Preserving Mushrooms

Mushrooms Fast Fasts

- 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 ¼ 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.

Adapted by the author from The Home Preserving Bible by Carole Cancler. Published by Alpha Books/Penguin Group (USA), New York, 2012. For more information about food preservation methods and recipes, see www.TheHomePreservingBible.com.