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## Harvest of the Month | Family Newsletter





# Mushrooms

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**T**here are three parts to a mushroom – a cap, gills, and a stem. Mushrooms come in thousands of different varieties. Some of the most common are button, cremini, shiitake, oyster, and portabella. Mushrooms are grown in sterile environments in “growing houses.” They also grow in the wild. Some wild mushrooms are toxic so it’s best to purchase mushrooms commercially rather than to pick your own.



### Did you know?

-  Pennsylvania leads the US in mushroom production with more than 50 farms growing nearly 557 million pounds of mushrooms each year.
-  Mushrooms are made up of 90% water.
-  While commonly placed in the vegetable category, mushrooms are technically not vegetables or fruits. They are considered a fungus.
-  Unlike plants, mushrooms do not need light to grow.

### Selection

Most of the tops (caps) of the mushrooms should be closed around the stem or moderately open with pink or light tan gills. The surface of the cap should be white or creamy or a uniform light brown. Avoid mushrooms with wide-open or pitted or discolored caps, and dark, discolored gills. Mushrooms should be firm and the surfaces should be dry.

### Storage

Store mushrooms in a paper bag in the refrigerator for up to three days. Do not store in a plastic bag as it can trap moisture and promote spoilage. Do not wash the mushrooms before storing them. Fresh mushrooms should never be frozen. Sautéed mushrooms can be frozen for up to one month.

### Nutrition

Mushrooms are low in sodium, fat, and calories and high in B vitamins such as riboflavin and niacin. Riboflavin plays a role in making energy from foods. Niacin is involved with the body’s digestive system, skin, and nerves.

### Handling

Limit contact with water when cleaning mushrooms as they will soak up the water which could cause the flavor to change. Wipe with a dry paper towel or damp sponge or cloth. If the mushrooms have soil on the stems, trim off the soiled portion. For shiitake mushrooms, stems should be removed before use.

Dried mushrooms need to be re-hydrated prior to use unless they’re being used in soups. To re-hydrate, place mushrooms in a small amount of hot water or broth for 30 minutes prior to use in recipes.

(For videos on selecting, storing, and handling mushrooms, go to this [website](#) by The Mushroom Council.)



## Harvest Season

Mushrooms are harvested year-long in Pennsylvania.

### Preparation

Mushrooms can be eaten raw or cooked. Consider adding mushrooms to salads, pasta dishes, and soups, or use as a topping on pizza, burgers, and sandwiches. Mushrooms can also be used as a meat extender. For example, chopped mushrooms blend well with ground meats so they can be used to replace some of the ground meat in items such as sloppy joes or tacos.



**Sautéed/Stir-fried:** Put a small amount of oil or broth in a pan. Place mushrooms in the pan and cook, uncovered, over medium to medium-high heat for three to five minutes. Add additional liquid if mushrooms begin to stick to the pan.



**Broil:** Brush mushrooms lightly with oil. Place mushrooms stem-side down on a pan. Broil for five minutes, turning the mushrooms and brushing them again halfway through the cooking time.



**Bake:** Pre-heat oven to 375° F. Arrange mushrooms in a single layer on a baking pan. Brush lightly with oil. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes.



### Recipe | Mushroom Beef Sloppy Joes

Makes: 4 servings.

Ingredients	Measure	Directions
White button mushrooms	½ pound	1. Chop mushrooms to approximate size and texture of cooked ground beef.
Cremeni mushrooms	½ pound	2. Heat a saute pan over medium-high heat.
90% lean ground beef	¼ pound	3. Add ground beef and mushrooms, and cook.
Canola oil	1 ½ tablespoon	4. Saute until ground beef is done.
Chopped onion	½ cup	5. Remove mushroom-beef mixture from pan.
Garlic (minced)	1 clove	6. Add onions and garlic to pan; cook until golden.
8 oz no-salt-added tomato sauce	1 can	7. Return mushroom-beef mixture to pan, along with remaining ingredients.
Chili powder	1 tablespoon	8. Simmer about 10 minutes; remove from heat.
Brown sugar	3 teaspoons	
Cider vinegar	1 teaspoon	
Ground black pepper	⅛ teaspoon	
Whole wheat buns	4	

**Source:** Produce for Better Health Foundation



Check out the PA Harvest of the Month website ([www.paharvestofthemonth.org](http://www.paharvestofthemonth.org)) for sources, additional resources, and recipes.

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