-needled pines.
- **How it grows** In troops.
- **Color** Orange to rusty brown (cap); pale brown (stem).
- **Size** Cap 1¼–2¾in (3–7cm), up to 6in (15cm) wide; stem 1¼–2½in (3–6cm) high x ¼–½in (0.5–1cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Brownish olive.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe. Also found in parts of Asia including Japan. Absent in North America.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Mushroom bruschetta (pp146–147), Boletes with balsamic vinegar (p159).



Often grows among pine litter.



Giant puffball *Langermannia gigantea*

This is one of the best known edible fungi, with news of prize specimens often reaching the newspapers. Its football-shaped fruitbodies regularly weigh above 9lb (4kg), and record finds of over 45lb (20kg) have been reported. Only the firmest young specimens of Puffball are worth eating.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** On disturbed soil or on grass in fields, hedgerows, woodland edges, and parks.
- **How it grows** Mostly in fairy rings.
- **Color** White or cream.
- **Size** Fruitbody 8–20in (20–50cm), up to 28in (70cm) across.
- **Spore mass** Olive-brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread and locally common throughout the UK, mainland Europe, and other temperate zones worldwide, excluding South America and western North America.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Fairly strong.
- **Recipes** Cream of Giant puffball soup (pp134–135), Fried Puffball slices (p154).



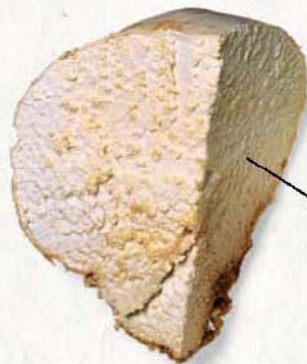
Often found in fairy rings on grass.

huge white or cream ball-shaped fruitbody

outer skin leathery and smooth; finally rots away

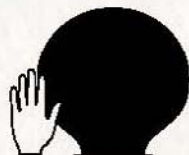


SIDE VIEW



flesh edible only when white and firm

SEGMENT



Meadow puffball *Vascellum pratense*

The uninitiated often find the Meadow puffball difficult to identify. Its key characteristic, a kind of membrane that separates the fertile globe-shaped part and the short, sterile stem part, can be very difficult to see. The globe usually has a rather flattened top which, when mature, has a large opening through which the spores disperse.

The field

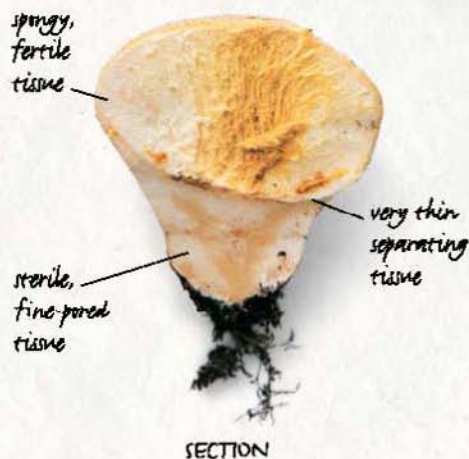
- **When to look** Summer to autumn.
- **Where to look** On soil and humus in grassy areas such as downland, parks, and lawns; also in heathland.
- **How it grows** Mostly in small troops.
- **Color** White, then yellowish to pale brown.
- **Size** Fruitbody $\frac{3}{8}$ – $1\frac{1}{2}$ in (1.5–4cm) high x $\frac{3}{4}$ – $1\frac{1}{4}$ in (2–4.5cm), up to $2\frac{1}{2}$ in (6cm) wide.
- **Spore mass** Gray-olive to olive-brown.
- **Around the world** Temperate regions. Widespread throughout the UK, mainland Europe, North America, and New Zealand.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Cooking tips** Only firm, young specimens are worth eating.
- **Recipes** Puffball tempura (pp112–113).



Mostly grows in troops in grassy areas.



Deceiver *Laccaria laccata*

The name of this species is derived from the extremely variable color of the fruitbodies. Both caps and stems can be found in a range of pink-browns, and the color fades as it matures. It is a relative of the Amethyst deceiver, which is a stunning amethyst-violet color, changing to pale lilac with age.

The field

- **When to look** Summer to early winter.
- **Where to look** On damp soil under trees in woods and parks; also in boggy places under willow trees.
- **How it grows** In troops.
- **Color** Pink or reddish brown, pales with age.
- **Size** Cap $\frac{1}{2}$ –2in (1–5cm) wide; stem $\frac{3}{4}$ –2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in (2–6cm) high x $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ in (0.2–0.5cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Widespread and common across Europe, North America, and other north temperate zones.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Cooking tips** Remove stems before cooking as they can be tough.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Grows in troops, often on damp soil.



cap a shade of pink or reddish brown

strongly fibrillate and robust stem in this specimen

SIDE VIEW

old specimen becomes pale



thin-stemmed form

SIDE VIEW



Hedgehog fungus *Hydnum repandum*

The Hedgehog fungus is a very fleshy and flavorful mushroom. The spines under the cap are fragile, but the flesh is firm. Hedgehog fungi often grow so close together that their shape, which resembles a sheep's footprint, becomes distorted. The Terracotta hedgehog is a smaller, orange, closely related species. Also known as Pied de mouton.

The field

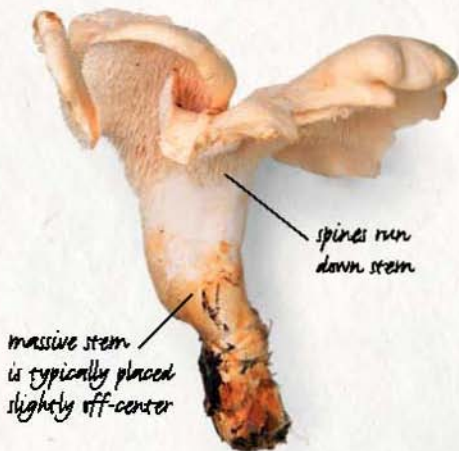
- **When to look** Autumn.
- **Where to look** On mossy soil in woodland, with both softwood and hardwood trees.
- **How it grows** Troops in rings or clusters.
- **Color** Pale cream to ochre.
- **Size** Cap 2–6in (5–15cm) wide; stem 1¼–2¾in (3–7cm) high x ½–1¼in (1–3cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Widespread across north temperate zones.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Strong; tends to bitter and tannic in older specimens.
- **Cooking tips** Remove the spines before cooking, especially with older specimens.
- **Recipes** Hedgehog fungus and sorrel frittata (p129), Hedgehog fungus parcels (p144).



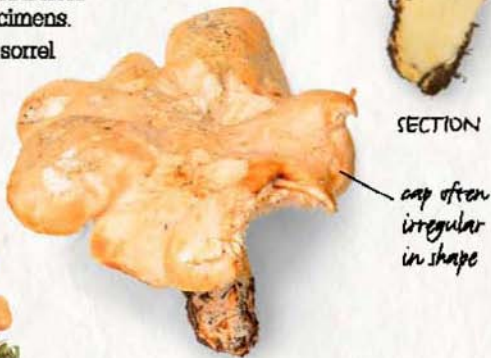
Grows in clustered troops on mossy soil.



SIDE VIEW



SECTION



TOP VIEW



Rickstone funnel cap *Clitocybe geotropa*

Unlike other members of the *Clitocybe* family, this tall, edible fungus is easy to identify, due to its distinctive funnel-shaped cap. The funnel has a central umbo (raised lump or boss) in the center and, like the stem, is a pale flesh brown in color. It has a tendency to grow in fairy rings. Also known as Trooping or Giant funnel cap.

The field

- **When to look** Autumn.
- **Where to look** Mostly in woodland, mainly under hardwood trees, but also in certain types of softwood forest.
- **How it grows** In fairy rings.
- **Color** Pale flesh brown.
- **Size** 2–8in (5–20cm) wide; stem 3¼–8in (8–20cm) high x ½–1¼in (1–3cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe, North America, and other north temperate zones.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Rickstone funnel caps with cannellini beans (p138).



Grows in fairy rings in woodland.



Honey fungus *Armillaria mellea* or *gallica*

A range of similar fungi once grouped under the name *Armillaria mellea* are now split into several different species. Bulbous honey fungus (*Armillaria gallica*) is shown here. Its cap scales are fine, pointed, and dark. In contrast, *Armillaria mellea* has few, pale cap scales and a pointed stem. Be cautious when eating this fungus, since it can cause gastric upsets in some people.

The field

- **When to look** Autumn.
- **Where to look** Mostly on or around dead or dying hardwood, but also on softwoods, in woods, parks, and gardens.
- **How it grows** In clusters or scattered.
- **Color** Honey-yellow to brown (cap); white to yellow (stem).
- **Size** Cap 1¼–5in (3–12cm) wide; stem 1½–5in (4–12cm) high x ½–1¼in (1–3cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** North temperate regions. Widespread across Europe and eastern North America.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Very strong.
- **Recipes** Honey fungus tart (p158).



Often grows in clusters near stumps.



SIDE VIEW



SECTION



Wood blewit *Lepista nuda*

A popular and quite easy to identify fungus. Wood blewits are now cultivated on a commercial scale. The cap and stem tend to be a violet-brown, while the gills are brighter violet. It has a strongly perfumed aroma.

The field

- **When to look** Mainly autumn.
- **Where to look** Nutrient-rich habitats, such as compost and thick woodland litter.
- **How it grows** In small troops and rings.
- **Color** Violet to violet-brown.
- **Size** Cap 2–8in (5–20cm) wide; stem 1½–4in (4–10cm) high x ¾–1½in (1.5–3cm) wide
- **Spore deposit** Dingy pink.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe and North America. Also in temperate Australia.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Fairly strong. Meaty and moist.
- **Cooking tips** Must be cooked before eating.
- **Recipes** Confit of wild rabbit with a sweet onion and Wood blewit ragout (p121). A hot winter Wood blewit salad (pp156–157).



Grows in small troops on rich soil.



SIDE VIEW



SECTION



UNDERSIDE



Field blewit *Lepista saeva*

The fibrous stem of this mushroom is a bright lilac color. The cap is pale leather brown, and domed when young, flattening with age. The overall shape tends to be squatter and more robust than that of the Wood blewit (*opposite*) and it prefers open grassy habitats.

The field

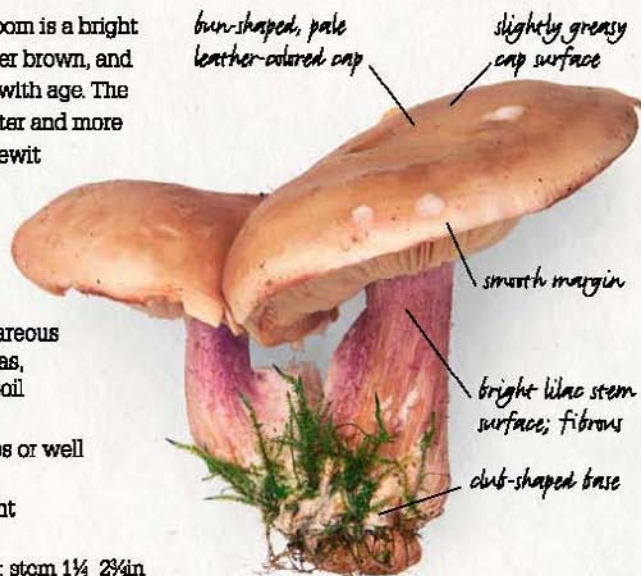
- **When to look** Autumn.
- **Where to look** On rich, calcareous soils, mostly in open grassy areas, road sides, and parks; on bare soil in calcareous woodland.
- **How it grows** In small troops or well developed fairy rings.
- **Color** Pale leather (cap); bright lilac (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2 8in (5–20cm) wide; stem 1¼–2¾in (3–7cm) high x ½–1½in (1.5–4cm) wide
- **Spore deposit** Dingy pink.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe and North America.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Fairly strong and meaty.
- **Cooking tips** Cook before eating.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Grows in small troops in grassy areas.



bun-shaped, pale leather-colored cap

slightly greasy cap surface

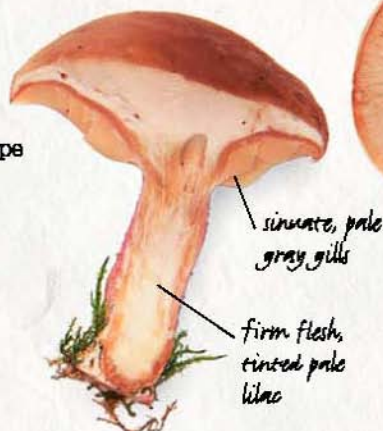
smooth margin

bright lilac stem surface; fibrous

club-shaped base

SIDE VIEW

crowded gills, cream to pinkish brown



sinuate, pale gray gills

firm flesh, tinted pale lilac

SECTION



UNDERSIDE



Clustered domecap *Lyophyllum decastes*

This fungus forms clusters late in the autumn, and prefers park and garden soils. The cap is gray-brown, with wavy edges and silvery streaks. The gills are white to pale gray. The stem is white at the top, shading to brown at the base. Also known as Fried chicken mushroom.

The field

- **When to look** Autumn, mostly late in the season.
- **Where to look** Along woodland rides, and in garden settings and parks. Often found on disturbed soil.
- **How it grows** In dense clusters.
- **Color** Gray-brown (cap); whitish to brown (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2–4in (5–10cm) wide; stem 1½–4in (4–10cm), up to 6in (15cm) high x ¼–1in (0.5–2.5cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Widespread and common across Europe, North America, and other north temperate zones.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Often grows in dense clusters in parks.



SIDE VIEW



UNDERSIDE



The miller *Clitopilus prunulus*

The miller is so-called because of its strong smell of fresh, moist meal. It has pinkish gills that (like those of the Chanterelle) run down its stem, which is entirely pale gray-white in color. Be sure to recognize this mushroom correctly, as it looks similar to two or three poisonous types. It is best to take a spore print (see p36) to confirm its identity.

The field

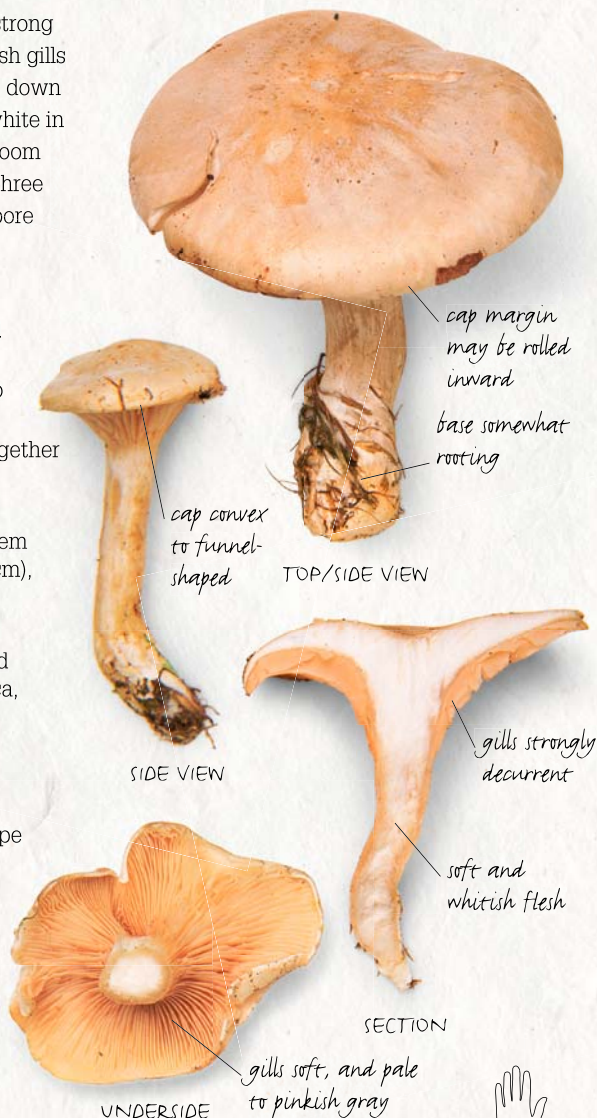
- **When to look** Throughout autumn.
- **Where to look** On humus-rich soil in mostly acid types of woodland; also close to trees in grassy places.
- **How it grows** A few fruitbodies together or trooping.
- **Color** Pale gray-white.
- **Size** Cap $1\frac{1}{4}$ – $3\frac{1}{2}$ in (3–9cm) wide; stem $\frac{3}{4}$ – $2\frac{1}{2}$ in (2–6cm) high x $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ in (0.5–1cm), sometimes up to $\frac{5}{8}$ in (1.5cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Pinkish.
- **Around the world** Widespread and common across Europe, North America, and other north temperate zones.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Often grows in troops in grassy places.



Lawyer's Wig *Coprinus comatus*

This edible species is fleshier than most members of its family. The shaggy wig-like caps, which tend to deliquesce quickly, are a key feature. The stems are white, with a distinctive ring. Pick only young specimens, and cook them as soon as you get home. Also known as Shaggy inkcap.

The field

- **When to look** Throughout autumn.
- **Where to look** On lawns and along roads and woodland paths, often on disturbed soil.
- **How it grows** In large troops.
- **Color** White to gray (cap); white (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2–8in (5–20cm) high x $\frac{3}{4}$ – $2\frac{1}{2}$ in (2–6cm) wide; stem 4–14in (10–35cm) high x $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ in (1–2cm), up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ in (3cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Black.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe, North America, and other north temperate zones. Introduced to Australia and New Zealand.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Strong.
- **Cooking tips** Be prepared for the black "ink" that forms the juice of these mushrooms when cooked.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Grows in large troops on disturbed soil.



Saffron milk cap *Lactarius deliciosus*

The Saffron milk cap is one of many *Lactarius* species with bright orange milk. Its cap has dark orange rings, and when bruised, stains green. The stem is a pale orange, with darker depressions. The species is known for its thick flesh, clear colors, and association with pines and damp places.

The field

- **When to look** Autumn.
- **Where to look** Beneath or near to two-needled pines, such as Scots pine.
- **How it grows** In troops.
- **Color** Brownish orange (cap); pale orange with dark brown depressions (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2–6in (5–15cm) wide; stem 1¼–2¼in (3–7cm) high x ½–1¼in (1–3cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Whitish.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe, North America, and other temperate zones. Introduced to Australia, New Zealand, and Chile.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Cooking tips** Blanch before eating.
- **Recipes** Saffron milk caps with cream (p120), Pan-fried chicken breast with ragout of Saffron milk caps (pp130–131).



Grows in troops near two-needled pines.



cap slightly zoned, in tones of brownish orange

SIDE VIEW

crowded gills colored as cap



UNDERSIDE

red flesh yields orange milk



SECTION



Red-staining mushroom *Agaricus silvaticus*

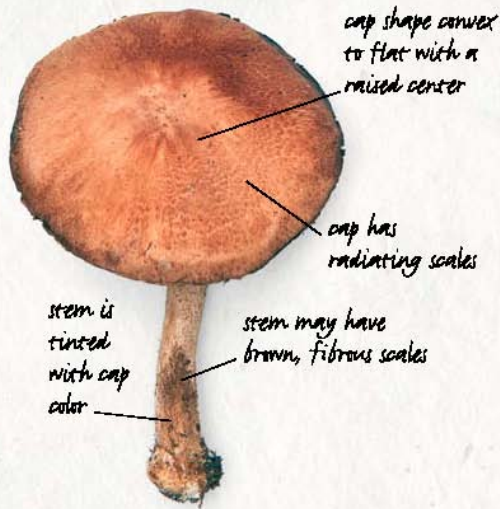
This is a close relative of the Field mushroom (see p55), but it has fine brown fibers and radiating scales on its cap. As its name implies, the white flesh can stain deep red after cutting or bruising. Also known as Blushing wood mushroom.

The field

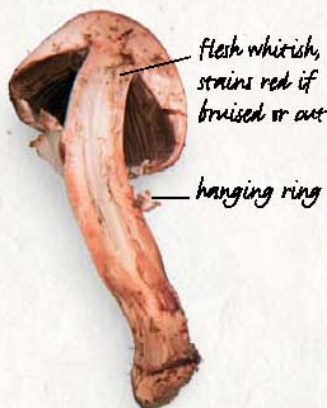
- **When to look** Throughout autumn.
- **Where to look** On pine needle-beds and softwood debris in woodland, plantations, and parks. Also often found on woodchip mulch beds.
- **How it grows** In troops or rings.
- **Color** Brown to dark brown (cap); pale brown (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2–4in (5–10cm) wide; stem 2–4in (5–10cm) high x ¼–½in (0.5–1.5cm) wide; base up to 1in (2.5cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Chocolate-brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe, North America, and other north temperate zones.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Fairly strong.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



SIDE VIEW



SECTION

gills pale gray, turning rose-pink and, finally, chocolate-brown.



UNDERSIDE



Often grows in troops on needle-beds.



The prince *Agaricus augustus*

The prince can be identified by the brown-scaled circles on its cap and the yellow reaction of the flesh when bruised, together with its strong scent of almonds. Its stem is white to pinkish brown in color, and scaly. This mushroom contains a high degree of the toxic element cadmium, so it is best eaten in small amounts.

The field

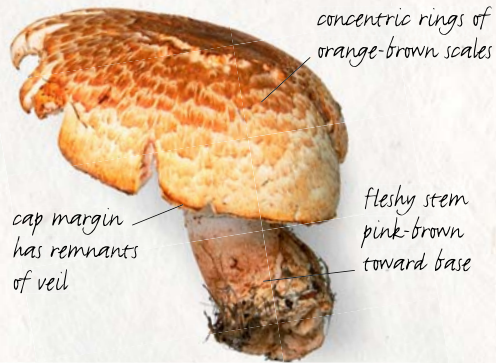
- **When to look** Throughout autumn.
- **Where to look** On rich soil in all types of woodland and parks, and garden compost.
- **How it grows** A few together or in large troops.
- **Color** Orange-brown (cap); white to pinkish brown (stem).
- **Size** Cap 3¼–6in (8–15cm), up to 8in (20cm) wide; stem 2¾–5in (7–12cm), up to 8in (20cm) high x ⅝–1½in (1.5–3.5cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Chocolate-brown
- **Around the world** In north temperate zones. Widespread across Europe, North America, Canada, and parts of Mexico.

The kitchen

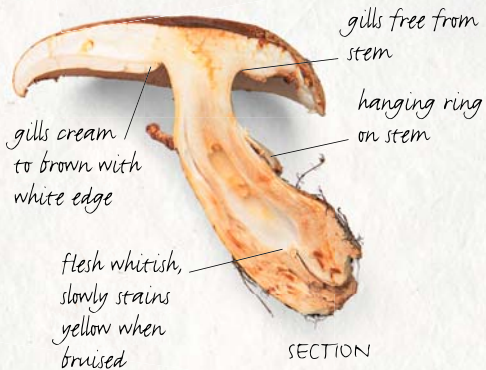
- **Flavor** Strong.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Often grows in troops on rich soil.



SIDE VIEW



SECTION



UNDERSIDE



Bay bolete *Boletus badius*

In many ways, the Bay bolete looks similar to the Cep (see p60), but its uniformly red-brown stem is more cylindrical and lacks any net pattern. The green-yellow pores stain blue when touched, but this disappears during cooking. The best time for finding this species is late in the autumn when other Boletes have finished fruiting.

The field

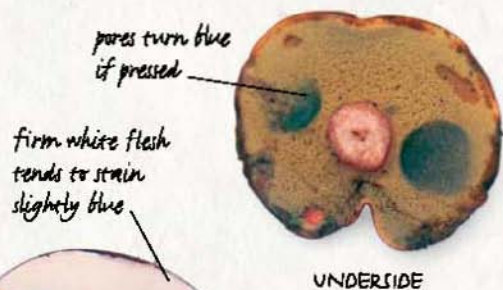
- **When to look** Late autumn.
- **Where to look** In woodland and plantations, usually under pines, but also found with hardwood trees and Norway Spruce.
- **How it grows** Singly or in scattered groups.
- **Color** Dark chestnut brown (cap); red-brown (stem).
- **Size** Cap 1½–6in (4–15cm) wide; stem 1½–5in (4–12cm) high x ½–1½in (1–4cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Olive-brown.
- **Around the world** In north temperate zones. Widespread across Europe and North America.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Choice.
- **Recipes** Crispy Bolete caps (p133), Mushroom bruschetta (pp146–147).



Grows in scattered groups under pines.



Larch bolete *Suillus grevillei*

In early autumn, this Boletes can be found springing up under or near larch trees—the host tree may be some distance away. It is variable in color, but is often a vivid yellowish orange. Its smell has been likened to crushed geraniums. It is advisable to peel off the veil covering the cap to prevent it from becoming soft and slimy.

The field

- **When to look** Autumn.
- **Where to look** Among grass and larch litter near larch trees, in woodland, plantations, and gardens.
- **How it grows** In troops.
- **Color** Bright yellow to yellowish orange (cap); yellow-orange (stem).
- **Size** Cap 2–4in (5–10cm), up to 7in (18cm) wide; stem 1½–4in (4–10cm), up to 8in (20cm) high x ½–¾in (1–2cm), up to 1in (2.5cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Yellowish brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread across Europe and North America, and other north temperate zones.

The kitchen

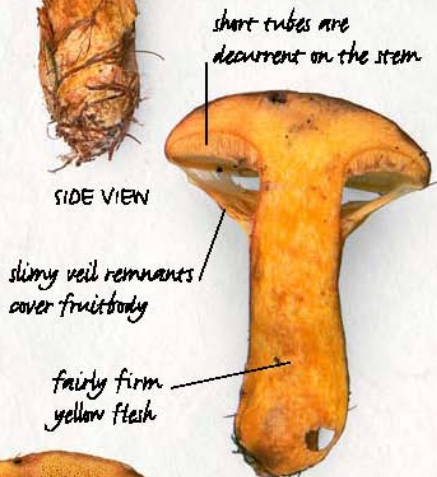
- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Mushroom bruschetta (pp146–147), Boletes with balsamic vinegar (p159).



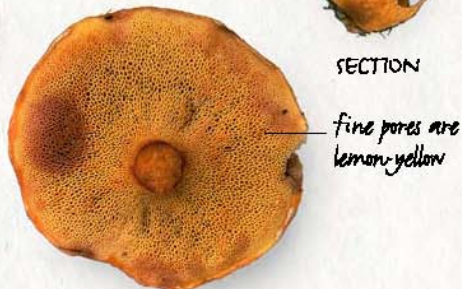
Often grows in troops among grass.



SIDE VIEW



SECTION



UNDERSIDE



Common puffball *Lycoperdon perlatum*

The short, wartlike spines on this small white Puffball leave a regular pattern on the outer skin when they fall off. These spines also extend over the stem, but less densely. When the Common puffball matures and turns brown, its spores are dispersed from a projection in the center of the cap.

The field

- **When to look** Autumn.
- **Where to look** On soil, mainly in woodland, but also found in open grassland.
- **How it grows** In dense groups and clusters, or occasionally singly.
- **Color** White to brown.
- **Size** Fruitbody $1\frac{1}{2}$ – $2\frac{3}{4}$ in (4–7cm), sometimes down to $\frac{3}{4}$ in (2cm) and up to $3\frac{1}{2}$ in (9cm) high x $\frac{3}{4}$ – $1\frac{1}{2}$ in (2–4cm) wide.
- **Spore mass** Yellowish to olive-brown.
- **Around the world** Widespread and fairly common in Europe and North America.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild in young specimens, with a spongy texture.
- **Cooking tips** Eat only young, white specimens.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Often grows in dense groups on soil.



Trumpet chanterelle *Cantharellus tubaeformis*

Although its slender stem is bright yellow, its dark brown, velvety cap and gray gills blend so well with a background of dead leaves that this mushroom is fairly difficult to find. However it normally grows in such profusion that large quantities can be gathered for drying or to eat freshly cooked. Its ability to withstand quite sharp frosts makes it a true winter mushroom. Also known as Winter chanterelle or Yellow legs.

The field

- **When to look** Autumn to winter.
- **Where to look** Under hardwood and softwood trees, especially in older moss-rich spruce forests and plantations.
- **How it grows** In large troops.
- **Color** Dark brown (cap); yellow (stem).
- **Size** Cap $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{2}{3}$ in (1–6cm) wide; stem $1\frac{1}{4}$ – $3\frac{1}{4}$ in (3–8cm) high x $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{3}{8}$ in (0.3–0.8cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Widespread throughout Europe and North America.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Linguine and Trumpet chanterelles (pp126–127), Scrambled Chanterelles (pp160–161).



Grows in large troops in woodland.



Oyster mushroom *Pleurotus ostreatus*

This species, so-called because of its oyster-like shape, prefers cold weather and appears later in the year. Very young, fresh specimens often have an attractive, blue-gray coloring and good firm flesh. It is the texture rather than the taste that makes this a popular edible species, cultivated for sale in shops.

The field

- **When to look** Autumn to winter.
- **Where to look** On dead or dying hardwood trees or logs; more rarely on softwoods.
- **How it grows** In tiers and rows.
- **Color** Brown to dark blue-gray (cap).
- **Size** Cap 2½–8in (6–20cm) wide; stem 0–2in (0–5cm) high x ½–¾in (1–2cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Pale dingy gray-lilac.
- **Around the world** Temperate. Widespread across Europe, North and Central America, and parts of Asia and Australia.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Very mild.
- **Cooking tips** The stem by which the mushroom attaches itself to the tree can be quite hard, so remove it before cooking. Eat only young, firm specimens.
- **Recipes** Warm salad of Oyster mushrooms (pp140–141).



SIDE VIEW

cap color ranges from brown to dark blue-gray

springs up in tiers or rows



SECTION



SECTION



Often grows in tiers on dying wood.



Stump puffball *Lycoperdon pyriforme*

Like the Common puffball (see p84), the Stump puffball is small, white, and edible when young. It also has a warty though smoother skin and, when mature and brown, a central pore for the release of spores. But in contrast to its common relative, this species is an elongated pear shape, and it grows on wood rather than grass—as its English name implies.

The field

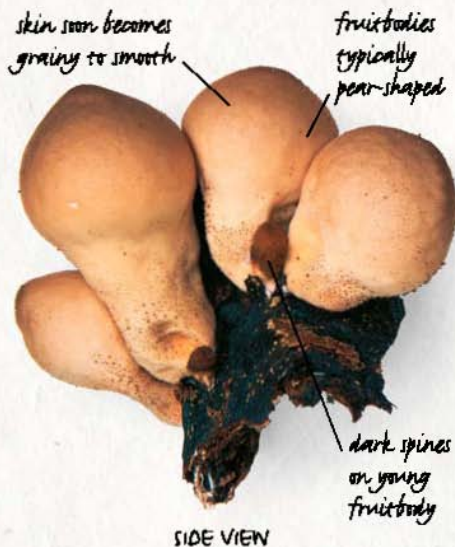
- **When to look** Autumn to winter.
- **Where to look** On rotten hardwood and more rarely softwood, in woodland, parkland, and also gardens.
- **How it grows** In clusters.
- **Color** Beige.
- **Size** Fruitbody $\frac{3}{4}$ –2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in (1.5–6cm) high x $\frac{1}{2}$ –1in (1–2.5cm) wide.
- **Spore mass** Olive-brown.
- **Around the world** Almost cosmopolitan, absent in extreme climatic zones.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild. Spongy texture.
- **Cooking tips** Eat only young, solid white specimens.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–165).



Grows in clusters on decaying wood.



SIDE VIEW



SECTION



Velvet shank *Flammulina velutipes*

An alternative common name for the Velvet shank is Winter fungus, as this is one of very few species of mushroom that survive the first frosts—in fact, it thrives in low temperatures. Found in dense clusters on hardwood trees, its orange-brown cap and velvety, brown stem make it easy to identify.

The field

- **When to look** Late autumn to winter.
- **Where to look** On living, but often weakened, hardwood trees, especially elm, willow, or poplar; more rarely on softwoods.
- **How it grows** In dense clusters.
- **Color** Orange-brown (cap); brown to dark brown (stem).
- **Size** Cap ½–2½in (1–6cm), up to 4in (10cm) wide; stem ¾–2¾in (2–7cm), up to 4in (10cm) high x ½–¾in (0.3–1cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Most temperate regions of the world. Throughout the UK, mainland Europe, North Africa, temperate Asia, eastern North America, and coastal northern California

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Often grows in clusters on hardwood.



White truffle *Tuber magnatum*

A speciality from the Piedmont region of Italy, and one of the most expensive foods in the world. The White truffle has a spicy odor and flavor, and its flesh is hard and brittle. Attempts to cultivate this species by inoculating suitable host roots are being carried out on a large scale, and if successful, may cause prices to drop. Also known as Alba truffle.

The field

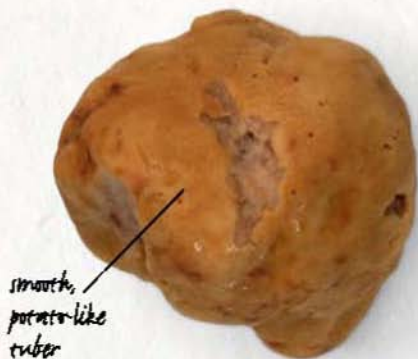
- **When to look** Autumn to winter.
- **Where to look** In calcareous soil, mostly among the roots of oak trees, but also with poplars and willows.
- **How it grows** Singly.
- **Color** Cream to pale brown.
- **Size** Fruitbody $\frac{3}{4}$ – $3\frac{1}{2}$ in (2–8cm) wide.
- **Spore color** Brown.
- **Around the world** Mainly from the Piemonte region of northwestern Italy.

The kitchen

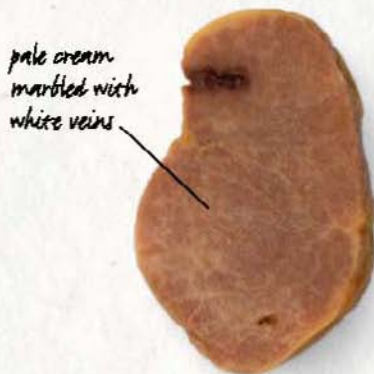
- **Flavor** Choice.
- **Cooking tips** Shave it raw over plain, creamy pasta, risotto, or scrambled eggs.
- **Recipes** Risotto with White truffle (p115).



Grows singly, buried among tree roots.



SIDE VIEW



SECTION



Perigord truffle *Tuber melanosporum*

This is the royal black Truffle of France, named after the Perigord district, and it is collected by skilled pickers employing trained dogs or pigs. It is a warmth-loving species, confined to southern France, Italy, and Spain where the annual yield is about 300 metric tons. The Perigord truffle is commercially available as inoculated seedlings. The Winter truffle is a similar species that occurs further north, reaching the British Isles.

The field

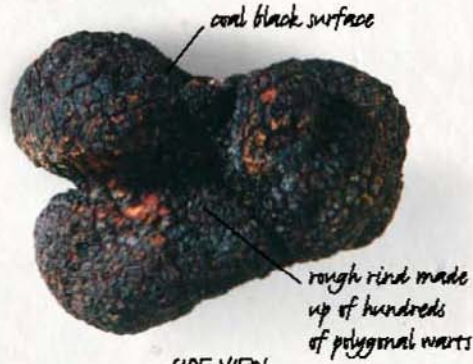
- **When to look** Late autumn to early spring.
- **Where to look** Among the roots of Mediterranean oaks and other host trees, on calcareous, red Mediterranean soils.
- **How it grows** Singly.
- **Color** Coal black.
- **Size** Fruitbody $\frac{3}{4}$ –2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in (2–7cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** Dark brown.
- **Around the world** Primarily a Mediterranean species, found in southern France, Spain, and Italy.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Choice.
- **Cooking tips** Use in thin slices or strips to enhance patés, salads, or pasta dishes.
- **Recipes** Spaghetti with black Truffles (p148).



Grows singly, buried among tree roots.



SIDE VIEW



SECTION



Jelly ear *Auricularia auricula-judae*

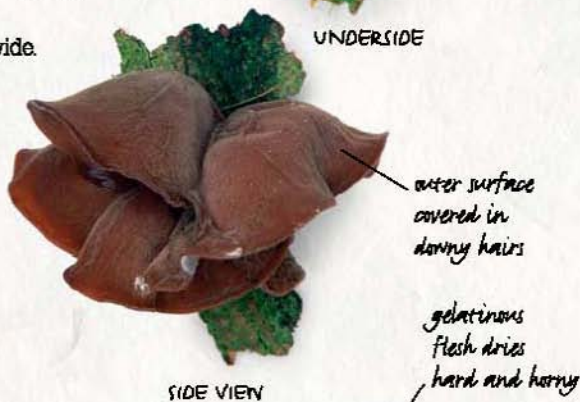
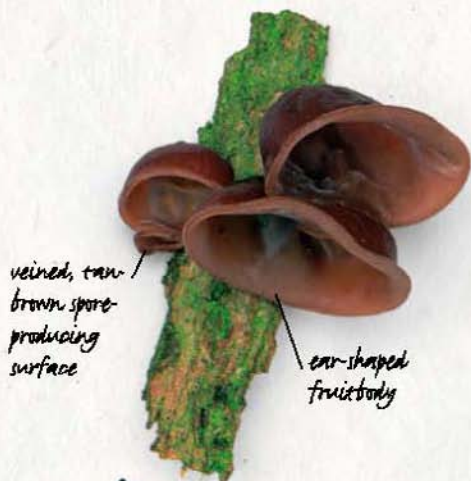
This distinctive ear-shaped fruitbody is gelatinous when fresh, but hardens when dry. The tan-brown outer surface is covered in downy hairs while the paler inner surface is wrinkled. Although sometimes considered bland in the West, the Jelly ear is eaten in the Chinese diet, dried or boiled with rice, and is prized for its medicinal value. Also known as Jew's ear.

The field

- **When to look** Throughout the year.
- **Where to look** On hardwoods in damp woodland; often found on elder.
- **How it grows** In tiers and rows on bark.
- **Color** Tan brown.
- **Size** Fruitbody ¾–4in (2–10cm) wide.
- **Spore deposit** White.
- **Around the world** Temperate and subtropical. Widespread across Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia.

The kitchen

- **Flavor** Mild.
- **Recipes** Any mixed mushroom recipe (pp162–185).



Grows in tiers and rows on bark.



UNDERSIDE





In the kitchen



Preparing notes

Often in the excitement of finding a good harvest, your mushrooms get piled into the basket quickly, with all sorts of debris attached. However, by cleaning off as much insect and slug-life, dirt, moss, grass, twigs, and leaves as you can before you put them in the basket, you simplify the job you will have when you return home.

Spread out your haul on a cloth on the kitchen table as soon as possible. Pick off the debris, and sort the mushrooms into their various types. If you have any doubts about the safety of eating any specimens, throw them away or double-check their identity.

Once you have your collection sorted, you should dry off any really wet fungi. Otherwise, they will grow microscopic fungi of their own and get moldy. Put prime young specimens on one side for salads and your best dishes, or for pickling or freezing. Keep the less prime ones for soups, stews, or drying.

Keep the whole collection somewhere cool if you do not wish to proceed further at this stage. The best place to leave them is outdoors, sheltered from sun or rain, or in a tray or a basket, lined and covered with damp cloths. They can be kept for a day or two like this, until you are ready to prepare, and enjoy, them.

< **Lay out your mushrooms** on a clean cloth for sorting

Cleaning

All mushrooms require careful cleaning before eating. Washing is not the best way to clean them, however, because it makes them waterlogged and thereby reduces their flavor. The exception here is the Cauliflower fungus (*see p47*), which can attract a lot of dirt and insects, and has a fairly robust flavor to begin with. Most wild mushrooms do not need peeling, except for perhaps the slimy-topped Slippery jack (*see p66*).

With other species, especially those with caps and stems, remove any traces of dirt that remain from your original cleaning in the field, by wiping, trimming, or brushing.

Reject very maggoty stems or caps. Once cleaned, you can keep your collection in the fridge. Put it in a lidded plastic box, lined and covered inside with damp paper towels.

Hardy species – such as Boletes, Blewits, and Grisettes



1 Using a small, sharp knife, scrape off any debris from the end of the stem.



2 Wipe off mud with a damp cloth or paper towels. The pores of old Boletes are best removed.



3 Scrape the length of the stem with a knife to remove any remaining dirt, and trim the end.

Delicate species – such as Morels and Chanterelles

Clean carefully with a soft pastry brush, or the brush on your mushroom knife. Any firmly embedded dirt, leaves, or pine needles can be removed with a small knife.



Hedgehog fungus



1 The spines of the Hedgehog fungus can be bitter (especially in older specimens) and you will need to remove them before cooking.

2 Lightly rub the underside of the cap, using a brush, the back of a knife, or, if you don't mind being stained with tannin, your thumb. The spines will fall away, revealing the firm flesh.



Slicing

After cleaning, it is always best to slice or break up your specimens. Some mushrooms are deceptive: they look fine on the outside, but when you cut into them, their flesh can be riddled with small maggot holes. Maggots start by attacking the center of the cap, and work outward. Don't discard the cap immediately, though—you may be able to rescue part of it. Take a good look at the damage, and then decide whether your mushroom is worth saving.

Firm, solid mushrooms such as Boletes, Chicken-of-the-woods, and Giant puffballs need to be sliced with a knife. Brittle species

such as the Hedgehog fungus can be broken into pieces, while fibrous specimens such as Chanterelles can be pulled apart.

Hardy species – such as Boletes, Grisettes, and Blewits



1 If the mushroom is large or mature, detach the cap from the stem.



2 Using a small, sharp knife, cut the cap into vertical slices. Discard any specimens that show signs of maggot infestation or do not feel firm.



3 Cut the stem into thin vertical slices. Discard hollow, tough, or infested specimens.



4 Small or immature mushrooms can be sliced whole, with the stem still attached.

Giant puffball

Hold the **Giant puffball** securely in place on a cutting board. Using a large, sharp knife, cut the flesh into slices, as you would a loaf of bread.



Morels



1 Firmly twist the Morel stem until it comes clean away from the cap. Smaller, immature specimens can be used whole.



2 Using a sharp knife, slice large caps lengthwise into halves or quarters. Check the hollow for any insects lurking inside.

Brittle species – such as Hedgehog fungus. Also Boletes, Grisettes, and Blewits



Using your thumb and forefinger, break the cap up into chunks of equal size. Discard any tough or hollow stems.

Chanterelles

1 Split large Chanterelles into halves by pulling the flesh apart from top to base. (Smaller specimens can be used whole.)



2 Gently tear into quarters. Stems may be too tough to cook well; if so, remove and use to flavor stocks.

Cooking

A few species of mushroom can be eaten raw. For example, thinly sliced Field mushrooms or Boletes work well in salads, and Truffles are delicious simply shaved over pasta or eggs. However, nearly all edible wild mushrooms are best eaten freshly cooked after picking. There are some species, such as Morels and Grisettes, that are poisonous when raw, so they must always be cooked thoroughly before eating.

In order to bring out the best possible flavor and preserve the texture of your mushrooms, it is important to know which cooking method is most suitable for each particular species. If you are using mixed mushrooms

(see pp162–185 for recipes), keep in mind that each species may require a different length of cooking time. Adjust the method accordingly to ensure that all specimens are tender and cooked through before eating.

Roasting – Good for Boletes



Place the whole mushrooms in a roasting pan. Add garlic cloves and a few sprigs of your chosen herb, and toss with olive oil. Cook in a preheated oven at 450°F (230°C) for about 30–40 minutes, turning once, until the mushrooms are tender and brown.

Sautéing – Good for Chanterelles and Fairy ring champignons



Set a frying pan over high heat, and add a small amount of olive oil or butter. As soon as the oil is hot, add the mushrooms. Constantly turn and toss with a wooden spoon, until the mushrooms are tinged with brown.

Grilling – Good for Puffballs, Parasols, and Field mushrooms



Cut the mushrooms into 1/4in (1cm) slices. Brush a nonstick griddle or frying pan with oil, and grill the mushroom slices at high heat for about 2–3 minutes on each side. Give them a quarter turn halfway through cooking in order to achieve the criss-cross pattern.

Smoking – Good for Boletes, Chanterelles, and mixed wild mushrooms



1 Make sure you are in a well-ventilated area. Set a wok over medium-high heat, and pour in a small amount of woodchips.



2 Position a grill over the woodchips and arrange sliced or whole mushrooms on top. Cover securely with the wok lid.



3 Cook for 10–15 minutes, or until the mushrooms are tender and tinged with brown.

Blanching – Good for Hedgehog fungus and Saffron milk caps



1 Salt the water and bring to a rolling boil. Plunge a small amount of mushrooms at a time into the saucepan. Boil for one minute.



2 Retrieve the mushrooms with a slotted spoon and transfer onto paper towels to dry. Repeat this method until all the mushrooms are blanched.

Preserving

Preserving mushrooms not only helps to solve the problem of having picked more than you can eat, but also helps to prolong their use. Most wild edible mushrooms can be preserved in some form or another. They can be frozen, pickled in oil or vinegar, salted or brined, or dried.

The most convenient method is drying, as this reduces their bulk considerably and allows them to be kept for a very long time, whereas pickled, salted, and frozen mushrooms need to be eaten within a few months, or they will lose their best texture and taste. Concentrated extracts can also be made by boiling down a stock made with

mushroom odds and ends, and a mushroom powder can be obtained by crumbling up dried mushrooms. Some mushrooms need to be blanched (parboiled in salted water until almost tender) before being preserved (see p105). This rids them of toxins that may be present in their raw state, and helps to retain their color and shape.

Freezing raw mushrooms – Good for Horn of Plenty, Morels, Boletes, and Blewits



Place whole specimens in a freezer bag, squeeze out the air, and fasten securely. You can also freeze mushrooms whole on open trays and scrape off their ice-crystals before bagging them. For best results, eat within 3 months.

Freezing sautéed mushrooms – Good for Chanterelles, Chicken-of-the-woods, and Honey fungus



Sauté the mushrooms in butter or olive oil (*see p103*), then let cool. Place in an airtight container and seal the lid. Best eaten within 3 months.

Duxelle – Good for mixed wild mushrooms



1 Sauté the mushrooms in butter or olive oil (*see p103*), transfer to a blender, and process until very finely chopped.



2 Carefully spoon the mixture into an ice cube tray and keep in the freezer for up to 3 months. Great for flavoring sauces, stocks, and soups.

Drying large mushrooms – Good for Blewits, Boletes, Puffballs, and Cauliflower fungus



1 Lay the sliced or whole mushrooms on a cloth-covered tray, without overlapping. Place in an oven on very low heat.



2 Check frequently, removing from the oven when the mushrooms are shrunken, brittle, and dry. Keep in airtight containers for up to a year.

Drying small mushrooms – Good for Horn of Plenty and Chanterelles



Using a needle, thread the mushrooms onto a length of string, making a knot between each one so that they do not touch. Hang up in a warm, well-ventilated place to dry. Store in airtight jars for up to a year.

Reconstituting dried mushrooms



Place in a bowl and cover with slightly warm water. After a couple of hours, retrieve using a slotted spoon. You can use the soaking water for stocks or soups, but it should be strained first because it may contain grit.

Pickling – Good for young specimens of Morels, Ceps, and Fairy ring champignons



1 Boil 1 cup water, 7fl oz (200ml) wine vinegar, 2 chiles, 1 garlic clove, and a few peppercorns for 10 minutes. Cool, then pour into an airtight jar containing the mushrooms.



2 Fill the jar so that the mushrooms are immersed. Add a bay leaf or two if desired. Seal and store in a cool, dark cupboard for up to 3 months. Drain, and toss with oil before serving.

The recipes





Puffball tempura

Andrew Sartain

Meadow puffballs are perfect for this delightful tempura recipe, where the crispness of the batter gives way to the soft flesh of the fungi within. The sweet and salty dashi sauce adds another taste sensation.

**Serves 4 as a snack
or starter**

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

For the batter

5 tbsp flour

3 tbsp cornstarch

1 tbsp baking powder

about 1 cup (8oz) ice water

peanut or vegetable
oil for deep frying

For the filling

12 Meadow puffballs

splash of olive oil

salt and pepper

blanched romaine lettuce
leaves, halved if large

For the dashi sauce

2 tsp dark sherry

1 tsp grated fresh ginger

4 tsp cold water

soy sauce to taste

1 Mix the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Slowly add about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the ice water. Whisk in additional water as needed until a thin batter is formed.

2 Fill a wok with approximately 3in (7cm) of peanut or vegetable oil and heat to 400°F (200°C).

3 Toss the Puffballs in the olive oil and seasoning, then wrap in a piece of wilted romaine lettuce.

4 Dip the wrapped Puffballs in the batter and carefully lower into the hot oil.

5 Use a chopstick to drizzle more batter over each puffball while frying. This will create layers of batter. Turn over, and repeat the process until golden and crisp.

6 Place the fried Puffball parcels on paper towels to absorb any excess oil.

7 Mix the sherry, ginger, water, and soy sauce to make the dashi sauce, then serve in a separate small bowl for dipping.

Best choice

Meadow puffball (p69)

Alternatively use:

Common puffball (p84)

Field mushroom (p55)





Chanterelle and king scallop salad

Andrew Sartain

This dish looks impressive and has a sophisticated medley of flavors, but is deceptively simple to prepare and cook. The Chanterelles perfectly complement the delicate flavor of the scallops.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 10–15 minutes

8 sea scallops in their shells with coral, or 8 large shelled scallops

2 tbsp butter

1 shallot, peeled and diced

¼ cup vermouth

1 cup fish stock

½ cup heavy cream

salt and freshly ground black pepper

1lb (400g) Chanterelles

squeeze lemon juice

1 If using shelled scallops, skip to step 2. Otherwise, remove the scallops from their shells and separate the coral from the white meat.

2 In a small saucepan, heat half the butter and sauté the diced shallot for 1–2 minutes before adding the coral (if using), the vermouth, fish stock, and cream. Cook for 2–3 minutes and remove from the heat. Transfer to a blender and process until smooth.

3 Pour back into a small pan through a fine sieve, and boil until reduced by two thirds. Season to taste and set aside.

4 In another frying pan, melt the remaining butter and add the Chanterelles. Toss gently until the mushrooms are cooked through, but still maintain a slight bite.

5 Season the scallops and sear on both sides using a preheated grill pan or very hot frying pan. Then squeeze a little lemon juice over the top.

6 Place the mound of mushrooms on a plate and the scallops in the middle. Pour the sauce over the scallops and serve at once.

Best choice

Chanterelle (p45)

Alternatively use: Saffron milk cap (p79)

Oyster mushroom (p86)

Risotto with White truffle

Anna Del Conte

This simple dish is near perfection. The subtle delicacy of a plain, well executed risotto is the ideal foil for the unique and indescribable flavor of thinly sliced Italian White truffle.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10–15 minutes

Cooking time: 25 minutes

5 cups chicken or light
meat stock

2 shallots or 1 small onion

4 tbsp unsalted butter

1½ cups Italian risotto
rice, preferably Carnaroli

6 tbsp freshly grated Parmesan

1 fresh White truffle, about
2oz (50g), brushed free of
any dirt

1 Bring the stock to a gentle simmer. Meanwhile, finely chop the shallots or onion. Sauté in a heavy pan with half the butter for 2–3 minutes until soft.

2 Add the rice to the shallots and stir until well-coated with butter. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon for 3–4 minutes, or until the outside of the grains become translucent and the rice begins to stick to the bottom of the pan.

3 Pour in about 1 cup of stock. Let the rice absorb the liquid and then add another ladleful of stock. Continue to add stock gradually, in small quantities, so that the rice always cooks in liquid. Stir frequently. Keep the rice at a lively simmer, and if you run out of stock before the rice is cooked, add up to one cup boiling water, as needed.

4 After 18–20 minutes, when the rice is tender yet still firm to the bite, remove the pan from the heat. Add the remaining butter and the Parmesan. Put the lid firmly on the pan. Leave for 1 minute, until the butter and the Parmesan have melted, and then stir the risotto vigorously.

5 Transfer the risotto to a heated dish. Shave the White truffle into thin slices directly onto the rice and serve.

Best choice

White truffle (p89)



Morel pie

Andrew Sartain

The chambered head of a Morel needs careful cleaning—it is also a mushroom that should always be cooked. The mouth-watering flavor is worth any effort in the preparation, however. This pie recipe is ambrosial.

Serves 4

Prep time: 45 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

For the velouté sauce

5 tbsp butter

2½ tbsp flour

2 cups vegetable stock

salt and freshly ground

black pepper

For the pie

2 tbsp olive oil

2 garlic cloves, sliced

2 shallots or 1 onion,
finely chopped

2 celery ribs, thinly sliced

1 leek, cut into rounds

3 carrots, cut into small chunks

2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

1 lb (400g) Morels

½ cup Madeira

8oz (250g) prepared puff pastry

1 egg and 1 tbsp milk, mixed
together, to glaze

1 Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). To make the velouté sauce, melt half of the butter in a medium-sized saucepan. Add the flour and beat with a wooden spoon until you have a smooth paste.

2 Cook over low heat for 2–3 minutes until the paste turns light golden brown in color.

3 Take the pan off the heat and whisk in half of the stock—this should prevent any lumps. Season with salt and pepper. Return the pan to the heat and bring the liquid to a simmer. Cook for 10 minutes and strain through a sieve.

4 In a large frying pan, add the oil and remaining butter and sauté the garlic, onion, celery, leek, carrots, and parsley for 5 minutes. Then add the Morels and sauté for another 2 minutes.

5 Now add the Madeira and simmer until the liquid is reduced by half.

6 Pour in the velouté sauce. Stir to combine, then pour into four individual pie dishes. Let cool to room temperature.

7 Top each with a disc of rolled chilled pastry and brush with the mixture of egg and milk. Bake for 45 minutes or until the pastry is golden.

Best choice

Morel (p40)

Alternatively use:

Semifree morel (p41)

Mixed wild mushrooms



Petit sale with winter root vegetables and Porcini

Andrew Sartain

This slow-cooked dish with root vegetables, herbs, and cider, is inspired by the traditional pork belly dishes of northern France. It has a wonderfully fragrant broth, enhanced by the Porcini.

Serves 4

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 2 hours

5–6 smoked or roasted garlic cloves
8 baby turnips
1 rutabaga, peeled and cut into bite-size pieces
8oz (300g) Chantenay or other carrots
8 shallots, whole and peeled
one 2¼lb (1kg) slab fresh skinless boneless pork belly (side pork)
sprig each of thyme, rosemary, sage, and bay leaf
2 cups apple cider
4 cups chicken stock
2 tbsp butter
splash of olive oil
1lb (500g) Porcini (Ceps), sliced
salt and freshly ground black pepper
8 leaves of savoy cabbage, sliced coarsely

1 Place the garlic, turnips, rutabaga, carrots, shallots, pork, and herbs in a large, flameproof casserole. Add the cider and stock. Cover and bring to a simmer, then cook gently over low heat for 2 hours.

2 Twenty minutes before the end of cooking, heat the butter and olive oil in a separate sauté pan. Add the Porcini and season with salt and pepper. Cook over high heat for 1 minute until they are slightly colored.

3 Add the Porcini to the casserole and cook for 12 minutes, then add the savoy cabbage and continue cooking for 7 minutes longer.

4 To serve, remove the meat from the casserole and slice thickly into 8 equal slices. Ladle the vegetables and stock into deep serving bowls, lay the sliced pork on top, and serve with good crusty bread.

Best choice

Cep (*p80*)

Alternatively use:

Bay bolete (*p82*)

Field mushroom (*p55*)





Saffron milk caps with cream

Anna Del Conte

This is a recipe from the northeastern region of Tuscany. It makes a good accompaniment to meat or an excellent sauce for pasta. You could also try it as a topping for a toasted bread slice, with a garnish of cherry tomatoes.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 35 minutes

1lb (450g) Saffron milk caps

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

2 garlic cloves, very thinly sliced

salt and freshly ground black pepper

¾ cup heavy (double) cream

¼ cup flat-leaf parsley, chopped

1 Blanch the Saffron milk caps in boiling water. Drain and pat dry, then cut them into pieces. Put the pieces in a dry pan and heat gently until their liquid has evaporated.

2 Heat the olive oil with the garlic over low heat. Add the mushrooms, salt, and pepper. Cook gently for 30 minutes and then stir in the cream. Cook for 5 minutes longer.

3 Taste to check the seasoning. Mix in the chopped parsley and serve.

Best choice

Saffron milk cap (p79)

Alternatively use: Chanterelle (p45)

Hedgehog mushrooms (p71)

Confit of wild rabbit with a sweet onion and Wood blewit ragout

Andrew Sartain

The fruity aroma of Wood blewits beautifully complements the sweet onion of the mushroom ragout and the smoky spice of the dry-cured rabbit. This recipe works well as either a starter or light lunch.

Serves 4

Prep time: 20–25 minutes
plus 24hrs marinating time

Cooking time: 2 hours 15 minutes

For the dry cure

¾ cup flaked sea salt or other coarse sea salt

3 tbsp Demerara (raw) or brown sugar

3 juniper berries, crushed

few sprigs of fresh thyme

few bay leaves, roughly torn

2 garlic cloves, peeled

1 rabbit, cut into thighs and saddle

For the confit

2 x 12oz (320g) jars goose fat

For the ragout

4 tbsp butter

6 shallots, quartered

1 garlic clove, crushed

8oz (225g) Wood blewits, chopped

½ cup white wine

1 cup chicken stock

1 tbsp sugar

Best choice

Wood blewit (p74)

Alternatively use: Morel (p40)

1 Mix all the dry cure ingredients together in a large, shallow dish, add the rabbit pieces, and stir to coat. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for 24 hours.

2 Preheat the oven to 300°F (150°C). Rinse the rabbit pieces to remove the salt, then pat dry.

3 Place the rabbit in a casserole dish and pour in enough goose fat to completely cover the rabbit pieces.

4 Cover with a lid and bake for 2 hours or until the meat is almost falling off the bone.

5 Let cool, remove the rabbit, and reserve the fat. Now place the rabbit in an earthenware pot, cover with the reserved goose fat, and refrigerate until needed.

6 Melt the butter and sauté the shallots for 5–6 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute, then add the Wood blewits and sauté for 3–5 minutes. Add the wine, stock, and sugar and boil for 3–5 minutes or until reduced.

7 To serve, remove the rabbit pieces from the goose fat and wipe off any excess fat. Fry the rabbit for 3–5 minutes, turning once or twice, until heated through. To serve, spoon the ragout over the top.



Radicchio leaves filled with Field mushrooms

Anna Del Conte

Of all the hundreds of ways to cook Field mushrooms, this is a superb one. The purple radicchio leaves make a crisp, pretty container for the sautéed mushrooms and a drizzle of truffle oil adds even greater depth of flavor.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 5 minutes

1 large head radicchio
 6 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 6 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
 4 anchovy fillets, chopped
 2 garlic cloves, very finely chopped
 1 small dried chile pepper, seeded and chopped
 1lb (500g) Field mushrooms, thinly sliced
 salt, to taste
 juice of ½ lemon
 2 tsp truffle oil (optional)

1 Unfold 8 large leaves of radicchio, breaking each leaf off at the core to form a cup. Wash and pat the leaves dry. Arrange two leaves on each plate.

2 Heat the olive oil in a frying pan and add the parsley, anchovy, garlic, and chile. Cook for 1 minute or so, stirring frequently. When the mixture is sizzling hot, add the Field mushrooms, stirring to coat with oil. Season with salt, and continue cooking over high heat to evaporate any liquid.

3 When all the liquid has evaporated, the mushrooms are ready. Taste to check the seasoning. Spoon an eighth of the mixture into each radicchio leaf.

4 Serve the dish either warm or at room temperature. Before you bring it to the table, drizzle lemon juice over each portion, and truffle oil, if you wish. Serve with warm, crusty bread.

Best choice

Field mushroom (p56)

Alternatively use:

Horse mushroom (p56)

Wood mushroom (p57)



Horn of Plenty with squid, clams, and egg noodles

Andrew Sartain

Although a tasty mushroom with a flavor similar to that of the Chanterelle, Horn of Plenty trumpets can be a little tough, so be sure to slice them and allow time for them to simmer slowly in the wine and stock.

Serves 4

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 8–12 minutes

3 tbsp peanut or vegetable oil
1 shallot, peeled and chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
8oz (200g) Horn of Plenty trumpets, sliced
8oz (200g) clams in their shells, cleaned
1 cup (8fl oz) dry white wine
1lb (500g) thin egg noodles
1lb (500g) squid, cleaned and cut into strips or rings
salt and pepper
1 red Thai chile pepper, finely chopped
a pinch of ground Sichuan pepper
2 tbsp freshly chopped basil, mint, and coriander

1 Heat 1½ tablespoons of the oil in a wok or deep frying pan and sauté the shallot and garlic for 1–2 minutes. Stir in the Horn of Plenty.

2 Add the clams, followed by the wine. Cover and cook for 3–5 minutes to let the clams open from the steam. Remove from the heat and discard any clams that have not opened.

3 Bring a large pot of water to a boil and cook the noodles as the package directs (usually for 3–4 minutes).

4 In a separate pan, heat the remainder of the oil. Season the squid liberally with salt and pepper, and stir-fry very quickly for 3–4 minutes, adding the chile pepper and Sichuan pepper at the last minute. Remove from the heat.

5 Now add the squid to the clams and Horn of Plenty, along with the chopped basil, mint, and coriander.

6 Adjust the seasoning, stir the squid, Horn of Plenty, and clams into the cooked noodles, and serve.

Best choice

Horn of Plenty (p46)

Alternatively use: Trumpet chanterelle (p85)

Fairy ring champignon (p49)

Stuffed Parasol caps

Anna Del Conte

This recipe requires small, young caps that are firm and fresh, and will not collapse during cooking. These tasty and attractive mushrooms should be cooked before eating.

Serves 4 as a starter

Prep time: 15 minutes

**Cooking time: 50 minutes—
1 hour**

2 tbsp unsalted butter

3 tbsp flour

1¼ cups whole milk

grated fresh nutmeg
salt and freshly ground
black pepper

3 tbsp shredded Gruyère
cheese

3 tbsp grated Parmesan

2oz (60g) smoked ham,
thickly sliced

½ cup shelled peas, blanched
and drained, or frozen petit
peas, thawed

8 Parasol caps, 2in (5cm)
in diameter

1 Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Make a béchamel sauce: Melt the butter in a saucepan, then stir in the flour and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Take the pan off the heat and gradually whisk in the milk. When all the milk has been incorporated, return to the heat and slowly bring to a boil, stirring constantly for 5 minutes.

2 Cook the béchamel sauce for 5 minutes longer. Season with nutmeg, salt, and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Stir in the Gruyère and Parmesan cheeses.

3 Stir the ham and peas into the sauce and set aside.

4 Even off the bottom of the Parasol caps with a knife so that you can stand them upright on a plate for filling.

5 Cut out eight 8in (20cm) square pieces of parchment paper or foil, and lightly grease each one with butter. Spoon the sauce into each cap and wrap each one in paper or foil, then place in a roasting pan and place in the oven.

6 After 30–40 minutes, remove the parcels from the oven. Serve two parcels on each plate, to be opened at the table to release their fragrance.

Best choice

Parasol mushroom (p53)

Alternatively use: Field mushroom (p55)

Cep (p60)



Linguini and Trumpet chanterelles

Andrew Sartain

The flavor of the Trumpet chanterelles works really well with the smoked garlic and wine sauce in this quick pasta recipe. You could add chopped red chile to give it an extra kick.

Serves 4

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

1lb (500g) linguini
 2 tbsp olive oil
 5 tbsp butter
 4 shallots, sliced
 3 smoked or roasted garlic
 cloves
 small red chile pepper
 (optional)
 1lb (500g) Trumpet chanterelles
 salt and pepper
 1 cup white wine
 handful of chopped
 parsley and chives
 freshly grated
 Parmesan cheese

1 In a pan of boiling water, cook the linguini according to the package directions. Drain in a colander and rinse with cold water. Set aside.

2 In a pan large enough to hold the cooked pasta, heat the olive oil and half of the butter, then sauté the shallots and garlic and the chopped chile (if using). Stir for 2 minutes until softened but not browned.

3 Add the Trumpet chanterelles. Season with salt and pepper and gently sauté for a few minutes, just until they start to brown.

4 Pour in the white wine and let it bubble. When the wine has reduced, add the remaining butter, cooked pasta, chopped parsley, and chives.

5 Serve in large bowls, with Parmesan sprinkled on top.

Best choice

Trumpet chanterelle (p85)

Alternatively use:

Ham of Plenty (p46)



Baked eggs with Summer truffle

Anna Del Conte

Although Summer truffles are not as coveted as their cousins, the black Perigord truffle or the white truffle from Piedmont, this recipe shows that they are still to be treasured.

Serves 4

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 8–10 minutes

2 tbsp unsalted butter

2 tbsp olive oil

4 large eggs

salt

1 Summer truffle, thinly sliced
generous handful of Parmesan
cheese shavings

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).

2 Heat the butter and the oil in a large ovenproof sauté pan.

3 When the oil and butter are very hot, remove the pan from the heat and gently break the eggs into it, keeping each egg separate. Sprinkle a little salt over the white of each egg.

4 Divide the Summer truffle slices and the Parmesan shavings into four little mounds and arrange them over the eggs.

5 Bake in the oven for 5–7 minutes, or until the eggs are just set. Serve at once.

Best choice

Summer truffle (p43)

Alternatively use: Perigord truffle (p90)

Hedgehog mushroom and sorrel frittata

Andrew Sartain

Similar to the Chanterelle in flavor, the Hedgehog fungus is fleshy and peppery. Choose young specimens for this quick and simple omelet, which has the fresh, lemony tang of sorrel to counteract the richness of the egg.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 10 minutes

3½ tbsp butter
 1lb (400g) Hedgehog mushrooms, sliced
 8 large eggs
 salt and freshly ground black pepper
 4oz (115g) sorrel, sliced

1 In an omelet pan, melt half the butter and add the Hedgehog slices. Sauté for a few minutes until they begin to brown.

2 In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs and season generously with salt and pepper. Pour the whisked eggs into the pan with the mushrooms, stirring as you do.

3 As the omelet begins to set, add the sorrel, and gently cook for a few minutes more until the omelet is nearly set and the sorrel has wilted.

4 Fold the omelet in half or thirds and serve at once on a warm plate.

Best choice

Hedgehog mushroom (p71)

Alternatively use: Chanterelle (p45)

Saffron milk cap (p79)

Pan-fried chicken breast with a ragout of Saffron milk caps

Andrew Sartain

The wonderfully named Saffron milk caps impart a subtle, nutty flavor to this simple dish. With its classic combination of chicken, cream, and mushrooms, the richness of the sauce is given added piquancy with a squeeze of lemon.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10–15 minutes

Cooking time: 20–25 minutes

2 tbsp vegetable oil

4 organic chicken breasts on the bone, skin on

3½ tbsp butter

2 shallots, diced

1lb (400g) Saffron milk caps, blanched and sliced

1 cup white wine

1 cup chicken stock

¾ cup heavy (double) cream

salt and freshly ground black pepper

juice of half a lemon

1 clove of garlic, crushed
a few thyme leaves

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). In a sauté pan, heat the vegetable oil until smoking. Place the breasts skin-side down and brown for 2–3 minutes. Turn over and cook for another 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and transfer to an ovenproof dish.

2 In the same sauté pan, add half of the butter and sauté one of the diced shallots without browning for 2 minutes. Add half the mushrooms and cook for another 2 minutes.

3 Now add the wine and reduce by half, then add the chicken stock and cream, boiling rapidly to reduce by two-thirds. Season, and add a squeeze of lemon juice if too rich.

4 Meanwhile, cover the chicken and bake for 10–15 minutes or until the juices run clear. Remove, and let rest.

5 In a sauté pan, melt the remaining butter, add the rest of the diced shallot, crushed garlic, mushrooms, and a few thyme leaves, and sauté quickly for 2–3 minutes. To serve, divide the sauce equally among 4 warm plates. Top each with ¼ of the sautéed mushrooms and a chicken breast.

Best choice

Saffron milk cap (p79)

Alternatively use:

Chanterelle (p45)

Hedgehog fungus (p71)





Chanterelle and spinach pie

Andrew Sartain

Chanterelles, one of the most attractive of all wild mushrooms, release their delightful, apricot-like fragrance when the crust of this rich pie is cut. Spinach and port add bite to the unctuous sauce.

Serves 4

Prep time: 15–20 minutes

plus cooling time

Cooking time: 40–45 minutes

3 tbsp butter

8oz (200g) bacon, cut into strips or squares

2–3 shallots, finely chopped

1lb (450g) Chanterelles

1lb (450g) fresh baby spinach

¼ cup heavy (double) cream

2 tbsp port wine

salt and pepper

1lb (450g) prepared puff pastry

yolk of one egg, for brushing

1 Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). In a sauté pan, slowly melt the butter. Add the bacon and cook, stirring occasionally, until very lightly browned. Stir in the shallots and cook for 2–3 minutes.

2 Add the Chanterelles to the pan and sauté for 2 minutes, until slightly softened.

3 Stir in the spinach and cook gently for 2–3 minutes until wilted. Stir in the cream and let cool.

4 In a separate pan, reduce the port to a syrup by boiling for 1–2 minutes, then add it to the mushrooms and season with salt and pepper.

5 Roll out a bit more than half the pastry and use it to line a 8in (20cm) round pie tin. Brush with the beaten egg yolk and refrigerate for 10 minutes before adding the cooled filling.

6 Roll out the remaining pastry and use this to make a lid for the pie. Place the lid on top and use a little water to create a good seal, then brush with egg yolk. Use the tip of a sharp knife to cut a few vents on top to allow the steam to release while baking.

7 Bake the pie for 35–40 minutes or until the pastry is golden and crisp. Serve hot with a green salad.

Best choice

Chanterelle (p45)

Alternatively use: Saffron milk cap (p79)

Hom of Plenty (p46)

Crispy Bolete caps

Anna Del Conte

This simple recipe is an ideal way to cook Bay boletes. The parsley, garlic, anchovy, and bread crumbs bring out the earthy richness of the mushrooms. Select large caps, but be sure they are fresh.

**Serves 4 as a starter
or an accompaniment**

**Prep time: 1 hour 10
minutes**

**Cooking time: 20–30
minutes**

¼ cup dry white bread crumbs
3 tbs chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 garlic clove, very finely
chopped
1 anchovy fillet, very finely
chopped
6 tbs olive oil
freshly ground black pepper
4 large Bay bolete caps
salt, to taste

1 Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Put the bread crumbs, parsley, garlic, and anchovy into a bowl. Stir in 3 tablespoons of olive oil and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Let stand for about 1 hour to blend flavors.

2 Brush a small roasting pan with some of the remaining olive oil. Place the Bay boletes in the pan, one next to the other, with the rounded side down.

3 Sprinkle a little salt over each cap and put 1 tablespoon of the bread crumb mixture into each one. Spread the mixture evenly inside the cap and drizzle with olive oil.

4 Bake for 20–30 minutes, or until crisp. Serve the caps warm. Tomatoes stuffed with the same mixture make a good accompaniment.

Best choice

Bay bolete (p82)

Alternatively use: Field mushroom (p55)

Horse mushroom (p56)



Cream of Giant puffball soup

Andrew Sartain

One of the best-known and easy-to-identify edible mushrooms, these large, round Giant puffballs often weigh more than 9lb (4kg). Larger specimens can be tough, so use smaller finds for this creamy, delicately flavored soup.

Serves 4

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

6 tbsp butter

2 tbsp olive oil

1 large onion, chopped

2 garlic cloves, minced

1½lb (700g) Giant puffball,
sliced into small pieces

¼ cup Arborio rice

2 cups white wine

4 cups hot vegetable, chicken,
or light mushroom stock, or
more, if needed

flaked sea salt or other coarse
salt and white pepper

splash of heavy (double) cream
squeeze of lemon juice

For the garnish

4oz (140g) Giant puffball, diced
handful chopped chives

1 Melt 4 tablespoons of the butter and 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a thick-bottomed pan. Add the onion and garlic and sauté gently for a few minutes.

2 Add the Giant puffball pieces, increase the heat, and cook for a few minutes until they begin to brown.

3 Add the rice and gently stir until translucent, then pour in the wine and reduce by one half, stirring constantly.

4 Gradually ladle in the hot stock, stirring slowly. Bring to a boil and simmer for 15–20 minutes.

5 Remove from the heat and let cool briefly, then puree in a blender or press through a sieve. If the soup is too thick, add more stock.

6 Return the soup to the pan, taste for seasoning, and add the cream and lemon juice to taste.

7 Heat the remaining butter and oil and cook the diced Puffball quickly until browned. Garnish the soup with the fried mushroom and chopped chives.

Best choice

Giant puffball (p68)

Alternatively use:

Oyster mushroom (p86)



Fairy ring champignon and poached egg on toast

Andrew Sartain

Often found growing in grassy areas, the Fairy ring champignon, sometimes known as Mousseron, is a delicate, round-capped fungi with a unique anise flavor that works particularly well with eggs.

Serves 4

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

6 tbsp butter

1 tbsp olive oil

dash of white wine vinegar

4 eggs

1lb (400g) Fairy ring
champignons, sliced

few sprigs of thyme

squeeze of lemon juice

4 thick slices of bread

salt and freshly ground

black pepper

small handful of chopped

parsley to garnish

1 Fill a saucepan with cold water and bring to a boil.

2 In a sauté pan, gently heat the butter and olive oil.

3 Once the water boils, add a dash of vinegar. When small bubbles begin to rise to the top, take a whisk or fork and create a whirlpool in the center of the pan. Working one at a time, crack each egg and gently lower it into the simmering water. If they are really fresh, the eggs will instantly form neat ovals. Remove from the heat and let stand for 4–5 minutes.

4 While the eggs are sitting in the water, begin sautéing the mushrooms in the butter and olive oil. Stir frequently and add the sprigs of thyme and a squeeze of lemon.

5 Finally, toast the bread slices until nicely browned and place on the serving plate. Spoon the mushrooms over the toast and place an egg on top of each. Season with salt and pepper, and garnish with chopped parsley.

Best choice

Fairy ring champignon (p49)

Alternatively use:

Chanterelle (p45)

Mixed wild mushrooms





Rickstone funnel caps with cannellini beans

Anna Del Conte

This mushroom, quite easy to recognize, grows in lovely fairy rings, often covering a large area. It has a pleasant flavor and is particularly good with cannellini beans.

Serves 4

**Prep time: 5 minutes,
plus soaking time if using
dried beans**

Cooking time: 1 hour

1½ cups dried, or 2 x 15oz
(400g) cans cannellini beans

2¼lb (1kg) Rickstone funnel
caps, sliced

1 onion, sliced

1 garlic clove, thinly sliced

12 fresh sage leaves, chopped

1 fresh chile, seeded
and chopped

½ cup extra virgin olive oil

1 cup dry white wine

8oz (250g) ripe tomatoes,
peeled and chopped

1 If using dried cannellini beans, soak them overnight and then cook until tender. Drain and set aside. If using canned beans, drain in a colander, then rinse with cold water and drain again.

2 Blanch the mushrooms in boiling water for 3 minutes, then drain.

3 Gently sauté the onion, garlic, sage, and chile in the olive oil for 5–6 minutes.

4 Add the mushrooms, sauté for 2–3 minutes, and pour in the wine. When the wine has partially evaporated, stir in the tomatoes.

5 Reduce the heat and cook for 20 minutes. Add the cannellini beans and continue cooking for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve with crusty bread.

Best choice

Rickstone funnel cap (p72)

Alternatively use: Morel (p40)

Bay bolete (p82)

Potato, celeriac, and Cep hats

Anna Del Conte

Mushrooms are a perfect match for both potatoes and celeriac. Here, Porcini have been combined with vegetables in an adaptation of a delicious free-form pie recipe, originally developed by Caroline Liddell.

Serves 4

Prep time: 45 minutes

Cooking time: 25–30 minutes

1lb 4oz (600g) waxy potatoes, such as Charlotte, Maris Peer, Yukon Gold, or fingerling

1lb (400g) celeriac (celery root)

1 stick unsalted butter

2 small onions, very thinly sliced

salt and freshly ground black pepper

pinch of grated fresh nutmeg

½ cup freshly grated Parmesan

8oz (300g) Porcini mushrooms (Ceps), sliced

2 tbsp chopped parsley

1 tbsp chopped tarragon

8oz (250g) frozen puff pastry, thawed

1 egg yolk and 1 tbsp milk, mixed together, to glaze

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Peel and thinly slice the potatoes and celeriac. Put half the butter in a frying pan and cook the onion over low heat for 10 minutes.

2 Add the potatoes and celeriac. Sauté for 15 minutes, or until tender. Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Sprinkle with Parmesan.

3 In a separate pan, melt the remaining butter and sauté the mushrooms for 5 minutes. Add the herbs and season to taste with salt and pepper. Stir into the potato and celeriac mixture and set aside. Cool to room temperature.

4 Divide the pastry into four portions: two larger and two smaller. Roll out the smaller portions, cut into rounds and place on a greased baking sheet. Pile the vegetables in the middle of each round, leaving about 1¾in (2cm) around the edge, then brush the edge with the egg and milk glaze.

5 Roll out the larger pieces of pastry, drape them over the vegetable mixture, and crimp the edges together to seal. Glaze, and cut a steam hole in the top of each.

6 Bake for 15 minutes, then reduce the heat to 325°F (150°C) and continue baking for 10–15 minutes until the crust is nicely browned and puffed. Serve the pies hot, with a fresh green salad.

Best choice

Cep (p60)

Alternatively use: Field mushroom (p55)

Mixed wild mushrooms

Warm salad of Oyster mushrooms

Anna Del Conte

Oyster mushrooms have a lovely texture, but the flavor can be quite delicate. Prepared this way, with white wine vinegar, lemon, chile, and anchovies, this very attractive mushroom acquires greater depth.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 25 minutes

½ cup white wine vinegar
2 bay leaves
pinch salt
1lb 12oz (800g) Oyster mushrooms, stems removed and caps sliced
6 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 unwaxed lemon, grated zest and juice reserved
1 or 2 dried chiles, seeded and chopped
3 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
3 garlic cloves, chopped
4 anchovy fillets, chopped

1 Put 3 tablespoons of water in a small saucepan and add the vinegar, bay leaves, and salt.

2 When the water is boiling, add the mushrooms and boil for 8 minutes, then drain. (This may look like a very small amount of liquid, but the mushrooms will render down very quickly.)

3 Put the oil, lemon zest, chile, parsley, garlic, and anchovy fillets in a sauté pan.

4 When the oil is sizzling, mix in the mushrooms and sauté for 5–6 minutes, stirring constantly.

5 Now squeeze in the lemon juice. Remove from the heat, check the seasoning, and serve warm, not hot.

Best choice

Oyster mushroom (p86)

Alternatively use:

Trumpet chanterelle (p85)

Horn of Plenty (p46)







Pan-fried turbot with Truffle sauce

Andrew Sartain

The distinct flavor of the Truffle, a strictly seasonal fungus, is considered a great gastronomic delicacy. It beautifully complements the flavor of such a highly prized fish as turbot.

Serves 4

**Prep time: 10 minutes,
plus resting time**

**Cooking time: 25–30
minutes**

1 stick butter, clarified
2 tbsp peanut oil
4 x 5½–7oz (150–200g)
pieces of turbot
salt and freshly ground
black pepper
2 shallots, diced
1 cup dry white wine
2 cups heavy cream
2 Summer truffles, peeled
and diced
8 leaves of Savoy cabbage
Truffle shavings, to serve

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). In a large frying pan, melt half the butter with the oil.

2 Season the turbot with salt and pepper. When the frying pan is very hot, add the turbot skin-side down. Cook for 5 minutes, then turn the fish and cook on each of the cut sides until the fish is evenly colored.

3 Place the fish in an ovenproof dish. Bake until opaque throughout, about 15–20 minutes (depending on thickness). Remove from the oven and let rest for 10 minutes.

4 Meanwhile, in a small frying pan, heat the remaining butter and add the shallots. Cook for 5 minutes until translucent, and add the white wine. Reduce over medium-high heat until only a few tablespoons remain. Add the cream and diced Truffle. Bring to a simmer and season with salt and black pepper, then simmer for 3–5 minutes until reduced slightly.

5 Blanch the cabbage in boiling water for 3–4 minutes, and then place two leaves on each plate to form a bed for the fish. Put the turbot on each cabbage bed and pour Truffle sauce over the top. Garnish with shavings and serve.

Best choice

Summer truffle (p43)

Alternatively use:

Perigord truffle (p90)



Hedgehog mushroom parcels

Anna Del Conte

Crisp filo pastry gives way to an intensely flavored filling of peppery Hedgehog fungus and rich tomato. Dried chiles give extra bite to these little parcels, making for an unusual appetizer.

Serves 4 as a starter

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

6 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 dried chile, chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
4 anchovy fillets, coarsely chopped (optional)
3 tbsp tomato purée or tomato sauce
2 tsp tomato paste
1lb (500g) Hedgehog fungus, chopped
salt, to taste
7–10oz (200–300g) filo dough, thawed as package directs
parsley, to garnish

1 Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Gently heat half the olive oil with the parsley, chile, and garlic in a pan for 2 minutes.

2 Reduce the heat and add the anchovies (if using). Mash them into a paste against the bottom of the pan, then mix in the tomato paste and the tomato purée and cook for 1 minute. Add the mushrooms, and salt to taste. Cook for 10 minutes. Taste, adjust the seasonings, and let cool.

3 Cut the filo into 16 rectangles measuring approximately 4 x 6in (10 x 15cm). Lay one rectangle on a work surface. Brush it with oil, then lay three more rectangles on top, brushing each one generously with oil. Repeat with the remaining pastry squares to make four stacks.

4 Divide the mushroom mixture into four portions and spread over the top layer of each stack. Roll them up jellyroll fashion and tuck in the ends. Brush the top of each parcel with olive oil. Bake for 20 minutes until lightly browned. Serve hot, garnished with a sprig of parsley. (Note: When served as a light lunch or dinner, fennel braised in stock makes a good accompaniment.)

Best choice

Hedgehog mushrooms (p71)

Alternatively use: Saffron milk cap (p79)

Trumpet chanterelle (p86)

Large fungi caps a cotoletta

Anna Del Conte

A *cotoletta* is the Italian expression for food that is coated in egg and bread crumbs for frying. This is a simple and satisfying way to cook any large caps of Porcini, Parasols, or sliced Puffballs.

Serves 4

**Prep time: 15–20 minutes,
plus 1 hour chilling time**

**Cooking time: 8–12
minutes**

1lb (400g) large mushroom caps

1 tsp salt

2 eggs, lightly beaten

1½ cups plain dry bread crumbs

4 tbsp unsalted butter

olive oil

lemon wedges, to serve

1 If the caps are thick, carefully slice them in half horizontally. Mix the salt into the eggs, and then dip each slice of mushroom into it, coating both sides. Let the excess egg drip back into the bowl.

2 Coat the slices with bread crumbs, tapping gently with the palm of your hand to get an even coating. If you have time, put the slices on a plate to chill in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour to set the crumbs.

3 Heat the butter and enough oil to fill a frying pan to a depth of ½in (1cm). Heat slowly until very hot.

4 To check that it is hot enough, drop a few bread crumbs into the oil. If they sizzle and brown quickly, the oil is ready. If not, wait another minute and test again.

5 Working in batches, cook as many slices at one time that will fit in a single layer without crowding. After approximately 2–3 minutes, when they are golden brown on one side, turn the slices over to brown the other side. Place on paper towels to drain.

6 Keep the cooked mushrooms warm while you cook the next batch. Serve at once with lemon wedges.

Best choice

Cep (p60)

Alternatively use: Parasol mushroom (p53)

Giant puffball (p68)



Mushroom bruschetta

Anna Del Conte

In Italy, cooks use any of the Bolete family of fungi, or a mixture of them, as they really are the best for bruschetta. If you have some leftover polenta, grill slices of it to use instead of bread—some believe it is even better.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

2 garlic cloves

5 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

8oz (300g) Porcini or other Boletes, coarsely chopped

salt and freshly ground black pepper

12 black olives, such as kalamata, sliced

4 thick slices ciabatta or other Italian bread

1 Sauté one clove of the garlic in 4 tbsp of the oil for 1 minute and then add the mushrooms and cook over high heat for 5 minutes or so, turning frequently.

2 Season lightly with salt and pepper and cook gently over low heat for about 15 minutes or until the mushrooms are tender.

3 Mix in the olives and taste to check the seasoning.

4 While the mushrooms are cooking, score one side of each slice of bread with the point of a knife. Grill on both sides until lightly toasted.

5 Rub the scored sides of the bread with the remaining clove of garlic and brush with the last tablespoon of oil.

6 Spoon the mushroom mixture over the bread in little mounds, and serve at once.

Best choice

Cap (*p60*)

Alternatively use:

Any of the Bolete family



Spaghetti with black Truffles

Anna Del Conte

This is a recipe from Umbria in central Italy where black Truffles, similar to the Perigord truffle, are found. In this robust pasta dish, garlic and chile enhance the unique flavor of the Truffle.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

2oz (60g) black Truffles (such as Perigord), brushed free of any dirt

12oz (340g) spaghetti

salt, to taste

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

3 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed with the side of a knife

1 whole dried chile

2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley

1 Grate the Truffles on the fine blade of a grater, or slice them into tiny slivers.

2 Cook the pasta in plenty of salted boiling water until tender yet firm to the bite.

3 Meanwhile, combine the olive oil, garlic, chile, and parsley in a large, heavy frying pan. Heat slowly, stirring frequently, until the garlic begins to color. Remove the garlic and chile from the pan and discard.

4 Reduce the heat and add the Truffle slivers to the seasoned oil in the pan. Heat very gently for 1 minute, stirring constantly. The Truffles should only become hot; they should not cook.

5 Once the spaghetti is tender, drain in a colander and then turn it into the frying pan. Cook over low heat for about 1 minute, tossing the spaghetti to coat with the olive oil. Serve at once, straight from the pan.

Best choice

Perigord truffle (p90)

Prawn, scallop, and Horn of Plenty sauce

Anna Del Conte

To make this sophisticated sauce for pasta, let the mushrooms cook for at least 20 minutes, until there is only a little liquid left in the pan. This will allow time for any tougher fungi to soften and release their full flavor.

Serves 4

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

8oz (225g) Horn of Plenty
 4 tbsp unsalted butter
 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 3 tbsp chopped parsley
 2 garlic cloves, crushed with the side of a knife
 salt and freshly ground black pepper
 6 tbsp dry white wine
 ½ cup vegetable stock
 12oz (350g) dried penne pasta
 4 scallops with corals if possible
 8oz (250g) peeled and deveined prawns (shrimp)

1 Slice the larger Horn of Plenty trumpets in half. Put the butter, olive oil, half the parsley, and the garlic in a large sauté pan. When the garlic becomes fragrant, remove and discard the garlic.

2 Add the Horn of Plenty to the pan and gently sauté for 5 minutes. Season with salt and black pepper, and add two of tablespoons of wine. Continue to gradually add the wine and then the vegetable stock, reducing the liquid as you cook, for 20 minutes or so. Remove the pan from the heat.

3 Cook the pasta until *al dente* in a large pot of salted boiling water. Rinse the scallops and pat them dry. Separate the corals, if using, and cut the white flesh into quarters.

4 When the pasta is ready, drain and turn it into the sauté pan with the fungi. Add the white scallops and coral (if using) and the prawns. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly until the scallops are opaque throughout.

5 Sprinkle with the remaining parsley and serve at once, straight from the pan.

Best choice

Horn of Plenty (p46)

Alternatively use: Chanterelle (p45)

Roast wild mallard with Chanterelles

Andrew Sartain

The pretty Chanterelle is among the most desirable of all edible wild mushrooms. Its peppery flavor perfectly complements the fragrance and richness of roasted wild duck.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10–15 minutes

Cooking time: 25–30 minutes

2 wild mallard ducks

For the stuffing

salt and freshly ground

black pepper

few sprigs of fresh thyme

4 tbsp butter, cut into pieces

1 small orange, quartered

For the sauce

4 tbsp butter

1 large shallot, peeled

and diced finely

juice of 1 orange

1 cup tawny port

1 cup dry red wine

2 cups chicken or duck stock

1 smoked or roasted

garlic clove

8oz (200g) Chanterelles

1 tbsp chopped parsley

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).

2 Season the ducks with salt and pepper inside and out. Place half of the thyme, butter, and orange quarters into each of the duck cavities. Roast in the oven for 25–35 minutes.

3 Remove the ducks from the oven, cover, and set aside to rest. Reserve any juices.

4 In a small saucepan, melt 2 tbsp of the butter. Add the shallot and sauté for 2–3 minutes until lightly browned. Add the orange juice, port, wine, stock, and the juices from the duck. Boil rapidly until reduced by two thirds. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

5 Finally, add a small knob of butter for a glossy finish, and keep the sauce warm while you sauté the Chanterelles.

6 Melt the remaining 1½ tablespoons of butter in a frying pan and add the garlic clove. Sauté the Chanterelles for 2–3 minutes, season to taste, then discard the garlic; stir in the chopped parsley. Serve the roast mallard and mushrooms with the sauce drizzled over the top.

Best choice

Chanterelle (p45)

Alternatively use:

Trumpet chanterelle (p85)







Morels with yellow peppers

Anna Del Conte

The mouth-watering taste of Morels makes them ideal for a variety of recipes. In this vibrantly colored dish, they are brought together with yellow peppers, whose flavor complements the richness of the fungi.

Serves 4

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

6 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 3oz (80g) prosciutto, cut into thin strips
 2 shallots, very finely chopped
 1¼lb (600g) Morels, sliced lengthwise
 salt and freshly ground black pepper
 pinch of grated fresh nutmeg
 1 cup dry white wine
 1 yellow bell pepper, cut into thin strips
 2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley

1 Warm the olive oil in a large saucepan. Add the prosciutto and shallots and sauté, stirring occasionally, until the shallots are softened but not browned, about 5 minutes.

2 Mix in the Morels and season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Sauté for 5 minutes, then pour in the wine. Simmer gently for another 5 minutes.

3 Add the yellow pepper strips and continue cooking gently for about 5 minutes, or until the peppers are crisp-tender.

4 Check the seasoning and transfer to a warm serving plate. Scatter the parsley over the top to garnish. Serve at once.

Best choice

Morel (p40)

Alternatively use:

Semifree morel (p41)

Oyster mushroom (p86)



Fried Puffball slices

Anna Del Conte

In Italy, the Giant puffball is often prepared in the same way as veal scallopine, as it has a similar meaty texture. This quick, simple recipe is perfect for young, firm Puffballs.

Serves 4 as a starter
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cooking time: 9–12 minutes

1lb (400g) of Giant puffball
½ cup all-purpose flour
salt and freshly ground black pepper
vegetable oil for frying
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 lemon, cut into wedges, to serve

1 Cut the Puffball into thick slices. Then cut each slice into 3 or 4 pieces, depending on how large the Puffball is.

2 Season the flour with salt and pepper. Put into a plastic bag, add the fungi, and shake well.

3 Empty the bag onto a work surface and shake any excess flour off the Puffball pieces.

4 In a large frying pan, heat enough oil to fill the pan to a depth of 1½in (4cm). When very hot, toss a few pieces in the beaten egg to coat, and slide into the oil without crowding.

5 Fry for 3–4 minutes, turning the pieces halfway through the cooking time. Remove the Puffball with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Repeat with the remaining pieces.

6 When all the pieces are fried, sprinkle with a little salt and serve at once with lemon.

Best choice

Giant puffball (p68)

Alternatively use: Chicken-of-the-woods (p44)

Cep (p60)

Chanterelle and mascarpone sauce

Anna Del Conte

The smoky flavor of Canadian bacon works well with Chanterelles, and the mascarpone cheese brings sweetness and creaminess to this rich sauce. It goes particularly well with fresh tagliatelle or other pasta.

Serves 4

Prep time: 5–10 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

2 tbsp unsalted butter

4 slices Canadian bacon,
cut into matchsticks

4 tbsp chopped fresh sage

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

8oz (200g) Chanterelles,
thickly sliced

salt, to taste

½ cup mascarpone cheese

freshly ground black pepper

1 Melt the butter in a medium frying pan. Add the bacon and fry until it begins to crisp.

2 Add the sage and garlic and gently sauté for 2 minutes.

3 Mix in the Chanterelles, season with salt, and sauté for 10 minutes, stirring frequently.

4 Add the mascarpone and a grinding of black pepper; then let it heat for a minute or so, just until the mascarpone has melted.

5 Taste and check the seasonings. Serve at once.

Best choice

Chanterelle (p45)

Alternatively use: Cep (p60)

Saffron milk cap (p79)



A hot winter Wood blewit salad

Andrew Sartain

With its roasted garlic, cumin, and nutty crunch, this healthy winter salad is ideal for cold days. The earthiness of the Wood blewits perfectly complements the creamy flavor of the pearl barley.

Serves 4

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

about 1¼ cups pearl barley

1lb (500g) Wood blewits

2 roasted garlic cloves, mashed
smoked or plain flaked sea salt

freshly ground black pepper

2 tsp cumin seeds,
toasted and crushed

4 leaves Savoy cabbage,
sliced thinly and blanched

4 tbsp toasted shelled
sunflower seeds

handful of chopped parsley
and thyme

2 tbsp tamar or soy sauce

For the dressing

2 tbsp red wine vinegar

¼ cup olive oil

sprig of fresh thyme

1 Cover the pearl barley with cold water and bring to a boil. Drain and rinse. Cover with cold water again and simmer gently for 45–60 minutes, or until tender yet still somewhat firm to the bite.

2 Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). In a large roasting pan, combine the mushrooms and half of the roasted garlic. Season with salt and pepper. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and bake for 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside.

3 To make the dressing, mix together the red wine vinegar, olive oil, fresh thyme leaves, and remaining roasted garlic.

4 In a large bowl, combine the cooked barley, cumin, cabbage, sunflower seeds, parsley, thyme, and roasted mushrooms. Drizzle with the dressing and toss gently to mix. Sprinkle with the tamar sauce and serve at once.

Best choice

Wood blewit (p74)

Alternatively use:

Trumpet chanterelle (p85)

Mixed wild mushrooms



Honey fungus tart

Anna Del Conte

The Honey fungus, as its name implies, has quite a sweet flavor, making it perfect for this recipe. You could also use the Charcoal burner, which has a very pronounced flavor.

Serves 4

**Prep time: 20 minutes, plus
30 minutes chilling time**

**Cooking time: 1 hour 25
minutes**

For the pastry

1 cup all-purpose flour

4 tbsp cold unsalted butter,
cut into pieces

¼ tsp salt

1 large egg yolk

For the filling

4 tbsp unsalted butter

3 tbsp olive oil

4 shallots, chopped

salt and freshly ground
black pepper

1lb (400g) Honey fungi,
coarsely chopped

1 tsp tomato paste

1 tsp vegetable bouillon
granules

grated fresh nutmeg

1 large egg, lightly beaten

1 Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Combine the pastry ingredients until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Add approximately 2 tablespoons of cold water at the end to form a ball.

2 On a lightly floured surface, roll the pastry into a disc to line an 8in (20cm) tart tin. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, until firm.

3 Bake blind by lining the pastry with parchment paper and filling with dried beans. Cook for 15 minutes. Take out the beans and bake for another 8 minutes, then remove from the oven. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F (180°C).

4 Heat the butter and the oil in a sauté pan and cook the shallots for 5 minutes until soft. Add the salt, then the fungi, and cook, stirring frequently, for 5 minutes over high heat. Reduce the heat and mix in the tomato paste.

5 After 2–3 minutes, mix in the bouillon granules and a few tablespoons of water. Cook for 30 minutes, or until the mushrooms are tender, adding more water if necessary.

6 Season with nutmeg, salt, and pepper. Remove from the heat and let cool 5 minutes. Mix in the egg until well-blended. Spoon the filling into the pastry shell and bake for 20 minutes, or until the filling is set and shows no evidence of uncooked eggs. Let cool 5–10 minutes before serving.

Best choice

Honey fungus (p73)

Alternatively use: Charcoal burner (p59)

Rickstone funnel cap (p72)

Boletes with balsamic vinegar

Anna Del Conte

Most Boletes are easily recognizable and plentiful in autumn, but—with the exception of Porcini mushrooms—they can lack flavor. This is easily remedied by the addition of balsamic vinegar, which makes them zesty and lively.

Serves 4

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 25 minutes

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
1lb (500g) Boletes, sliced
2–3 garlic cloves, chopped
salt
pinch of hot red chile flakes
3 tbsp balsamic vinegar

1 Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan.

2 Add the Boletes and mix in the garlic. Cook over high heat for 5 minutes, then season with salt and chile flakes. Reduce the heat to medium-low.

3 Continue cooking for 20 minutes longer, stirring frequently, and adding just a little water whenever necessary to prevent the mushrooms from drying out.

4 When the Boletes are soft and there is little liquid remaining in the pan, transfer to a serving bowl. Pour in the balsamic vinegar and toss gently to mix. Serve at once.

Best choice

Cep (p60)

Alternatively use: Any of the Bolete family

Scrambled Chanterelles

Anna Del Conte

The delicate flavor of the mushrooms perfectly complements the richness of the eggs in this luxurious dish, suitable for brunch or dinner. With the cream and Parmesan cheese, it is especially good served with sautéed spinach.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

6 tbsp unsalted butter

2 tbsp olive oil

1 garlic clove, cut into
2 or 3 pieces

12oz (350g) Trumpet
chanterelles

8 eggs

salt and freshly ground
black pepper

¼ cup heavy cream

¼ cup grated Parmesan

4–8 slices of toasted bread

1 Melt half the butter in a pan with the oil and garlic.

Add the Trumpet chanterelles and sauté for 3 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove and discard the garlic.

2 Melt the remaining butter in another pan. Beat the eggs, season with salt, and add to the pan. Cook the eggs over low heat for 2 minutes, gently stirring and turning often.

3 Add the cream and the mushrooms, and continue cooking for 1–2 minutes.

4 Sprinkle in the grated Parmesan and plenty of pepper.

5 Pile the eggs and mushrooms onto slices of hot toast and serve at once.

Best choice

Trumpet chanterelle (p85)

Alternatively use:

Mixed wild mushrooms







Foraging risotto

Andrew Sartain

The meaty texture of the mushrooms contrasts well with the softness of the butternut squash in this recipe. You can use a variety of wild fungi, but make sure each species is cooked until tender.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 40 minutes

1 stick butter, cut into 8 tbsp

1 tbsp olive oil

2 onions, diced

4 garlic cloves

8oz (250g) butternut squash, diced

1 cup Arborio rice

3½–4 cups hot mushroom stock

1lb (400g) mixed wild mushrooms, sliced if large

salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 In a large pan, melt 2 tbsp of the butter in the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onions and garlic and cook until softened but not browned.

2 Increase the heat and add the butternut squash. Cook for a few minutes, stirring occasionally, until it starts to brown at the edges.

3 Add the rice. Stir gently until the rice is coated with butter and the grains become translucent.

4 Now add a ladleful of hot stock and stir continuously until it is nearly, but not completely, absorbed.

5 Continue adding the stock in this way for about 20 minutes, or until the rice is tender yet firm to the bite.

6 In a separate pan, melt 2 tbsp of butter. Working in batches, sauté the mushrooms until tender. Deglaze the pan with a little water, scraping up any browned bits, and add to the risotto.

7 Once the rice is cooked, stir in the remaining 4 tbsp of butter until melted. Season to taste and serve with the mushrooms spooned over the rice.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use:

Trumpet chanterelle (p85)

Honey fungus (p73)



Wild mushroom and leek pie

Anna Del Conte

This rustic-style recipe was created by Val Archer, who cooks all kinds of fungi at her house in Tuscany. It works well with mixed mushrooms and is also good for Field, Horse, or Wood mushrooms, because their delicate flavors perfectly complement the leeks.

Serves 4

Prep time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 40 minutes

2 shallots
6 tbsp unsalted butter
3 tbsp olive oil
2 medium leeks, rinsed and trimmed, cut into ½ in (1cm) slices
¼ cup dry white wine
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tbsp chopped tarragon
1 lb (400g) mixed wild mushrooms, thickly sliced
half a lemon
3 whole eggs plus 1 yolk
2 tbsp crème fraîche
¼ cup whole milk
1¼ cup shredded aged cheddar cheese
1 tbsp cold butter, cut into bits, for the topping

1 Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Sauté the shallots in 2 tbsp of the butter and 1 tbsp of the oil until they are soft and translucent.

2 Stir in the leeks. Cook for 5 minutes over high heat, then pour in the wine and bring to a boil. Continue cooking for 10 minutes, or until the leeks are tender. Set aside.

3 Season with salt, pepper, and tarragon.

4 In a separate frying pan, melt the remaining butter in the oil. Add the mushrooms and a generous squeeze of lemon juice. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Let cool slightly.

5 In a bowl, mix the eggs and the extra yolk with a little salt and pepper. Stir in the crème fraîche, milk, and 1 cup of the cheese. Mix in the leeks and the mushrooms.

6 Butter an ovenproof dish large enough for the mixture to fill to a depth of 2 in (5cm). Spoon in the leek and mushroom mixture, and sprinkle with the remaining ¼ cup cheese. Scatter the butter over the top.

7 Bake for 40 minutes or until set and golden on the top.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Field mushrooms (p55)

Horse mushrooms (p56)

Pork tenderloin and mixed wild fungi

Anna Del Conte

Pork and mixed mushrooms are a marvelous match, and the Marsala lends this simple dish a very welcome liveliness. You could also use young Lawyer's Wig mushrooms.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

6 tbsp olive oil

8oz (300g) wild mixed mushrooms

2 garlic cloves, chopped
salt and freshly ground black pepper

3 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley

1¼lb (600g) pork tenderloin, trimmed of any excess fat

all-purpose flour, for coating

2 tbsp unsalted butter

½ cup dry Marsala

1 Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C).

2 Heat 4 tablespoons of the oil. When hot, add the mushrooms and the garlic. Sauté over medium heat for 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and continue cooking until the mushrooms are tender, then stir in the parsley.

3 While the mushrooms are cooking, slice the pork into slices about ½in thick, then gently pound each slice to make it a little thinner.

4 Season with salt and pepper and coat lightly with flour.

5 Heat the butter and the remaining 2 tbsp oil in a large frying pan. When hot, add the pork in batches, without crowding, and cook for 2 minutes.

6 Turn the pork over and cook for 1 minute. Transfer to a plate and keep warm. Repeat with remaining pork. When all the slices have been cooked, pour over the Marsala and cook briskly for 2 minutes, scraping up any browned bits.

7 Transfer the pork and all the juices to a wide ovenproof dish and spread the mushrooms over the top. Place the dish in the oven for about 6 minutes for the flavors to blend, then serve at once.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Lawyer's Wig (p78)

Horn of Plenty (p46)

Mixed fungi soup

Anna Del Conte

This simple soup with onion, garlic, and parsley brings out the flavor of mixed wild mushrooms beautifully. Grated nutmeg adds depth, and the soup is delicious when served topped with a dollop of sour cream.

Serves 4 as a starter
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cooking time: 1 hour

6 tbsp unsalted butter
½ cup finely chopped onion
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
8oz (225g) mixed wild mushrooms, diced
¼ cup milk
salt and freshly ground black pepper
grated fresh nutmeg
5 tbsp all-purpose flour
5 cups vegetable or chicken stock
¼ cup sour cream

1 Heat half the butter with the onion, garlic, and parsley in a sauté pan and cook for 3 minutes. Add the mushrooms, and sauté 3 minutes longer.

2 Add the milk and season with salt and nutmeg. Cook for a few more minutes and set aside.

3 In another saucepan, melt the remaining butter. Remove the pan from the heat and whisk in the flour. Return the pan to low heat and cook until the mixture is golden brown.

4 Remove the pan from the heat once more, and gradually add the stock by the ladleful. Stir constantly to avoid lumps from forming, and return the pan to low heat.

5 When all the stock has been blended into the flour, add the mushroom mixture and their juices. Bring to a boil and simmer for 15–20 minutes.

6 Season with salt and pepper to taste. Spoon a tablespoon of sour cream onto each bowl and serve.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Cep (p60)

Field mushroom (p55)

Sole fillets stuffed with mixed fungi and ricotta cheese

Anna Del Conte

A filling of wild mixed mushrooms and ricotta is the perfect foil for the sweetness of fresh sole. You may wish to try Chanterelles or Grisettes, since their delicate flavor also works well in this dish.

Serves 4

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 20–25 minutes

¼ cup olive oil
 6 tbsp unsalted butter
 3–4 shallots, chopped
 8oz (250g) mixed wild mushrooms, chopped
 3 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
 salt and freshly ground black pepper
 ¼ cup ricotta cheese
 12 shelled cooked prawns (shrimp), coarsely chopped
 8–10 sole fillets, approximately 4–5oz (125–150g) each
 all-purpose flour, for dusting
 1 cup dry white wine

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Put the olive oil and 1 tbsp of the butter in a frying pan. Add the shallots and cook for a few minutes to soften.

2 Mix in the mushrooms and half the parsley, and sauté for 5 minutes. Transfer the mushrooms to a bowl and season with salt and pepper. Mix in the ricotta, prawns, and the remaining parsley.

3 Lay the fish fillets on a board dusted with flour and sprinkle each side with a little salt. Spread a generous tablespoon of the mushroom mixture over each fillet; then roll up the fillet and secure with a toothpick.

4 Butter a large ovenproof dish that will hold the rolls tightly packed in a single layer. Lay all the rolls next to each other and pour the wine over the top.

5 Dot with the remaining butter and bake in the oven for 15–20 minutes until the sole is opaque throughout. Spoon some of the cooking juices over each serving.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Chanterelle (p45)

Tawny grisette (p50)

Orange grisette (p51)

Pasta with mixed fungi sauce

Anna Del Conte

This sauce can be used with any type of pasta, but it is especially good with linguine or spaghetti. Assorted wild mushrooms would suit it best, or use strongly flavored fungi to complement the robust flavor of the anchovies.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 20–25 minutes

1lb (400g) linguine or spaghetti
 ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
 3 garlic cloves, chopped
 1 tbsp dried oregano
 12oz (300g) ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped, or 1 x 14.5oz (400g) can of peeled plum tomatoes, drained and coarsely chopped
 salt and freshly ground black pepper
 pinch of sugar (optional)
 1lb (400g) mixed wild mushrooms, sliced
 4 anchovy fillets, chopped

1 Cook the pasta in plenty of salted boiling water. Keep in mind that the sauce will take at least 20 minutes to cook, so time the pasta accordingly.

2 Meanwhile, in a large nonreactive sauté pan, heat the oil with the garlic and oregano for 1–2 minutes. Then add the tomatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes longer.

3 Season lightly with salt and pepper. If you have used canned tomatoes, you may need to add a pinch of sugar to counteract any acidity. Add the mushrooms and the anchovy fillets.

4 Cook the sauce over low heat until the mushrooms are tender—how long depends on the species you have used—but most will need 5–10 minutes cooking time.

5 Pour the sauce over the cooked pasta, toss to coat, and serve at once.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use:

Field mushroom (p55)

Cep (p60)





Potato and mixed fungi bake

Anna Del Conte

Cooks in Valle d'Aosta, Italy, would normally use local Fontina cheese, but since this is not easily available outside of Italy, Gruyère is a superb alternative. Perhaps not for the calorie-conscious, this is a rich, but very tasty dish.

Serves 4

Prep time: 20–25 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour

1lb (500g) waxy potatoes, such as Charlotte, Maris Peer, Yukon Gold, or fingerling, thinly sliced

8oz (250g) mixed wild mushrooms, sliced

1 onion, thinly sliced

5oz (150g) Gruyère cheese, sliced

grated fresh nutmeg

salt and pepper

2½ cups heavy cream

¼ cup grated Parmesan

1 tbsp dried, plain dry bread crumbs

2 tbsp unsalted butter, cut into bits

1 Preheat the oven to 300°F (150°C).

2 Butter a large ovenproof dish and place a layer of potatoes on the bottom. Cover with a layer of mushrooms, a few onion rings, some Gruyère, grated nutmeg, and salt and pepper.

3 Repeat these layers, ending with the potatoes. Slowly pour the cream into the dish. Mix together the Parmesan and bread crumbs and sprinkle over the top.

4 Dot with the butter, place on a baking sheet (to catch any spills), and bake for about 1 hour, or until the potatoes are tender and the top is golden and crisp.

5 Let stand about 5 minutes before serving.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Cep (p60)

Field mushroom (p55)

Beef steak in mushroom sauce

Anna Del Conte

A variety of wild mushrooms would be best for this recipe, but if necessary, add some cultivated, or rehydrated dried ones, too. The mushroom flavors need to be quite robust to stand up to the red wine and Marsala in the sauce.

Serves 4

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

2 tbsp olive oil
 2 tbsp unsalted butter
 2 shallots, very finely chopped
 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
 2 tsp tomato paste
 8oz (225g) mixed wild mushrooms, coarsely chopped
 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
 salt and freshly ground black pepper
 6 tbsp dry red wine
 ½ tbsp dry Marsala or sherry
 1 cup beef stock
 4 beef tenderloin steaks (filet mignon) weighing about 5oz (150g) each
 4 slices smoked bacon
 3 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Heat the olive oil, butter, and shallots in a sauté pan large enough to hold the steaks in a single layer, and cook for 3–5 minutes.

2 When the shallots are soft and golden, stir in the mustard and the tomato paste. Cook gently for 1 minute, then mix in the mushrooms, lemon juice, and salt and pepper. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring frequently.

3 Add the wine and Marsala to the pan, then pour in the beef stock. Let simmer for about 20 minutes to blend flavors.

4 While the sauce is cooking, season the steaks and wrap a slice of bacon around each one. Place the prepared steaks in a roasting pan and cook in the oven for 8 minutes.

5 When the sauce is ready, add the steaks and cook, turning once or twice, about 2 minutes for rare (or longer for medium or well-done).

6 Taste the sauce and adjust the seasonings. Sprinkle with parsley and serve at once.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Cep (p60)

Trumpet chanterelle (p85)



Wild mushroom and miso broth

Andrew Sartain

This light, fragrant, delicately flavored broth is quickly but gently cooked to retain all the subtle flavors of the wild mushrooms and the fermented soy beans of the Japanese miso paste.

Serves 4

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

1 tbsp peanut oil
 4 shallots, finely diced
 8oz (200g) mixed wild mushrooms
 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
 1 small red chile, seeded if desired, and finely chopped
 1 tsp grated fresh ginger
 1 tbsp miso paste, dissolved in a little stock
 4 cups mushroom stock
 soy sauce to taste
 ½ bunch fresh cilantro, stems sliced and leaves chopped

1 In a large saucepan, heat the oil until hot but not smoking. Add the shallots and mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until they begin to brown.

2 Add the garlic, chile, and ginger and sauté for 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Now stir in the dissolved miso paste and mushroom stock.

3 Bring to a simmer and turn off the heat. Let the broth stand for a few minutes to blend flavors, then add a splash of soy sauce.

4 Serve in bowls, sprinkled with cilantro.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use:

Oyster mushroom (p86)



Baked rice with mixed wild mushrooms

Anna Del Conte

This recipe is from Liguria in Italy, where Porcini would normally be used, but it also works very well with mixed wild mushrooms. This makes a really tasty and satisfying meat-free meal.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 25–30 minutes

5 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, chopped
8oz (200g) frozen peas
8oz (250g) mixed wild mushrooms, chopped
salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 cups vegetable stock
1 cup dry white wine
1½ cups Arborio or other Italian rice
6 tbsp grated Parmesan
1 tbsp unsalted butter

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Pour 2 tablespoons of the oil into a large flame- and ovenproof pot, then pour the remaining oil into a frying pan.

2 Add half the onion and half the garlic to the ovenproof pot, and the rest to the frying pan. Sauté the onion and garlic in both pans, stirring occasionally, until tender.

3 Add the peas to the ovenproof pot and cook just until tender, then add the mushrooms to the frying pan and cook over high heat for 5 minutes.

4 Transfer the mushrooms to the pot with the peas, and season with salt and pepper.

5 In a large saucepan, bring the stock and the wine to a boil. Stir in the rice and cook for 7 minutes.

6 Ladle the rice mixture and its stock into the ovenproof pot. Add the Parmesan, season with salt and pepper, and mix thoroughly.

7 Dot with butter and bake for 10–15 minutes, or until the rice is tender and a golden crust has formed on the top. Let rest for 5 minutes before serving.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Cep (p60)

Bay bolete (p82)

Chicken and mushroom pie

Andrew Sartain

Chicken and mushrooms are a classic combination, and for good reason. Using wild mushrooms, this recipe has an added depth of flavor and a rich *velouté*—a velvety smooth sauce.

Serves 4

Prep time: 15–20 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour 25 minutes

4 tbsp butter

¼ cup all-purpose flour

¾ cup hot chicken stock

¼ cup half-and-half or light cream

salt and pepper

4 skinless boneless chicken breast halves

1 tbsp olive oil

2 garlic cloves, crushed with the side of a knife

4 shallots or 1 large onion, chopped

2 celery ribs, sliced

2 leeks, trimmed and cut into thick rounds

4 carrots, peeled and sliced

1lb (400g) mixed wild mushrooms, trimmed and halved

1lb (500g) puff pastry

1 egg and 1 tbsp milk, mixed together, to glaze

1 Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). To make the *velouté* sauce, melt half the butter in a saucepan. Add the flour and beat with a wooden spoon until smooth, then cook over low heat for 2–3 minutes until barely golden.

2 Return the pan to the heat, add the stock, and simmer, whisking until smooth and thickened. After 10 minutes strain through a sieve, stir in the cream and season with salt and pepper.

3 Return the *velouté* to a shallow pan. Add the chicken breasts and cook over low heat for 15–20 minutes or until white throughout. Remove the chicken, reserving the sauce. Set the chicken aside to cool slightly, then dice.

4 In a large frying pan, heat the oil and the rest of the butter. Sauté the garlic, shallots, celery, leeks, and carrots together for 5 minutes until softened slightly.

5 Stir in the mushrooms, diced chicken, and *velouté* sauce. Turn the mixture into an 8in (20cm) pie dish. Set aside.

6 On a lightly floured surface, roll out the pastry into a 10in (25cm) circle. Drape the pastry over the filling, trimming off any excess. Cut 2 or 3 vents in the pastry to allow steam to escape during baking. Brush with the egg and milk mixture. Bake for 45 minutes or until the pastry is puffed and golden.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Cep (p60)

Couscous with mushroom ragout

Anna Del Conte

The couscous in this recipe beautifully absorbs the juices and the flavor of the mushrooms. This is a delicious one-dish meal, and if you leave out the sausages, it becomes a perfect dish for vegetarians.

Serves 4

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 35 minutes

½ cup extra virgin olive oil
3 garlic cloves, chopped
small bunch flat-leaf
parsley, chopped
1lb (500g) good quality pure
pork sausages, cut into
2in (4cm) chunks
14oz (400g) can diced
tomatoes, drained
1 cup meat or vegetable stock
1½ cups couscous
1lb (500g) mixed
wild mushrooms
salt and freshly ground
black pepper

1 Heat the oil over medium-low heat. Add the garlic and half the parsley and sauté gently for 2 minutes.

2 Increase the heat to medium-high and add the sausages. Cook, turning, until browned on all sides. Add the tomatoes and cook for about 10 minutes, adding a little of the stock if the mixture becomes too dry.

3 In a separate pan or bowl, pour around 2 cups boiling water and 1 tbsp olive oil (or the same quantity of vegetable stock, if preferred) over the couscous. Let stand while you finish the ragout.

4 Mix the mushrooms in with the sausages, tomatoes, and remaining stock and cook slowly for about 20 minutes or until tender.

5 Squeeze out any excess liquid from the couscous and spoon it onto individual plates.

6 Spoon some ragout over the couscous and sprinkle with the remaining parsley, season with salt and pepper, and serve at once.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Field mushrooms (p55)

Hom of Plenty (p46)

Mushrooms with parsley and garlic

Anna Del Conte

This is the classic Italian recipe for cooking porcini, but you can use mixed wild fungi, especially other varieties of Boletes, such as the Chestnut, Bay, or Summer. The timing of the cooking might differ, so taste after 15 minutes.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 25 minutes

½ cup extra virgin olive oil
3 garlic cloves, chopped
large bunch flat-leaf parsley,
coarsely chopped
1lb (500g) mixed wild
mushrooms, cut into
thick slices
salt and freshly ground
black pepper

1 Gently heat the olive oil with the garlic and half the parsley in a sauté pan.

2 Increase the heat to high and add the mushrooms. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Reduce heat to low.

3 Season with salt and pepper and cook over low heat until tender, about 20 minutes.

4 The mushrooms will naturally release some moisture as they cook, but by the end of the process, they should have just a little liquid, without being too dry.

5 Taste to check the seasoning and sprinkle with the remaining parsley before serving.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Cep (p60)

Chestnut bolete (p62)

Baked wild mushroom polenta

Anna Del Conte

This rich, warming winter dish is a classic one from northern Italy. Polenta, a peasant comfort food, is here cleverly transformed into a gourmet delight by the addition of truffle paste.

Serves 4

Prep time: 1 hour, plus

2 hours cooling time

Cooking time: 30 minutes

3 cups cornmeal or instant polenta

salt and freshly ground black pepper

4 tbsp unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing

1lb (450g) mixed wild mushrooms, sliced

6 tbsp all-purpose flour

3 cups whole milk

1 tbsp truffle paste

4oz (120g) Italian Fontina cheese, thinly sliced

4oz (120g) Gruyère cheese, thinly sliced

½ cup Parmesan, grated

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Put 6 cups of hot water into a large saucepan. Add the cornmeal and 1 teaspoon of salt, stirring constantly. Bring to a boil, and continue stirring.

2 Cook for 5 minutes and then spoon the mixture into a buttered, shallow baking dish. Cover with buttered foil and bake for 1 hour. Let cool for at least 2 hours before cutting the polenta into ½in (1.25cm) wide slices.

3 Meanwhile, prepare the mushroom sauce. Melt the butter in a heavy pan, add the fungi, and sauté, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes.

4 Add the flour and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat and gradually whisk in the milk. Season with salt and pepper and simmer for 15 minutes. Whisk in the truffle paste.

5 Spread 2 tablespoons of the sauce over the bottom of a buttered 10in (25cm) gratin or rectangular ovenproof dish. Cover with slices of cold polenta followed by slices of Fontina and Gruyère cheese. Sprinkle with grated Parmesan. Repeat the layers, finishing with the sauce.

6 Bake for about 30 minutes or until bubbly-hot. Serve warm.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use:

Field mushroom (p55)

Cep (p60)





Wild mushroom risotto

Andrew Sartain

This risotto will work with almost any wild mushroom—Ceps, Morels, Blewits, Deceivers, or Trumpet chanterelles are especially good—or you could use a packet of cultivated exotic mushrooms.

Serves 4

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

½oz (15g) dried mushrooms,
such as Porcini

2 tbsp olive oil

2 medium onions,
finely chopped

4 garlic cloves, chopped

1½ cups Arborio rice

2–3 cups homemade
chicken stock

8oz (250g) mixed wild
mushrooms

¾ cup dry white wine

½ cup grated Parmesan

1 tbsp butter

1 bunch wild rocket (arugula)

truffle oil (optional)

1 Soak the dried mushrooms in 1 cup of boiling water and set aside for at least 20 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve to remove any grit.

2 Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a heavy-bottomed pan and gently cook the onion and garlic until soft.

3 Add the rice to the pan and stir to coat with the oil. Continue to cook for a few minutes until translucent.

4 Add the dried mushrooms along with the soaking liquid, and stir until nearly all the liquid is absorbed.

5 Begin adding the stock, a little at a time, letting each addition absorb before adding any more. The amount of stock used may vary—just use enough to cook the rice.

6 In a separate pan, sauté the mushrooms in 1 tablespoon of olive oil.

7 When the rice is almost cooked, add the wine and keep stirring until nearly all the liquid is absorbed.

8 When the risotto has a soft, creamy consistency and the rice is tender, add the Parmesan and butter. Stir, and let stand covered for a few minutes.

9 Serve with rocket leaves, a few extra shavings of Parmesan, and a drizzle of truffle oil.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Cep (p60)

Morel (p40)

Chicken in a mixed fungi sauce

Anna Del Conte

This wonderfully creamy sauce for chicken can be supplemented with cultivated mushrooms mixed with 2oz (60g) of rehydrated dried Porcini to strengthen the flavor.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10–15 minutes

Cooking time: 25–30 minutes

2oz (60g) dried Porcini
(optional)

4 skinless boneless chicken
breast halves

salt and freshly ground
black pepper

¼ cup olive oil

6 tbsp unsalted butter

4 shallots, finely chopped

¾ cup dry white wine

2 garlic cloves, very finely
chopped

1lb (400g) mixed wild
mushrooms, coarsely chopped

1 cup vegetable stock

1¼ cups heavy cream

1 Soak the dried Porcini in 1 cup warm water for 20 minutes (if using), and retain some of the soaking liquid. Cut the chicken breasts in half lengthwise and season with salt and pepper. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil and half the butter in a sauté pan, add the chicken halves, and brown on both sides.

2 Add the shallots and continue cooking until soft. Add the wine, boil briskly, then turn down the heat and cover the pan. Cook for 15–20 minutes over low heat, turning the chicken once. Set aside.

3 Heat the rest of the butter and oil with the garlic in a frying pan. Add the mushrooms and cook the mixture for 5 minutes, stirring frequently.

4 Season with salt and pepper and continue cooking for 15 minutes over low heat. Add a small amount of vegetable stock to the pan to prevent the fungi from cooking dry. Pour in the cream and gently bring the sauce to a boil for 2–3 minutes until slightly thickened.

5 Transfer the sauce to the pan with the chicken and cook for 5 minutes. Spoon into a heated dish and serve.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Cep (p60)



Wild mushroom pizza

Andrew Sartain

This is a versatile pizza recipe for which you can use any assortment of wild mushrooms, although Porcini are particularly good. The fresh thyme brings out the rustic flavor of the dough.

Serves 4 (makes 2 large pizzas)

Prep time: 1 hour 15 minutes, plus 1–2 hours marinating time

Cooking time: 15 minutes

For the dough

1 cup warm water
 1½ tsp active dry yeast
 1 tbsp sugar
 4 cups bread flour
 1½ tsp salt
 1 tsp olive oil

For the topping

1 tbsp olive oil
 8oz (200g) mixed wild mushrooms
 salt and freshly ground black pepper
 fresh thyme leaves
 your choice of cheese, to grate over the top

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). In a measuring cup, pour in the water, followed by the yeast and sugar. Stir, and set aside for 10 minutes.

2 Sift the flour into a large bowl, add the salt, and stir; then pour in the yeast mixture and olive oil and use your hand to bring the dough together. Set aside for 10 minutes.

3 On a lightly floured work surface, gently work the dough, kneading and folding into thirds. Let sit for 10 minutes.

4 Repeat this process 4–5 times, folding into thirds each time, then wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate.

5 In a bowl, mix together the olive oil, mushrooms, salt, pepper, and thyme leaves, and let marinate for 1–2 hours.

6 Remove the dough from the refrigerator and tear into two equal pieces. Roll out each piece into a thin rectangle and place on a lightly oiled baking sheet.

7 Spread the mushroom topping over the pizza bases and sprinkle with the cheese.

8 Bake for about 15 minutes, until the cheese has melted and the crust has browned. Serve with crisp green salad.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use:

Field mushroom (p55)

Cep (p60)



Lasagna with fungi and cheeses

Anna Del Conte

Mushrooms and cheese is a classic combination, and this recipe is ideal for any mix of wild mushrooms. With the Cheddar, Gruyère, and Parmesan cheeses, it is rich and satisfying enough to make a delicious one-course meal.

Serves 4

Prep time: 25 minutes

Cooking time: 50 minutes

¼ cup olive oil
2 tbsp unsalted butter
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1lb (500g) mixed wild mushrooms
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1¼ cups heavy cream
8oz (200g) dried egg lasagna, cooked as package directs, well drained
5oz (150g) Cheddar, coarsely grated
5oz (150g) Gruyère, thinly sliced
¾ cup freshly grated Parmesan

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). In a frying pan, heat the oil and half the butter with the garlic. As soon as the garlic begins to color, add the mushrooms and cook over high heat, stirring frequently.

2 After about 5 minutes, season with salt and pepper. Reduce the heat and cook until all the mushrooms are tender. If there is too much liquid, increase the heat to evaporate it.

3 Butter a 13 x 9in (30 x 23cm) lasagna dish and spoon 2–3 tablespoons of cream over the bottom. Cover with one layer of lasagna noodles. Spoon over a third of the mushrooms, a third of the cheeses, and 2–3 tablespoons of cream.

4 Repeat these layers until you have used up all the ingredients (reserving 1 tablespoon of Parmesan), finishing with the lasagna. Pour the remaining cream over the top and dot with the remaining butter. Sprinkle with the reserved Parmesan.

5 Cover with foil, place on a baking sheet, and bake for about 10 minutes. Then remove the foil and bake for 15 minutes longer, or until a golden crust has formed on top. Serve hot.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Field mushroom (p55)

Baked red mullet and mixed wild mushrooms

Anna Del Conte

Red mullet is one of the most delicious and attractive fish—the flesh is white, delicate, and yet full of flavor. In this recipe, it perfectly complements the deep earthiness of the wild mushrooms.

Serves 4

Prep time: 10–15 minutes

Cooking time: 35–40 minutes

½ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
 8 anchovy fillets, chopped
 1–2 dried red chiles, seeded and chopped
 ¼ cup capers, drained
 salt and freshly ground black pepper
 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
 1lb (500g) mixed wild mushrooms, sliced or whole
 1½ cups fresh white bread crumbs
 4 whole red mullet
 juice of 2 lemons

1 Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Mix together the parsley, garlic, anchovies, chiles, and capers in a bowl. Season lightly with salt and pepper.

2 Stir in about half of the olive oil. Mix in the mushrooms, coating them with the mixture.

3 Choose a shallow ovenproof dish large enough for the fish to lie in a single layer, surrounded by the mushrooms. Grease the dish with some of the remaining oil.

4 Pile the mushrooms into the dish and sprinkle all over with bread crumbs. Drizzle with a little olive oil and bake for about 20 minutes, or until crisp and golden.

5 While the fungi is cooking, season the red mullet inside and out with salt and pepper. Coat with some of the remaining olive oil and pour a little oil inside each fish.

6 Remove the mushrooms from the oven, then push to the sides of the dish and lay the fish in the center. Drizzle with olive oil. Bake for 15–20 minutes, or until the flesh flakes away from the bone. Sprinkle with lemon juice and serve.

Best choice

Mixed wild mushrooms

Alternatively use: Chanterelle (p45)

Hom of Plenty (p46)

Glossary

Adnate (gills) - gills connected to the stem by their whole depth

Adnexed (gills) - gills connected to the stem only by the narrowest, topmost part

Agaric - general term for a gilled fungus

Ascomycetes - a large and diverse group of fungi, which includes Morels, whereby the spores are shot out of a tubelike cell called an Ascus

Basidiomycetes - a large and diverse group of fungi that includes Chanterelles, whose spores are borne on the tips of microscopic club-shaped structures

Bolete - a fungus with a dome-shaped, firm cap and pores rather than gills; most Boletes belong to the Boletus family

Bracket - fungi with a flat, fan-shaped structure in which the stem is almost or completely absent; usually attached to tree trunks, sometimes forming layers

Cap - the top part, borne on the stem of a fungal fruitbody

Cluster - a very closely bunched form, in which some types of fungi grow

Decurrent (gills) - gills running down the stem

Free (gills) - gills attached only to the cap, and not to the stem

Fruitbody - literally the spore-bearing fruit of the main plant, which is a threadlike mass lying either beneath the soil, within the living roots and branches of trees, or within rotting matter

Fungus - a member of the kingdom Fungi that commonly reproduce via spores and draw sustenance from both living and dead plants, and even dead animals

Genus - the first, or family, name in Linnaeus's system of scientific classification. A genus consists of a group of similar species

Gills - the spore-producing tissue on the underside of the cap of an Agaric

Hymenium - a thin layer of fertile cells that produce the spores

Hyphae - long strandlike cells that collectively make up the mushroom and the mycelium

Margin - in mushrooms, the edge of the cap

Mycelium - the vegetative mass of hyphal threads formed by germinated spores

Mycologist - a botanist devoted to the study of fungi

Mycophile – one who loves the eating, collecting, and study of fungi

Mycorrhizal – the symbiotic relationship between certain fungi and certain tree-roots

Parasitic – describing any plant, animal, or insect living and feeding on another animal or plant, and giving nothing in return

Pores – the mouths of spore-carrying tubes, mainly found in Boletes and Polypores (bracket fungi)

Ring – a filmy band on the stem of a mushroom, remnants of the fruitbody's universal veil

Saprophytic – describing any plant or fungus that grows and feeds on decaying organic matter

Sinuate (gills) – gills that curve into a notch at the point where they are attached to the stem

Species – the second name in Linnaeus's system of scientific classification; it follows the generic or family name

Spores – the microscopic, reproductive units of a fungus, dispersed when ripe from the fruitbody. On falling onto a suitable site, they germinate and form an underground mass of hyphae called a mycelium

Spore deposit – the "print" formed by spores falling down from a cap placed on a sheet of paper

Stem – the stalk of a fungal fruitbody

Substrate – an under-layer of soil, decomposing leaves, or wood

Troop – a group of one type of fungi growing together, either in long lines or large patches

Tubes – the spore-bearing layers of fungi such as Polypores and Boletes

Umbo – a small central hump or bump on a cap

Umbrate – having a small central hump or bump (an umbo) on the cap

Veil – a protective skin enclosing the young fruitbody. A universal veil covers the whole of it and may remain as flakes on the cap and a bag (volva) over the stem base; a partial veil joins the edge of the cap to the stem and may remain as a ring

Volva – a filmy bag or cup (remains of the universal veil) covering the base of the fruitbody's stem

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