

THE PERFECT SAUTÉED MUSHROOMS

Jill-Ann Ouellette

MUSHROOMS: VERSATILE, NUTRITIOUS & DELICIOUS!

Mushrooms can be eaten raw, sautéed, grilled, broiled, roasted, dried, steamed in microwave, canned, pickled, marinated, substituted as a burger or sandwich meat—no matter how you slice a mushroom, they are a great addition to any meal!

The most common mushrooms consumed in the US are white button mushrooms (about 90%). Worldwide, there are thousands of different types of mushrooms. Each has its own unique shape, flavor, and texture. About 650 types have been broadly studied, cultivated, and consumed for health and medical applications. Most grocery and health-food stores carry a limited variety. Perhaps you are interested in foraging...

There is a long-standing foraging tradition, where the top-four mushrooms to find in the wild are: chicken of the wood, chanterelles, morels, and giant puff-



balls. Wild mushrooms are found in forests and fields when it's damp out or after it has rained. Local Montanans know to search for morels the year after a forest fire for a bounty of these beauties.

Many local and five-star restaurants seek these delights to plate for their diners.

Mushrooms are nutritious as well. If you want to skip your multi-vitamin and add vitamin B5, B3, and B2, plus copper and selenium, you can eat them every day. Mushrooms also have protein, fiber, potassium, vitamin D, and calcium. They are 90% water for extra hydration. Mushrooms also have antibacterial properties. They can help lower your blood pressure and cholesterol and boost your immune system, to

name a few health benefits.

When you wash your mushrooms, they are like sponges and they will soak up excess water, which means you want to be careful when cleaning them. If the mushrooms are really dirty, submerge them briefly in a bowl of water, then drain or rinse quickly. If they are fairly clean, just wipe off any excess debris with a damp paper towel. You can cook the extra moisture off, so it's not a big deal if they absorb some water, but more water means they will take longer to cook, and they will steam before they brown.

What's the best oil to sauté mushrooms in? Any oil works, but the best combination is avocado or olive oil with butter. This combination gives you both browning and flavor. The oil keeps the butter from browning too quickly and burning, and the butter brings a richness you can't achieve with oil alone. If you don't want to use butter, use an extra two tablespoons of oil. The oil will cook the mushrooms nicely—it will just



Varieties



Morels

lack that extra bit of richness and nuttiness that the butter brings.

A little trick I learned years ago to mellow the mushroom flavor is to add a touch of white wine or distilled vinegar along with lemon juice from one slice to the cooking process. I have had guests that don't like mushrooms wonder why they liked *my* mushrooms, and made a few spouses envious. I always tell them about this trick.

Enjoy this quick and easy recipe as a side, or upgrade some of your favorite dishes by topping it with sautéed mushrooms and onions. Pile them over grilled chicken, salmon, or steak, top flatbreads or pizzas, make it an accent in a grain bowl, or even the centerpiece.

A couple of tips before we get started: To keep the onions from taking on the mushroom juices, wait to add the onions until the mushrooms have released their excess liquid and almost all of that liquid has evaporated.

Once you get there, add the onions, and let them sauté and brown in the fat alongside the mushrooms.

How long should you sauté mushrooms? While the mushrooms are ready to eat once the moisture has evaporated, now they can finally start to sauté and brown—which adds richness to their flavor. You are looking at just around 15 minutes total on the stovetop for the perfect sautéed mushroom. Let's get cooking...



Buttery sautéed mushrooms with fresh herbs

- Heat a large skillet on high heat. Add 2 T. unsalted butter and 2 T. avocado oil. When the butter melts, add the mushrooms and 1/4 t. of the sea salt.

SAUTÉED MUSHROOMS

Ingredients:

- 1 pound cremini mushrooms (my favorite)
- 1 large sweet onion (about 12 ounces)
- 2 cloves garlic or 1/2 t. garlic powder
- 2 T. unsalted butter
- 2 T. avocado or olive oil
 - 1/2 t. sea salt, divided, plus more to taste
- 1/4 t. freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
 - 1 medium lemon
 - 1/4 bunch fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup dry white wine (or your favorite), or 2 caps full of white vinegar

Instructions:

- Clean and slice the cremini mushrooms into 1/4-inch pieces. Halve the large sweet onion, then slice into 1/4-inch half-moons. Mince 2 garlic cloves.

Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms release their liquid and the liquid is almost evaporated, 5 to 10 minutes.

- Add the onion and season with the remaining 1/4 t. sea salt and 1/4 t. black pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions and mushrooms are tender and golden-brown in spots, 7 to 10 minutes. Meanwhile, finely grate the zest from 1 medium lemon until you have 1/2 t. Juice the lemon until you have 2 T. Pick and finely chop the leaves from 1/4 bunch fresh parsley until you have 2 T.

- Add the garlic to the onion and mushroom mixture and cook, stirring often, until golden and fragrant, about 1 minute. Add 1/4 c. dry white wine or 2 caps full of vinegar and cook until completely evaporated, 1-to-2 minutes.

- Remove the skillet from the heat. Add the lemon juice, lemon zest, and parsley, and toss to combine.

Be creative and switch out the fresh parsley for any leafy, tender, green herb, such as cilantro, basil, or dill. Also, you can store the sautéed delights for up to five days in an airtight container in the fridge. ■



Grilled



Pickled