WILD MUSHROOMS IN MANITOBA

A basic guide for mushroom picking, preserving and cooking in Manitoba
Background

Mushrooms appearance, delicious flavors, and nutritional properties have complemented our tables and lifestyles for centuries. The beauty of wild mushrooms hunting starts when we walk through the forest in the spring or the fall. Mushroom hunting force us to look at the surrounded world with more perceptive eyes. Through the walks we start to identify the different scenarios where the mushrooms grow and the multiple partnerships they establish with other species and trees.

If your purpose is to pick mushrooms we recommend you to bring a basket and knife to avoid crushing them. Including mushrooms in your diet provides more flavor and nutrients to your table. Remember to bring into the kitchen only fresh, worm-free and well identified mushrooms.

In some places wild mushrooms are considered a delicacy and for that reason they are very expensive. For example, a bag of Golden Dry Chanterelles (1Lb) is value in $89.
It is good to eat?
Some mushrooms are easy to identify by sight, while others are more complicated. In Manitoba, there are many species of edible and non-edible mushrooms. This guide is a basic introduction to the 5 most common edible species found in Manitoba.

Safety
A first step to become familiar with your forest mushrooms is to take this book and start to recognize the most commons species, match it with the pictures, and descriptions of this book, and avoid bringing to the kitchen unknowing species. If you want to try new species be cautious and experiment with low portions first to check how you will react to the intake. Remember that some mushrooms can be highly-poison.

Basic Information
King Bolete (Edible)

**Colour and Description:** This Bolete is reddish to yellowish brown. Flesh is white; flesh and pores unchanging when bruised. Stem is white or tinted yellow/brown with a characteristic fine, white network extending down from the top of the stem, variable in shape.

**Shape:** Cap is up to 35cm wide, convex and smooth but often uneven. Underside of cap consists of pores, off-white to olive in age, with no pink tinged. Partial veil absent.

**When and Where Found:** grows singly or as many in conifer and hardwood stands. appears in spring, summer and fall. has a mild and pleasant taste with no odor; cook before eating.

**Warning:** Small amounts should be consumed when testing an unfamiliar bolete.
Black Morel (Edible)

**Color and Description:** The morel colour varies from a light gray-brown to a dark blackish-brown in age. It has narrowly conical caps with distinct pits separated by raised ridges that are more or less vertically aligned. The cap is attached at its base to the pale stalk. In size the caps vary widely.

**Shape:** The cap is cone-shaped, normally with rounded top, hollow, fastened by the lower edge to the stem or the edge slightly free. Steam: whitish to cream, hollow, roughened to granular overall, up to 5 inches long.

**When and Where Found:** Fruit during the spring and summer often occurring in large numbers in spring the year following a forest fire. Found in coniferous and hardwood forests, orchards.

**warning:** do not confuse with a False morel, which is not hollow inside and has a cap attached at the top of the stalk rather than a continuous hollow chamber.
Yellow Chanterelle (Edible)

Color and Description: golden to dark egg yellow or soft egg-yolk orange. Unlike other mushrooms Chanterelle are easy to recognize. They are bright yellow, and grow in a funnel shape.

Shape: convex in youth, becoming irregularly vase-shaped.

When and Where Found: Late summer to late fall, often under Douglas firs, hemlock, or spruce, in old or second growth forests.

Warning: This mushroom is commonly confused with the Chanterelle; the distinguishing factors are color (true Chanterelle is uniform egg-yellow, while the false one is more orange in hue and graded, with darker center) and attachment of gills to the stem (true Chanterelle does not have true, blade-like gills--rather, has rib-like folds running down the stem).
Oyster Mushroom (Edible)

**Colour and Description:** Brownish gray to oyster gray or white, attached at the side, 2-5 inches wide; flesh white, thin.

**Shape:** Caps are off-center, with attachment or short stalk at the margin. The top is irregularly convex. Gills are grayish, sometimes running together at point of attachment. The stem is usually absent, because the caps grows along a tree or log.

**When and Where Found:** Spring or late summer, and early fall. Oyster mushrooms can be grown on trembling aspen or poplar logs obtained from the woodlot. Standing, live trees should be harvested in early spring prior to bud break.

**Warning:** the oyster mushroom has several look-alikes that are indistinguishable in the field, all are edible as long as they grow on trees (avoid those growing on dead wood/logs/stumps). A potentially poisonous look-alike is the **Angel wings mushroom**, which is similar in appearance but is white rather than cream, has thinner flesh, no odor, and grows on dead wood (logs/stumps) rather than trees.
Chicken of the Woods (Edible)

**Colour and Description:**
fruited bodies are up to 20cm wide, shelf-like, rubbery, sulphur yellow to orange, sometimes with bright orange tips. Flesh is white to yellow tinted, firm, softer towards the edges.

**Shape:** Underside is characteristically white to bright yellow, with tiny pores instead of gills. Has no stem.

**Where to Found it:** grows in overlapping groups on logs, stumps, or wounds of trees. Appears in spring, summer, and fall.

**Warning:** can cause allergic reaction in some people due to toxins absorbed from the tree; begin by sampling small amounts.

Warning: an inedible (but not poisonous) look-alike is *Hapalopilus nidulans*, which is cinnamon brown/orange on the top and the underside, rather than bright yellow on the underside.
Finnish Funnel Chanterelle Pie (Serves 4-6)

Ingredients
- 8 oz. Chanterelles 3 T. butter
- 1 lb. puff pastry, thawed
- 6 oz. grated Emmental or blue cheese (if you like extreme flavors)
- 8 oz. sour cream
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1 large onion
- 1/2 t. salt and ground white pepper
- dash of ground clove, cinnamon and nut-meg

Methods
- Thaw the pastry sheet at room temperature. Line the bottom and edges of a greased pie tin with the pastry.
- Chop the onion and fresh mushrooms finely.
- Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat, add the onions, mushrooms and seasonings, and allow to simmer until the water is evaporated. Let it cool a bit.
- Mix with the grated emmental cheese, sour cream and eggs.
- Spread the mushroom-onion mixture over the pastry and then pour the cheese-sour cream-egg mixture over it.
- Bake the pie at 375 degrees F for approximately 30 minutes.
Wild Mushroom Soup

Ingredients

- 1/4 C. yellow onion, finely minced
- 3+2 T. butter
- 3 T. flour
- 6 C. chicken broth
- 1/4 t. dry thyme
- salt and pepper
- 2 C. of dried Boletus
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 t. lemon juice
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 C. whipping cream

Methods

- Place dried mushrooms in enough boiling water to cover and re-hydrate for at least 30 minutes.
- Melt 3 T. butter in a saucepan and sauté the onions slowly for about 8 - 10 minutes until tender and translucent.
- Add the flour and stir over moderate heat for about 3 minute without browning.
- Whisk in the broth and blend it thoroughly with the flour......Season to taste.
• Drain mushroom water into broth mixture, squeezing any extra water out of the mushrooms as well, and avoiding any grit.
• Simmer partially covered for 20 minutes, skimming occasionally.
• meanwhile, chop the mushrooms fine.
• In another saucepan, melt the 2 T. butter and add the chopped mushrooms, salt and lemon juice.
• Cook slowly for about 5 minutes.
• Pour the mushrooms and their cooking liquid into the saucepan with the soup base.
• Simmer for 10 minutes.
• Whisk together the egg yolks and the cream mixture.
Temper the egg mixture with small amounts of
• the soup base, and then add the mix to pot.
• Stir soup over moderate heat for a minute or two to thicken the eggs, but DO NOT LET SOUP COME TO SIMMER.
• Adjust seasonings
Asparagus & Morel Linguine with White Wine Mornay Sauce

- 1.5 lb. asparagus, trimmed, cut into 1-2" diagonals
- 3/4 lb. fresh morels (2 oz. dried, soaked in warm water, squeezed of water), cut crosswise into 1/4" rings
- 6 spring onions, white part minced, greens sliced in thin diagonals
- 8 oz. linguine
- 5 T. butter
- 3 T. flour
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 C. dry white wine
- 1 t. salt
- 1/8 t. white pepper
- 1 C. half-and-half
- 4 oz. fresh goat cheese
- 1 oz. grated sharp cheddar
- 1 oz. grated Parmesan
Methods

1. Cook the linguine in well-salted water until al-dente.
2. Melt 3 T. butter over medium-high heat in a medium saucepan. Add the flour and bay leaf, stirring constantly for 1 minute or until lightly frothy. Whisk in the half-and-half and continue to whisk until the sauce simmers. Add 3/4 C. wine, 1/2 t. salt and the pepper and cook until the sauce thickens and simmers. Reduce heat to medium-low and stir in the cheeses. Continue to stir until cheeses are melted.
3. In a very large skillet, melt the remaining 2 T. butter over medium heat. Add the morels and sauté for 5 minutes. Add the minced white portion of the green onions and sauté for 1 minute. Add the asparagus, the remaining 1/4 C. wine, and 1/2 t. salt. Braise covered for another 5 minutes or until asparagus is just tender. Drain the pasta thoroughly and add to the mushroom/asparagus skillet. Remove the bay leave and add the sauce. Add the green part of the green onions. Toss everything together and serve immediately.
**Drying Mushrooms**

Slice mushrooms no thicker than ¼ - ½ inch thick. Remember: the denser the species, the thinner the slice. Dry the slices using one of the following four methods:

1. String and hang in a light, airy room or in direct sunshine in warmer weather.
2. Spread on a wire screen over a heat register.
3. Lay in a single layer on newsprint and turn daily until thoroughly dry.
   Distribute evenly in a dehydrator.
   **Caution:** Do not dry in an oven, which tends to make them extremely hard and very difficult to re-hydrate!

When thoroughly dry, place in a tight sealing container and freeze for one week. Freezing kills any microscopic bugs that made it through the dehydration process. Then remove from freezer and store in a dry place. To re-hydrate, soak in warm water for 15 minutes.

We successfully dry: morels, boletes, puffballs, matsutake, cauliflowers, corals, oysters.

**Caution:** The Bay Area Mycological Society recommends drying mushrooms away from your main living area because "dehydrators blow a high volume of spores into the air"...and "some people have developed allergies from breathing this effluent."
There are different drying mushrooms systems. Use whatever is available in your community.
Freezing Mushrooms

Leaf small button mushrooms whole; halve or slice larger specimens. Freeze, using one of the following two methods:

1. Sauté mushrooms in a small amount of butter or olive oil. Cool and pack in freezer bags or plastic containers.

2. Steam over a small amount of boiling water for 10 minutes in a spaghetti cooker or similar pot. Cool. Pack into containers. Cover with liquid that has been extracted from the mushrooms and seal.

We successfully freeze: chanterelles, pig's ears, morels, verpa, matsutake.