

Preserving Mushrooms



Mushrooms Fast Facts

- There are a few rules to follow when eating mushroom that are unfamiliar to you: **always cook** unfamiliar mushrooms before tasting, **taste a small amount and wait 24 hours**, **try only one** new variety at a time, and **keep a whole uncooked sample** in case you need to confirm the identity later.
- Preserve cultivated button mushrooms by canning; **do not can wild mushrooms**.
- Wild mushrooms have different textures from the common commercially grown button mushroom. Therefore, the processing time for canned cultivated button mushrooms does not apply to wild mushrooms.
- Preserve cultivated or wild mushrooms by pickling, drying, or freezing.
- One pound of button mushrooms is equivalent to 2½ dry pints, 4 cups sliced, 3 ounces dried, or 1/3 cup dried mushroom powder.
- **To prepare mushrooms:** Wash in several changes of water until no more grit remains. Trim a small slice from the stem end.

Canned cultivated button mushrooms:

Prepare 4 pounds mushrooms per pint. If desired, add 1 teaspoon salt to each pint jar before filling with mushrooms. In a saucepan, bring 1½ cups of water to a boil; for better color with white mushrooms, add ¾ teaspoon fresh or bottled lemon juice. Add mushrooms to boiling water and cook 5 minutes. Keep hot while filling half-pint or pint jars to 1-inch headspace. Process mushrooms in a dial gauge pressure canner at 11 pounds or weighted gauge at 10 pounds; half-pints or pints for 45 minutes (at 0 to 1,000 feet).

Pickled marinated mushrooms: Prepare 5 pounds small button mushrooms (quartered if large). Bring to a boil in a large saucepan, the mushrooms, 6 tablespoons bottled lemon juice, and water to cover. Simmer 5 minutes. Drain mushrooms. In a clean saucepan, combine mushrooms, 1½ cups olive oil, 2 cups white vinegar, 6 tablespoons finely chopped onions, 3 tablespoons diced red bell peppers, and 2½ teaspoons each dried oregano, basil, and pickling salt. Bring to a boil, turn off heat, and cool to room temperature. Add several black peppercorns and garlic cloves to a sterilized jar; fill with mushrooms and refrigerate up to 1 month. For longer storage, keep mixture hot while filling half-pint jars to ½-inch headspace. Be sure to distribute the marinade evenly in the jars. Very carefully clean the rim of oil using a vinegar soaked towel. Process half-pints of pickled marinated mushrooms in a boiling water canner for 20 minutes (at 0 to 1,000 feet).

Japanese pickled vegetables (Fukujinzuke): In a large bowl, toss together 6 cups of thinly sliced vegetables such as daikon, turnip, lotus

root, eggplant, cucumber, carrot, and shiitake or enoki mushrooms. In a large saucepan, bring to a boil 1/3 cup brown sugar and 1/4 cup each soy sauce, sake, and mirin. Add vegetables, and return to a boil for 5 minutes. Turn off heat. Add 1/4 cup rice vinegar. Toss vegetables well. Store in a sterilized jar in the refrigerator up to 1 month.

Dried mushrooms: Dry whole or sliced; uniform pieces dry faster. Preheat an oven or food dehydrator to 130°F to 140°F. Dry until brittle. Cool until no longer warm. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for about 2 months. Freeze for longer storage. Use dried mushrooms in soups and stews. Grind to a powder for soups and sauces. Rehydrate for use in stir-frys and casseroles. To rehydrate, place in a bowl, cover with boiling water, and soak 20-30 minutes, or until plumped.

Frozen mushrooms: Before freezing, cook sliced, quartered, or whole mushrooms for 1-6 minutes, or until tender but still firm in the center. Cook by steam-blanching in boiling salted water or sautéing in a small amount of butter or oil. Cool and pack into freezer-safe containers. You may also freeze stuffed, cooked mushrooms.

Frozen mushroom soup: Sauté in 4 tablespoons butter or oil, 1 pound sliced mushrooms and 1 small sliced onion for 8 -10 minutes. Add 1 quart boiling water or chicken stock and ¼ cup medium-dry sherry. Simmer for 1 hour. Cool, purée in a blender or food processor, and package in freezer-safe containers. Reheat soup, season to taste with salt and pepper. Garnish with sour cream and bacon bits or fresh parsley or chives.