



### ARE MUSHROOMS A FRUIT OR A VEGETABLE?

Mushrooms are neither fruit nor vegetable, as they are not plants. Mushrooms are fungi. While plants are classified in the kingdom Plantae, all mushrooms are in a completely different biological kingdom, the kingdom Fungi. Because mushrooms are in a different kingdom, as a food source, they have a very different nutritional profile, including antioxidants and bioactive compounds not found in plants.

### HOW ARE MUSHROOMS GROWN AND HARVESTED?

Mushrooms grow from fungal spores that thrive in cool, damp, dark conditions. Since they need a lot of decaying plant matter or compost, in the wild they often spring directly from the ground or from trees. Mushrooms are characterized by mycelium, which is the root-like underground structure of a fungus, made up of a network of fine white thread-like filaments – Mycelium is an important part of the forest ecosystem, and also key to cultivation.

Organic cultivated mushrooms are mainly produced in two ways, either on large trays of sterile compost in mushroom rooms or using mushroom blocks. Crimini, Portabella and White are grown on large trays of compost. Shiitake, Maitake and Lion's Mane all grow in blocks, in which wood chips and nutrients are inoculated with mycelium.

Mushrooms are highly efficient at converting compost into food. They help decaying matter become usable material in the forest, providing food for humans, animals and other plants in the mycological net, exchanging sugars for nutrients.

Mushrooms have a short growth cycle, providing a consistent source of fresh, regionally grown food.

Depending on the mushroom variety and the growing medium and environment, it can take a few weeks to a few months from spore to harvest. Every single mushroom harvested in the U.S. is harvested by hand.

### WHICH VARIETIES DOES OGC CARRY?

OGC offers nearly 30 types of mushrooms, including organic cultivated and wild foraged varieties. Review OGC's Mushroom Primer for details.

### WHERE DOES OGC SOURCE MUSHROOMS FROM AND WHEN ARE THEY AVAILABLE?

Wild foraged mushroom varieties are sourced from the Northwest, including Oregon, Washington and southern areas of British Columbia. The wild season is generally September through May. Organic cultivated varieties are sourced from California, Oregon and British Columbia and are usually available year-round. Factors that can impact cultivated availability are seasonal fluctuations in temperature and rainfall, which can affect the compost during the fall and winter.

### HOW CAN EATERS USE MUSHROOMS?

Mushrooms are versatile, hearty in flavor and texture and can be used from cap to stem. Minimal trimming and prep make mushrooms one of the easiest produce ingredients to incorporate into recipes. Grilling, pan-frying, and roasting are popular preparation methods. Many varieties are great for stuffing, sauces, soups, sandwiches and burgers.

## SHARE THIS INFO WITH EATERS

- When stored in the original packaging or a brown paper bag on the bottom shelf of the fridge, mushrooms will last at least a week. So, when shopping, fill the bag full of fresh mushrooms so you can add them to various meals throughout the week.
- To clean mushrooms, gently brush off any debris with fingers or a damp paper towel, or a soft brush, if needed.
- There's no need to peel mushrooms; a lot of flavor is in the skin.
- Except for the few wild varieties that may need it (looking at you, More!), do not soak mushrooms in water, as they will absorb water. You can quickly wash whole mushrooms just before preparing a dish to remove any debris. Dry them quickly soon after, before cooking. Don't wash sliced mushrooms because they quickly absorb water through the exposed inner flesh.
- Caps and stems can be used in recipes.
- Mushrooms are a good source of B vitamins, several minerals including zinc and magnesium, antioxidants and fiber.

## MERCHANDISING TIPS

- Use POP in displays to help shoppers get to know each variety and encourage trial.
- Merchandise in a high-traffic area with signage pointing out healthy lifestyle attributes and suggested usages.
- Offer a wide variety including bulk, packaged, value and specialty options so there's an option for every shopper. Make sure you've got favorites on hand while also offering eaters something new.
- Handle mushrooms with care. Display mushrooms between 38 to 42 degrees with good airflow. Always rotate, avoiding over-stacking and spray misters.

