

NUTRITION

FACT SHEET

Discover Mushrooms: Nature's Hidden Treasure

People like mushrooms for their satisfying taste and versatility as an ingredient in everything from pizza and pasta to soups and meat dishes.

But are they good for you? In a word, yes.

In fact, mushrooms are a hidden treasure of nutrition. While bright, colorful fruits and vegetables are frequently in the spotlight for their nutritional value, less colorful but still nutrient-dense vegetables like mushrooms are often left in the dark. That's unfortunate, because mushrooms provide a range of nutrients. Mushrooms offer many essential nutrients, including copper and B vitamins riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid—plus antioxidants selenium and ergothioneine. White button mushrooms also are a largely unrecognized source of vitamin D. One serving of 4-5 mushrooms provides 15 IU of vitamin D.

According to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*, many Americans are not getting enough potassium. Mushrooms have nearly 300 milligrams of potassium in each serving. Best of all, one serving of mushrooms provides all this nutrition with only 20 calories and zero grams of fat.

Mushrooms' Natural Antioxidants

Mushrooms are the leading source of the mineral selenium in the fruit and vegetable aisle. In the body, selenium forms an antioxidant that may help protect cells from damage. Cellular damage may contribute to the development of chronic diseases such as cancer and heart disease. Long-term studies are currently underway to further investigate the potential role of selenium in cancer prevention. Ergothioneine is another natural antioxidant found in mushrooms, with one serving containing about 3 to 4 milligrams.

HOW THE SELENIUM IN MUSHROOMS STACKS UP

Food source	Daily Value*
Turkey, light meat, 3 ½ oz.	45%
Brown (Crimini), 5 medium	31%
White Button, 5 medium	22%
Portabella, 1 medium	21%
Brown rice, ½ cup	15%

*Daily Values are reference numbers developed by the FDA to help consumers determine if a food contains a lot or a little of a specific nutrient. A food that provides 10-19% of the DV is a good source. A food that provides 20% or more of the DV is an excellent source of that nutrient. The DV for selenium is 70 micrograms (ug).

Easy Ways to Make It with Mushrooms

- Slice and sauté white button mushrooms to top a pizza, toss in pasta or wrap in a quesadilla.
- Combine earthy flavored and hearty-textured brown (crimini) mushrooms with beef, poultry or vegetable dishes.
- Marinade and grill meaty Portabellas and serve on a bun for a great-tasting veggie burger.
- Jazz up sandwiches or soups with enoki mushrooms for added crunch and eye appeal.
- Add taste to pasta, steak, pork or chicken with oyster mushrooms.
- Round out the richness of a main dish or side dish meal with maitakes, which have a unique aroma and woody flavor.
- Enjoy the richness and texture of heated shiitakes in vegetable dishes as well as meat-based dishes.

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MUSHROOM PRIMAVERA WITH SPAGHETTI SQUASH

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Cooking Time: 22 minutes

Serves: 4

Ingredients

- 1 spaghetti squash (about 3 pounds)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound white button mushrooms, sliced
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup crumbled, fat-free feta cheese
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons sliced Kalamata olives
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped fresh basil, plus more for garnish

With the tip of a knife, pierce squash in about 5 places. Place on paper towel in microwave and cook on high for 10 minutes, or until squash has softened. When cool enough to handle, cut squash lengthwise and remove seeds with a spoon. Remove the spaghetti-like strands of squash with a fork, set aside and cover to keep warm (or reheat in microwave at serving time).

Heat oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Add a single layer of mushrooms and cook, without stirring, for about 5 minutes or until mushrooms become red-brown on one side. Stir in onion and garlic and cook for 3 more minutes, until onions are softened. Add tomatoes, cheese and olives and cook about 3 minutes longer, until mixture is hot and bubbling. Remove pan from heat and stir in basil.

Divide squash among 4 shallow serving bowls. Spoon sauce over spaghetti squash and garnish with additional freshly chopped basil. Serve immediately.

Nutrition facts per serving:

Calories 260; total fat 6g (saturated 1g); cholesterol 0mg; sodium 520mg; total carbohydrates 31g; dietary fiber 2g; protein 10g; vitamin A 20%DV; vitamin C 30%DV; calcium 15%DV.

Mushroom Basics 101: Selecting, Storing and Cleaning Fresh Mushrooms

Nutrient-dense and flavorful, mushrooms go great with almost any meal. Follow these tips to be sure mushrooms taste as good as they should.

How to Select:

- Purchase mushrooms that are firm and have a fresh, smooth appearance.
- Surfaces should be dry, but not dried out, and appear plump.
- A closed veil under the cap indicates a delicate flavor, while an open veil and exposed gills mean a richer flavor.

How to Store:

- Refrigerate mushrooms in original packaging for up to a week.
- Once opened, store mushrooms in a paper bag for longer shelf-life; avoid storing in airtight containers, which can cause condensation and quicken spoilage.
- Fresh mushrooms should never be frozen, but frozen sautéed mushrooms will keep for up to a month.

How to Clean:

- Brush off any dirt with a damp paper towel or fingers.
- Rinse fresh mushrooms only briefly under running water and pat dry with a paper towel. They absorb moisture so never soak them.
- Trim the end of the stem before using.

For a referral to a registered dietitian and for additional food and nutrition information visit

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