



# MUNCH ON MIGHTY MUSHROOMS!

## WHAT'S SO SUPER ABOUT 'SHROOMS?

- Mushrooms will have a satisfying, earthy flavor and meaty texture, yet they're low in calories and have little or no fat, depending on the variety.
- Mushrooms easily soak up flavors. Try them with your favorite marinade or seasoning.
- They provide fiber and, depending on the variety, many nutrients, including B vitamins, selenium, potassium and zinc.
- Mushrooms are full of moisture and release their own liquid when cooked, so little or no oil is needed, even for high-heat methods.
- Mushrooms can produce vitamin D when exposed to ultraviolet light—just like humans do! However, some mushrooms are cultivated in the dark, so look for packaged mushrooms with nutrition labels to find the vitamin D.



## HAVE YOU HEARD “THERE’S A FUNGUS AMONG US?”

Indeed, mushrooms grow from fungus, usually above ground on soil or on top of other moist substrates (examples: wood chips, straw, compost material, manure, coffee grounds). Mushrooms grow and reproduce from spores, not seeds. Spores are single-cell reproductive units produced in the “gills” underneath the mushroom cap.



## GO A STEP FURTHER Mushrooms for a Main Dish

Mushrooms are hearty and satisfying enough to serve as a main dish, and make a lower-calorie, nutrient dense stand-in for all or part of the meat in recipes.

- Use mushrooms as the meaty ingredient in pasta dishes, tacos, enchiladas, stir-fries or on pizza.
- Add chopped mushrooms to ground beef to stretch your dollar and reduce calories and fat.
- Thick, large portobello mushrooms are great for grilling. Serve them whole on a bun instead of a hamburger or cut into strips for fajitas.
- Gourmet mushroom varieties, including shiitake or porcini, add texture and distinctive, savory flavor to stews, soups, gravies and sauces.

Check out our yummy **recipes** on back!

## TIPS FOR PARENTS Work the Mushroom Magic!

Make the most of mushrooms with these serving & storage tips:

- Cooking mushrooms releases more nutrients and makes them more digestible.
- Mushrooms should be eaten within a few days after buying them for best taste. They remain freshest when not allowed to get too dry or damp, so refrigerate in a paper bag or container that allows cool air to circulate.
- Never soak mushrooms to wash them. Clean them by gently wiping with a damp cloth, or rinse briefly and dry with a towel.
- Try growing mushrooms at home. To get started, look for mushroom-growing kits, like the one from Back to the Roots ([backtotheroots.com](http://backtotheroots.com)).



## HANDS-ON ACTIVITY Mushroom Investigation

### What You'll Need

fresh mushroom, cutting board or plate, fork/knife/tweezers, microscope or magnifying glass

### Step 1

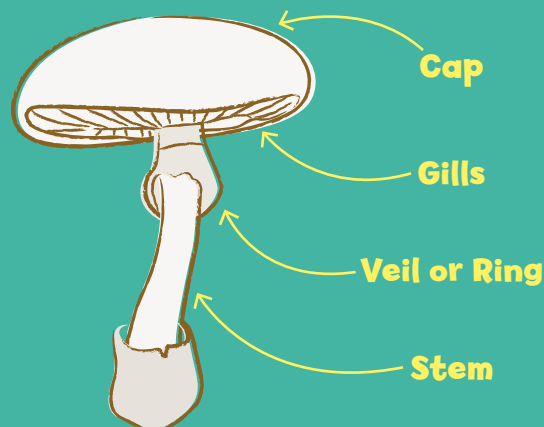
Choose a mushroom at the grocery store or ask an adult to help you hunt for a mushroom in the garden. (Never eat a wild mushroom. Some are poisonous!)

### Step 2

Prepare your examination table and dress up as a scientist if you wish. A fork, knife and/or tweezers will be useful for separating and examining the various mushroom parts.

### Step 3

Examine your mushroom closely and identify these main parts: cap, stem, veil (if still intact) or ring (which results from collapsing of the veil), gills. Cut it into pieces to see the inside. Look at it with the microscope or magnifying glass to see as much detail as possible. Describe what you see and make notes. If you have questions, look up the answers online or at the library.



## RECIPES

Let kids help with the simple steps in **bold**!

### BREAKFAST

#### Mushroom Potato Hash

3 red potatoes, scrubbed and diced  
4 chopped fresh sage leaves or  
1 teaspoon dried sage  
medium red onion, diced  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
fresh chives or parsley for garnish  
16 ounces mushrooms,  
any variety

Preheat oven to 375°F. **Step 1:** Place potatoes on a large, rimmed baking sheet and roast approx. 30 minutes until barely golden, turning them halfway through cooking (add a little water to the pan to prevent sticking if necessary). **Step 2:** Meanwhile, heat a large skillet over high heat. Cook onions and mushrooms, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, approx. 10 minutes. **Step 3:** Add cooked potatoes, garlic and sage to the pan. Use a spoon to scrape up any bits of onion or mushrooms that stick to the bottom of the pan, adding a small amount of water if necessary to prevent sticking. Cook just until potatoes begin to brown on the edges. **Step 4:** Garnish with chopped fresh chives or parsley.

### LUNCH

#### Portobello "Pizzas"

portobello mushroom caps,  
wiped clean and dried (not rinsed)—one cap per person  
olive oil  
salt and pepper to taste  
tomato sauce or pesto  
grated or sliced mozzarella  
your favorite pizza toppings  
(olives, onions, peppers, tomatoes, basil, oregano, etc.)

Portobello "Pizzas" continued.

Preheat oven to 400°F. **Step 1:** Lightly brush the top and bottom of each portobello cap with olive oil, dust with salt and pepper, and arrange the caps gill side down on a baking sheet lined with parchment. Bake until tender, about 10–12 minutes, flipping them over halfway through cooking. **Step 2:** Remove mushrooms from oven and switch oven to broil setting. **Step 3:** Keep mushroom caps gill side up and layer on sauce, mozzarella and other toppings. **Step 4:** When oven has reached full broil temp, put the mushrooms back in for a few additional minutes until cheese melts and toppings are hot.

### DINNER

#### Grilled Portobello Sandwich

4 large portobello mushroom caps,  
wiped clean and dried (not rinsed)  
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
1 teaspoon vegetable oil  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
salt and pepper to taste  
whole wheat hamburger buns  
toppings of your choice

**Step 1:** Whisk the vinegar, mustard, garlic and oil together in a small bowl, then use a basting brush to apply it on both sides of the portobello caps. Add salt and pepper to taste. **Step 2:** Arrange portobello caps, gills down, on the grill or on a broiler pan. **Step 3:** Cook about 6–8 minutes, then turn and cook an additional 4–8 minutes or longer until tender and juicy (time varies depending on mushroom thickness). **Step 4:** Serve on a bun with your favorite toppings. Try: spinach leaves, tomato, onion, pickles, chopped olives, avocado, roasted or raw bell pepper, feta or pesto.



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