



A close-up photograph of a basket filled with various types of fresh mushrooms, including button mushrooms and larger, more complex varieties. A small sprig of green parsley is placed among the mushrooms on the right side. The basket is made of a light-colored material, possibly wood or metal, and has a handle visible on the left. The background is softly blurred, showing more mushrooms.

Summary and Conclusions

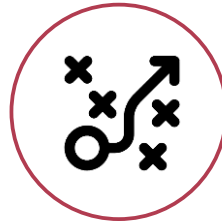
Background and Objectives

The Mushroom Council wants to better understand mushroom shoppers' path-to-purchase for fresh mushrooms in order to uncover insights that may lead to improved merchandising, sales and marketing.

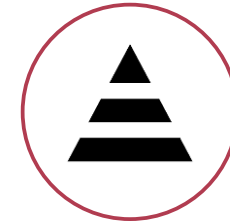
Specifically, they are looking to:



Assess shoppers' involvement and engagement in the purchase and use of fresh mushrooms



Identify the key steps in the purchase decision process; the influences and decisions that lead to purchase, and potential in-store barriers



Understand the relative importance of the elements in the decision process (e.g. variety, appearance, packages, signage, promotions and price, etc.)



Methodology – Qualitative Research



In-depth Shop-along Interviews



Qualifications

- Primary Shoppers
- Ages 24-64
- Purchased fresh mushrooms in the past 3 months at grocery
- Plan to purchase fresh mushrooms again



Interviews Included

- Pre-store: discuss perceptions, purchase and use of mushrooms, etc.
- In-store: discuss reactions to display, selection, how they choose, etc.



When

September 2019

Note:

This **qualitative research** is designed to uncover **consumer insights** through in-depth discussions and observation that help guide marketing and sales.

The results are based on a group of individuals and are not intended to be representative of all mushroom consumers.

This research is an excellent precursor to conducting **quantitative research** among a broad audience of mushroom shoppers. The quantitative research would be **representative of mushroom shoppers** in general and would provide statistically projectable facts about their attitudes, behaviors and shopping characteristics.

Executive Summary

PASSIONATE – Mushroom buyers love mushrooms. They love mushrooms' taste, unique flavors and ability to enhance any dish. They welcome new recipes and ideas on how to incorporate mushrooms into a meal. This is especially true for the lesser known mushroom varieties.

QUALITY ABOVE ALL – Shoppers choose mushrooms based on what visually looks the best and the freshest. Quality is more important than price to these shoppers.

THE MORE FLAVOR THE BETTER – Most of the shoppers love to try all varieties of mushrooms and use them in a wide range of recipes. The more flavorful mushrooms (i.e. Cremini and Portabella) were preferred by nearly everyone over White Button. Shoppers would like information on preparing less-known varieties.

HIDDEN BENEFITS – Most shoppers were not aware that mushrooms contain any specific nutrients, vitamins or health benefit but were viewed as “healthy”. This may be a “halo effect” of fresh produce.

WHOLE OR SLICED – Mushroom shoppers seem to prefer whole mushrooms over sliced because they are viewed as fresher, more versatile and longer lasting at home. Many claimed to prefer whole so they can be sliced/diced to a preferred size/shape. Sliced were primarily thought of as a convenience.

Opportunities

ENTICE

Provide usage and recipe ideas for less well-known varieties of mushrooms

Possibly have a recipe idea on pack. Shoppers were more interested in recipes than price or discounts. Continue to promote the taste benefits of The Blend.

ENGAGE

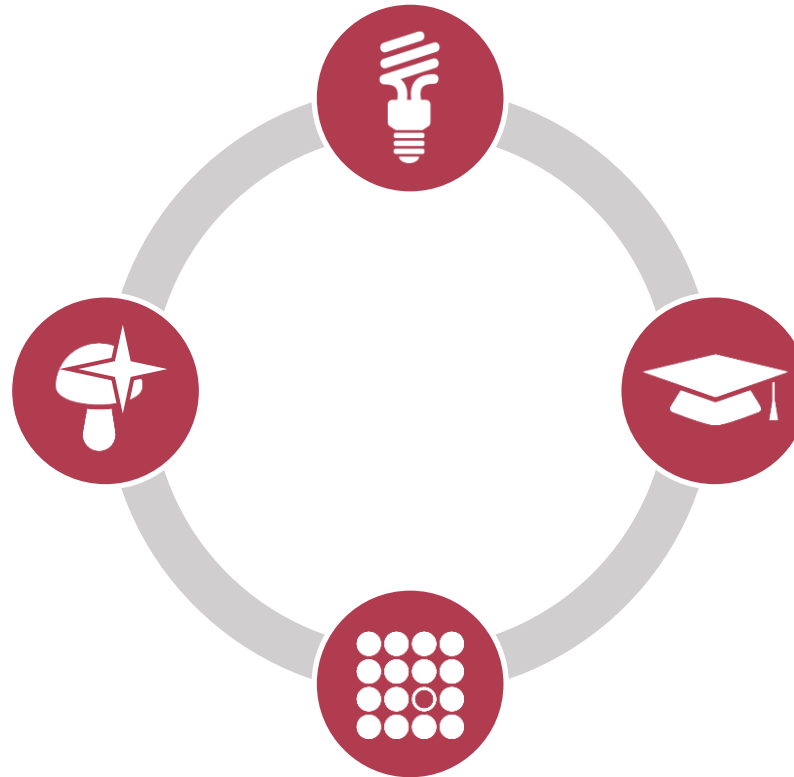
Make usage suggestions readily accessible (e.g. new recipe ideas and nutrition information at point of purchase (on shelf/on package)).

EDUCATE

Tout the nutrition benefits. It may make mushrooms even more top of mind, especially for the lighter users. Consider providing information on the package.

DIFFERENTIATE

Brands don't currently stand out in produce generally or mushrooms specifically, but they could.



A close-up photograph of a basket filled with various types of fresh mushrooms, including button mushrooms and larger, more complex shapes. A small sprig of green parsley is placed among the mushrooms on the right side. The basket is made of a light-colored material, possibly wood or metal, and the background is softly blurred.

Key Learning

Pre-Store: Eating Habits and Preparing to Shop



Eating healthy is a priority

Mushroom shoppers claim they are making a conscious effort to eat more fruits and vegetables and less processed foods, sugars and red meats.



*"More fruits and vegetables. I want to be healthier. I want to eat **cleaner, fresh foods.**"* – CT, Rhegie



*"We try to eat really healthy. Healthy to me is more whole foods and **less processed** food. Fruits and vegetables." - CT, Melanie*



*"I try to limit processed foods, limit chemicals. Strive for organic when possible. Try to eat as many **fruits and vegetables** as I can. Not always as successful as I want to be." – CA, Gail*

*"I try to eat **fresh greens and fruits** more than anything else in my house. So it's fairly important. Makes me feel healthier. Those foods are better for my body than processed foods and ingredients. I feel lighter and healthier. Don't feel so sluggish." – CT, Lauren*

OBSERVATION:

Consumers are striving to "eat healthier" and want to consume more plant-based foods.

Mushrooms are included as part of this effort to eat healthier.



They buy mushrooms because they LOVE the taste and the unique flavor



"They taste really good and they add something really nice to your food."
– CA, Brittany



"Mushrooms have a very specific **earthy palate that is unique**. That kind of flavor profile is pretty much distinctively mushrooms. If I'm craving that kind of flavor, then I can make something with that in mind." – CA, Rob



TASTE

is the **#1**
reason for buying
mushrooms



"**Just the flavor.** We love mushrooms. Even my girls since they were babies love mushrooms. I don't know why. When we go to parties and the kids are eating pizzas, they'll grab the mushroom pizza."
– CT, Vanessa



"Mushrooms are one of my favorite things to cook because they're quick and **make everything flavorful**. I love mushrooms."
– CT, Jen

Many shoppers grew up eating mushrooms and continue the tradition as adults



Started eating



"A lot of what I do with mushrooms is based on what my parents did."
– CT, Melanie



"I've always eaten mushrooms, even as a kid. My mom always cooked with them. She used to make a side of mushrooms and onions if we had burgers or steak or chicken. I've always made them. My kids didn't like them when they were little, but they like them now."
– CA, Renee



Started buying

"Since I started grocery shopping for myself. 20 years." – CT, Alexis

"I've always bought them. I like them for salads.... I've always loved sautéed mushrooms." – CA, Amy

"As soon as I started cooking" – CA, Brittany

"It's been years. I like mushrooms. It wasn't all-of-a-sudden." – CT, Rhegie



OBSERVATION:

Learning to enjoy mushrooms at a young age, as many of these respondents did, may contribute to a life-long appreciation and purchase of mushrooms. Motivating parents to cook with mushrooms for their children may inspire the next generation of mushroom shoppers.

Many were inspired to buy mushrooms because of a dish or a recipe they tried

*"Maybe when I started watching more "Barefoot Contessa" in my early 30s. She makes a great **mushroom soup**. I love mushrooms on my **pizza**. You see how people cook with mushrooms on cooking shows and get intrigued. They're pretty." – CT, Kelly*

"Yeah. I had a Porcini crusted steak and I wanted to make that." – CA, Rob

*"No, I didn't like them growing up. I had them when I was dining out and I said these are not so bad.....
.....I went to a restaurant and they had a quesadilla with mushrooms, onions and spinach and cheese. It was really good. I went home and happened to have some leftover mushrooms, so I made a mushroom and cheese quesadilla." – CA, Gail*



OBSERVATION:

New usage ideas and recipes can motivate and inspire adults to try mushrooms as well as increase purchase among people who already love them.

Shopping lists are primarily used for larger shopping trips and for the preparation of new dishes/recipes

"Sometimes. Depending on what I plan to prepare. Complex meals or new recipes absolutely need a list but if I am just stocking up then no list is needed."

– CA, Erica



"When I'm doing a complete shopping (trip) I'll bring a list but if I'm just doing some refill...then I don't."

– CT, Alexis



"Because I tend to make many different dishes, I need to make sure I get all the right ingredients."

– CT, Lauren



"If we are (preparing) something new and different then I always make a list. If I am dropping-in to pick up just a few things, then I don't."

– CA, Rob



OBSERVATION:

Many shoppers relied on lists for larger shopping trips and when they were preparing a new recipe. Quick refill or "restocking" trips usually didn't require a written list.

Discounts are appreciated but not a significant driver of mushroom purchases



"The loyalty program here provides discounts...so I'll use those, but I'm not a clipper that snips away at the newspaper or magazines." – CT, Sheila



"If I see them (discounts), and they're easy to get, I use them, but I don't search for them." – CT, Alexis

*"Most of my "coupons" are from the loyalty program which are "clipless coupons."
– CT, Amy*



"I look for coupons, but I won't stop buying something just because there's no coupon for it, so I guess when I do find a coupon it's like a little prize." – CA, Gail



OBSERVATION:

With few exceptions, discounts were viewed as a 'bonus' but not a driver of mushroom sales. Many felt that their retailer's loyalty program and in-store specials and flyers provided purchase incentives. Shoppers appreciated discounts but they are not as important as the quality of the mushrooms.

In-Store Mushroom Shopping



QUALITY is most important – even more than PRICE

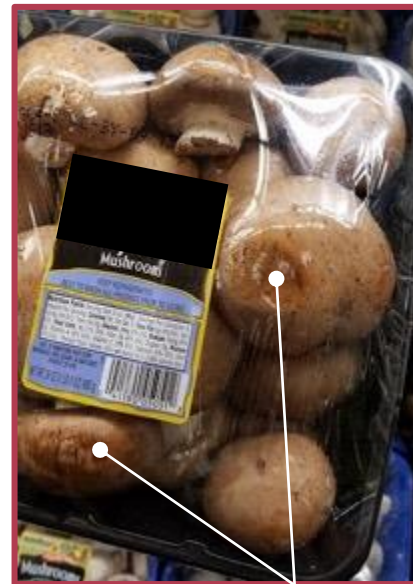
Most claim to choose the mushrooms that look and feel the best (regardless of price, local or organic)

*“I **just want them to look good**. If they look bad, they’ve been dropped, dented, old, that steers me off. I look for what looks most fresh and edible.”* – CT, Sara

“I should look at price, but I don’t really compare if it’s cheaper.” – CT, Kelly

*“I go by **taste and freshness**. If it’s organic, great. I try to just buy what looks good.”*
– CT, Jen

*“**Freshness and quality**. If I was at Erewhon (a natural grocery chain in So. Cal) and I saw a mushroom that was presented well and quite fresh and firm, that would be enough for me to just get it.”*
– CA, Rob



Too bruised

OBSERVATION:

Quality above all - including price. While most of the shoppers didn't even notice the price, they were willing to pay more for the mushrooms that looked the best. Fresh appearance equaled quality to these shoppers.

Quality: Most rely on visual cues for freshness, but some do check the expiration date



NO



"Not for mushrooms and they keep. I've had mushrooms in my fridge for weeks on end."

– CA, Amy



"Not on mushrooms. I didn't know they had expiration dates. They are fresh where I get them."

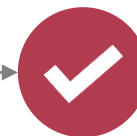
– CT, Alexis



"No. Do they have an expiration? I do it by eye. If it looks like crap, I don't buy it."

– CT, Vanessa

Do you ever look at the expiration dates?



YES



"I would look at the sell-by dates and see which ones look the cleanest. A package that's not too skimpy looking. In this case, they all look the same. I'd really go by the dates."

– CA, Gail



"These expire five days sooner. I would get the one that lasts until the 17th. I would have all week to use them. Whereas this package, I need to use it within 48 hours."

– CT, Lauren



"I try and reach in the back, because those are the freshest."

– CT, Jen

Selection: Whole mushrooms are preferred for their perceived freshness and ability to last longer



"Once it is cut up, it oxidizes. So getting something that isn't cut is going to last a little longer. These are already oxidizing. So these I would not buy." – CT, Jen



"I get the whole. It's fresher. It's not exposed to the air as much since it hasn't been cut up yet. Doesn't take long to cut up mushrooms." – CT, Evan



"I feel like they are fresher. If they are sliced, they could get dried out or soggy. I like mushrooms with the dirt on them. They feel fresh. Nobody has touched them." – CT, Alexis



OBSERVATION:

Shoppers feel that whole mushrooms will last longer (stay fresher) than sliced, once they get them home.



"I don't like them when they're pre-sliced because I feel like they're older. When everything's cut and prepacked, I feel like it's the stuff that's about to go. It starts turning black or brown." – CA, Tatianna

Selection: Whole mushrooms are also favored for their versatility

Whole mushrooms allow shoppers to control how they are cut (i.e. thickness, quarters or halves, etc.)

"I like whole because I can cut them in quarters or slice them."
– CT, Vanessa

*"I can **control the thickness.** Dice them or do more things when they're whole. Sometimes the sliced ones vary in size and that can mess with the cooking."*
– CT, Lauren



OBSERVATION:

Shoppers said they prefer whole mushrooms because they can "make it their way." They can slice or dice them to the exact size and shape they want.

*"I like chopping it **the way I like chopping it.**"* – CA, Tatianna

*"Whole. The sliced ones are more expensive. I can just slice them myself.... If you want to **slice it a particular way.** Sometimes you don't want it too thin."* – CA, Kevin

Selection: Shoppers say they purchase sliced mushrooms mostly for convenience

Sliced are purchased when under a time crunch, for large quantities or “being lazy”

“I buy whole. Sometimes I buy sliced. If there was a sale and I know I’m having a few people over and I’m making burgers and I **don’t have a lot of prep time**, I’ll buy the big package of the sliced ones and throw it in the pan.” – CA, Renee

“Only when I’m **really strapped for time**.”
– CT, Melanie

“Sometimes I like when they’re sliced because it **saves me time**. I make a chicken pot pie and get the sliced ones for that. There’s so much chopping for that recipe without having to also chop mushrooms.” – CT, Kelly



“A lot of times I’d rather get it pre-sliced. That way I can **hurry up** and prepare it and get going.” – CA, Kent

“I like them sliced because it’s a **little bit easier**. It depends on what I’m making.”
– CA, Brittany

“I personally buy them already sliced for the most part. I might re-chop them though because they’re this big. I like them in half..... I guess I could always cut it myself. Maybe it’s being **lazy**.”
– CT, Sara

OBSERVATION:

Many shoppers enjoy the convenience of sliced mushrooms when the are “time starved” Some feel they don’t stay as fresh as whole mushrooms.

Selection: Bulk mushrooms are viewed as fresher and more versatile by some shoppers

Mushroom shoppers like that they can choose the quality, size and quantity



"The ones in the bulk, you can get the huge ones, small ones. If I want to make a stuffed mushroom, I can get the big, fat, fresh ones." – CA, Erica



"I do like the idea of having them open like that, so you can pick them yourself." – CT, Jen



"The colors are more vibrant when you see them loose. Looks more farm to table. More enticing. And that's how you see it at a farmer's market." – CT, Kelly



"I love that these are open, and you can touch it and see it. It's so earthy. It's beautiful. I love it." – CT, Lauren

OBSERVATION:

Many said they buy packaged mushrooms because bulk aren't always available, and packages are more convenient and "cleaner."

A few disliked that bulk mushrooms are handled by other shoppers sifting through them.

Variety: Many prefer the more flavorful mushrooms (Cremini and Portabella) over White – Many wished they knew more about the less popular varieties

The more experimental cooks tend to buy several varieties of mushrooms and use them interchangeably, depending on what is available in store



"I mix them usually. The Whites tend to be a little cheaper, but I like the flavor of the Creminis better. I'll buy one of each or I'll do a two to one ratio. I'll buy two Baby Bellas and one White Button one." - CA, Tatiana

Bellas are probably my favorite. They're meatier and have more flavor. - CT, Lauren

"I don't even know what they're called but the ones that are a cluster, long-stemmed and White tops. They come in a cluster. Those are delicious. I love Shiitakes. I love big Portabellas. I like making those on the grill." - CA, Renee

"I've tried them all. The long skinny ones, I don't know what they're called. I get whatever's there, whatever catches my eye. It depends on what I'm making." - CA, Erica

"75% of the time I'll get White Button mushrooms. Occasionally I'll get some Portabella. Those are the two mushrooms I tend to eat." - CA, Kevin

"Just the regular White ones. I like to chop them. I like it to be part of a meal. I'm not just eating mushrooms by themselves. I like it on pizza, with chicken marsala, on a stir fry." - CT, Sara

Price: Most shoppers prefer high quality over low price



"If the price is a little high, I will buy them anyway because we really like them."
- CT Venessa

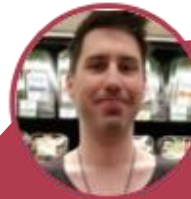
"Good quality is more important than price. What good is saving money if you can't eat them or they won't last?"
- CT, Sara



"The most important thing for me is quality. Sure price is important, but it's not the most important. Getting my money's worth is the most important."
- CA, Gail



"Price isn't really an issue – the quality is. The mushrooms have got to look great and be fresh."
- CT, Lauren



"For us, it's all about quality and flavor. If the mushrooms are excellent quality, they will have excellent flavor - price is secondary."
- CA, Rob

OBSERVATION:

Price, with many produce categories, can be the first or second most important decision. Price fell to the third position for these shoppers. They value:

1. Quality/Flavor
2. Selection
3. Price

Displays: Shoppers want neatly organized displays and more information about mushrooms

Some stores had signs with sought-after nutrition information,* by variety, but it was above eye level and wasn't noticed



"I guess I do know something about mushrooms. It's good they have that info there. In terms of display, they might need a bit more space to pull it off. They should have a sign here listing these benefits. A little bigger, little more organized. It would help." – CT, Evan

Influencers:

Organic Locally Grown Brands



Organic is held in high regard, but is not critical to purchasing mushrooms

Most shoppers just grabbed the mushrooms that visually looked the best and often didn't even notice if the ones they chose were organic



Prefer, but don't buy exclusively

"I try to do all natural, all organic because there's a lot of foods that have GMOs and the bad stuff." - CA, Erica

*"I don't get organic every time. I'm **not strict about it**. I'm going through price a lot. I'm going through so much food all the time." - CT, Evan*

*"**For the most part**, all of our fruits and veggies are organic." - CT, Kelly*



Don't seek out

*"It was more important to me **when the kids were little** because they were more susceptible to things. A lot of it is overpriced and to this day I don't understand the benefit." - CT, Alexis*

*"**I wouldn't try to look at every package** and see which one's organic. Usually at the market, they'll have a sign that says organic mushrooms. If it catches my eye, I'd steer towards there." - CA, Kevin*

OBSERVATION:

Not well labelled:

When organic mushrooms were in the same section as non-organic, stores often placed the organic at eye level and did not distinctly and clearly label that they are organic.

Hard to find:

When organic mushrooms were in a separate organic section, there appeared to be a more limited selection and they were often overlooked by these shoppers.

Organic was more of a consideration for animal products, for a few shoppers



"When do you choose organic? Milk. Maybe eggs and chicken. The proteins." – CT, Alexis

"Things that are filled with hormones, I try to do more organic. More protein and milk but we don't even have milk at our house really." – CT, Lauren



"I do get organic milk because we have some incidents of breast cancer in our family. I'm a bit weird about the hormones in dairy and chicken. So I want something that is safe for me and my daughter." – CT, Sheila

OBSERVATION:

These consumers had a more heightened awareness of "organic" for animal-based products such as animal proteins, dairy, eggs. They are also concerned about GMOs, hormones and antibiotics.

Locally grown suggests freshness

While nice to have, it's not an essential quality with these shoppers



"It came out of their farm yesterday, so I know its super fresh. It's not being shipped from California." – CT, Lauren



"I don't know if Ralphs tells you where they're from. I think Trader Joe's always tells you. It doesn't change my buying decision, but I do look." – CA, Gail



"It's fresher because it's here. It doesn't have to travel. And to support the area, things that are indigenous to this area."
– CT, Rhégie



"I prefer local when possible. That's why I like going to the farmer's market. You're just getting it straight from someone rather than having to be shipped." - CA, Brittany

OBSERVATION:

Shoppers said that locally grown is important and some enjoy shopping at Farmers' markets, but they don't actively seek out locally grown at retail.

Locally Grown: Supporting the local community and growers, is very appealing, but doesn't compel them to seek out local produce or pay more for it



"I like to feel like I'm supporting a smaller business. When it's locally grown, it's a smaller local farm that could use the business." – CT, Sara



"I like going to farmer's market to support that. It's not like it's 100% necessity." – CA, Renee



"I've been seeing more and more displays in stores about produce that is locally grown. I would rather support some business in our state than buy something shipped in from California." – CT, Sheila



“

I love to support local farms, which is why I go to the farmers market with the kids, so they can see farm to table." – CT, Kelly

OBSERVATION:

Supporting the community and local farmers was somewhat more important to shoppers on the East Coast. This maybe because Californians' may feel that all California produce is "local."

Brands are not currently a significant differentiator for mushrooms, or produce in general, but could be

Shoppers are not aware there are different brands of mushrooms

"If I had a brand that was familiar, I'd feel more confident buying mushrooms from them. These are from California so that's a bit more promising." – CA, Rob

"No. I didn't notice that they have brands on produce." – CT, Vanessa

"Simple Truth is Kroger, but I don't care about the brand." – CA, Gail



OBSERVATION:

Brand names do not appear to influence the purchase of mushrooms (or many produce items) currently. This could change with brand-work and marketing.

Influencer: Nutrition

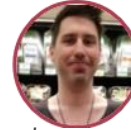


Nutrition: Mushrooms benefit from being perceived as a vegetable

Many assume mushrooms are either healthy or neutral (i.e. don't have negative qualities)



"I don't think they're bad for you, but they're delicious. It's a vegetable, so **I would assume it's good for you.** They're hearty and filling."
– CT, Kelly



"Most vegetables that are grown responsibly have nutritional benefits. I know that mushrooms **can be healthy.**"
– CA, Rob



"They're good for you. It's like a healthy vegetable. I **don't think they have any bad value.** They're light and airy. I don't know how much nutritional value they have."
– CA, Erica



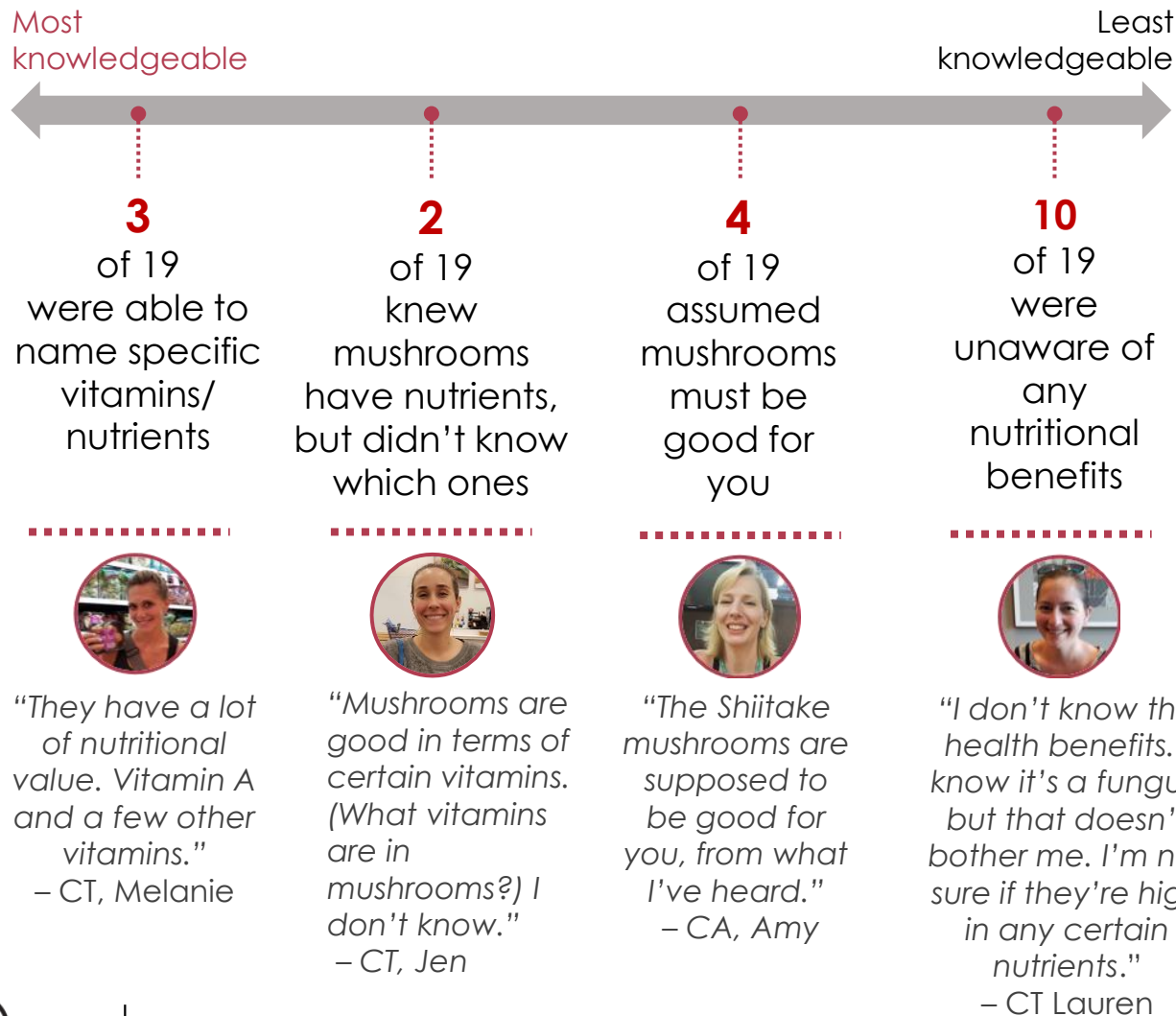
"I don't know if they have any nutritional value. They are a vegetable, so that **adds to the vegetables of the day.**" – CT, Vanessa



OBSERVATION:

Awareness of the nutritional value of mushrooms is not widely known. Yet they are perceived as a "healthy" food choice. This may be a halo effect from fruits and vegetables.

Nutrition: The nutritional value of mushrooms is not widely known, but there is interest in knowing more



OBSERVATION:

Among those interviewed the presence of Vitamin D in mushrooms was not known. Most shoppers said they wished they knew more about nutrition and mushrooms.

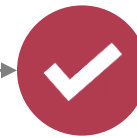
Nutritional value is “good to know.” It could influence lighter users and encourage parents to increase servings to their children

Most are unlikely to increase purchases based on nutrition, but information may have the potential to encourage consumption among light users and parents



Won't Change

If I told you that mushrooms have vitamin D...



Might change

“It’s good to know but I don’t know it’s going to affect my decision to buy them or not. It’s a nice added benefit. At the grocery store, it could say nice supply of vitamin D. It’s not going to make me buy it or prevent me from buying it.” – CT, Sara

[Would that change how much you eat mushrooms?]

“No. I eat them pretty often.” – CA, Erica

“I’d still eat it the same. It’s good to know, but I know vegetables are good for us.” – CT, Brittany

“If they were more public about the nutritional value. That would help. You always hear about the leafy greens and the berries.” – CT, Alexis

“Is there iron in there? I have no idea. I would want to know more about that.

It’s nice to know if I’m getting nutrients from what I’m eating.” – CT, Kelly

“Maybe I’d push them more on my kids. I don’t know. It will make me happier with my purchases. I might increase my quantity and I’d tell my kids.” – CT, Alexis

“It’s weird that there is not more information about it. Is it a beneficial food? That would make me try more mushrooms.” – CT, Evan

OBSERVATION:


“Heavy” users are purchasing frequently, so increasing consumption through nutritional messaging may be challenging. However, it may influence lighter users to enter the category, increasing consumer penetration. Consider adding information to labels.

Mushroom Usage and Home Preparation



Mushrooms are used in a wide variety of dishes, from basic to more elaborate

While, they don't typically look for recipes specifically containing mushrooms, they would try new recipes that include mushrooms



"I love a pasta with tomatoes, basil, spinach, onion and mushrooms. I'll do a **stuffed mushroom** with a Portabella. Quinoa and some veggies. Sometimes I'll add cheese on top." – CA, Brittany

"A Portabella burger with cheese and balsamic is one of my favorites. Shitakes are great for doing stir fry. Cremini mushrooms. I like mushrooms in an **omelet** sometimes." – CT, Kelly

"Sometimes I make **lasagna** and I have Shiitake mushrooms in it, with meat. Or sometimes I'll do a vegetarian. A lot of times I like mushrooms just **sautéed** with butter and a little wine." – CA, Kent

"**Mushroom pasta.** We used to go to this little French restaurant. They would feature seasonal mushrooms like Chanterelles, Morels, usually in cream sauces. I'm a big French food fan. I wanted to try to recreate that at home." – CA, Amy

"I like to chop them up and put them in stir fry. Maybe I'll make quinoa and brown rice or just a vegetable **stir fry**, and I'll put mushrooms in it." – CT, Sara

"I like to stuff them with breadcrumbs, egg, seasoning, and cheese. I'll make a pasta sauce, throw mushrooms in. I'll do the Portabella burger. I'll do mushrooms with garlic and make burgers. We'll have **mushroom swiss burgers.**" – CA, Erica

Shoppers want suggestions for new ways to use and prepare mushrooms

If they see a new recipe with mushrooms, they will try it



"I'm in this funk where I do the same recipes again and again. If I could learn a new recipe with mushrooms, I would try it." – CT, Jen

*"There's a lot of vegetables here that people don't try because they don't know how to cook them. So I recommend that supermarkets include benefits of different vegetables with little cards and **have recipes** where people can take a picture of it with their phone. Why wouldn't you do that? That's a genius idea. I stay away from some things because I don't know how to prepare it."* – CT, Evan



What would
get you to eat
mushrooms
more often?



"Maybe just being exposed to it in a different way. A mushroom festival like a garlic festival." – CA, Brittany

"If they could have somebody explaining four different things you can do with your mushrooms, people would immediately flock towards getting some mushrooms"
– CT, Jen

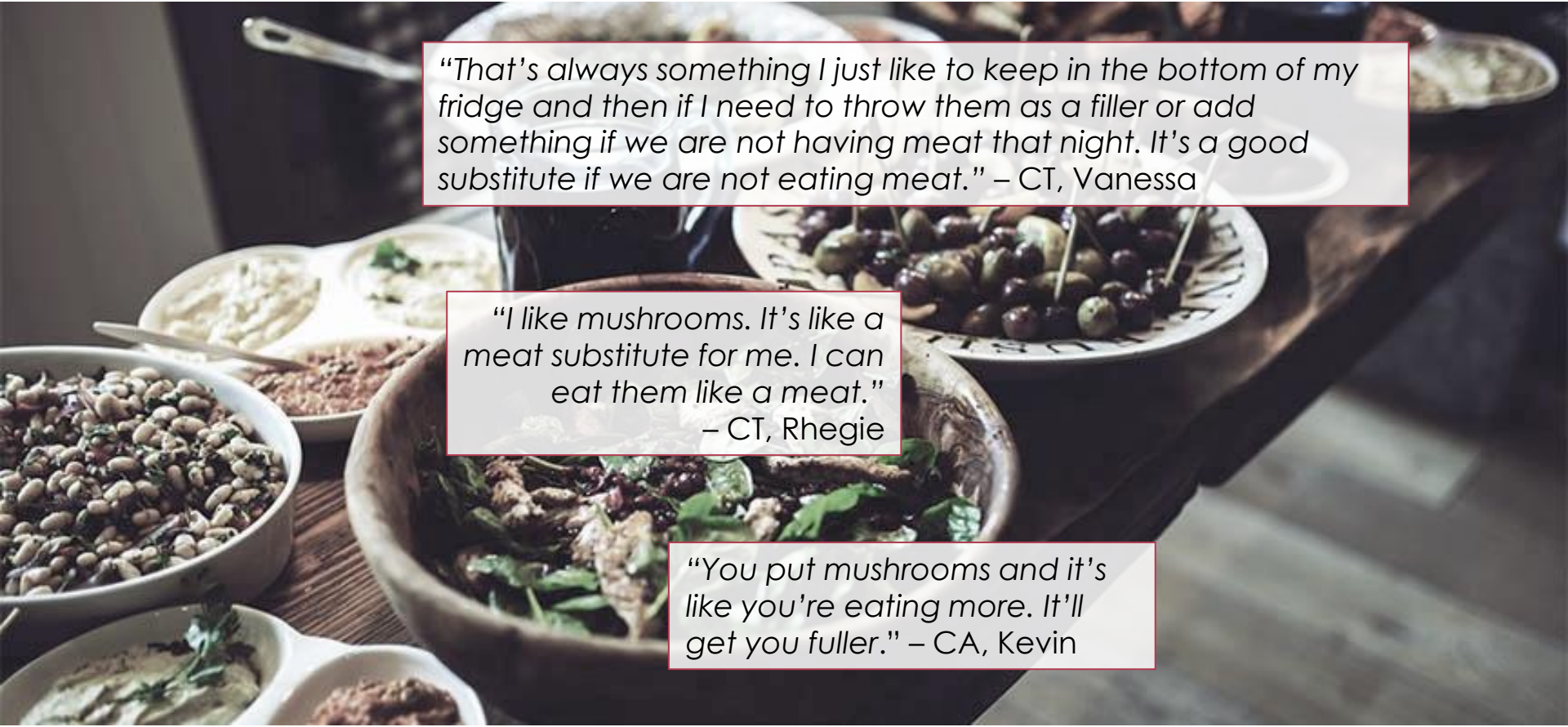


OBSERVATION:

Shoppers said that new recipe ideas may expand usage, especially for specialty mushrooms. Consumers are open to trying new mushroom varieties and flavors if a recipe calls for it. Many shoppers wished they knew how to prepare less well-known varieties and said they would purchase them if they had more information.

In addition to adding flavor, mushrooms add heartiness to the dish

Some use mushrooms to help stretch a meal or as a meat substitute




"That's always something I just like to keep in the bottom of my fridge and then if I need to throw them as a filler or add something if we are not having meat that night. It's a good substitute if we are not eating meat." – CT, Vanessa

*"I like mushrooms. It's like a meat substitute for me. I can eat them like a meat."
– CT, Rhegie*

"You put mushrooms and it's like you're eating more. It'll get you fuller." – CA, Kevin

Eating mushrooms raw was not universally appealing

Those who do eat them raw typically put them on salads



*"I **don't like mushrooms raw**, like in salads. It has a tannin taste. There's some aftertaste I don't like in raw. I love them cooked and burnt, almost charred. On a shish kabob on the grill."*
– CA, Tatiana

*"**Always cooked**. I'm not a huge raw mushroom fan."*
– CA, Brittany

*"Sometimes I chop them up. I like them fresh or cooked. Slice them up and put them in a **fresh salad** or chop them and sauté them with other things and then use that with chicken or steak."* – CA, Gail

*"I'll take the whole ones and **dip them in ranch** dressing or a salad dressing. I'll put a little veggie plate together."*
– CA, Amy

Only
7
of the 19 eat
them raw

OBSERVATION:

Shoppers in California were slightly more open to eating mushrooms raw.

The Blend



The concept of The Blend is familiar and appealing, but was not readily defined, unprompted

"I've never had a burger with mushrooms in it. That's interesting. Meat and mushrooms go really well together. Meat is a little bit earthy." – CA, Rob

"If it were prepared, I would probably try it first, to see how it tastes. Then if it was something I was like, wow, that actually tastes pretty good, I would be willing to try it at home." – CT, Sheila

"I know when people make burgers, they'll add onions and other things. I've never tried adding mushrooms."
– CA, Brittany

"Yeah, I would try it. It sounds good, interesting and different. I'd be down to give it a go. I'm obsessed with that shroom burger at Shake Shack." – CA, Brittany

15
of 19 would be
interested in
trying The Blend.

(2 of the 4 who would not, don't eat meat).

"I haven't heard of that. I wouldn't be opposed. I would do it with turkey meat."
– CA, Renee

OBSERVATION:

There is definite interest in trying The Blend once they realize what the term references.

Some have made The Blend at home but didn't define it as The Blend

"If I'm making tacos, I'll use ground turkey and then two packs of mushrooms and onions..... Mushrooms have a lot of moisture so when you mix them into meat, they end up keeping it moist." – CT, Tatiana

"Not in those words. But I've definitely had things that have had mushrooms incorporated into the rest. Such as my lettuce wraps with chicken. At Stop & Shop, in the deli cabinet they had pre-made hamburgers with mushrooms in them." – CT, Melanie

"I make a turkey meatloaf with mushrooms and I stuff it with cheese." – CT, Vanessa

"I've done that forever. Salisbury steak, meatloaf." - CA, Kent

"I mix mushrooms into meat. I've made beef burgers with mushrooms."- CT, Lauren



Interest in The Blend is more about taste than nutrition

A few mentioned that adding a “vegetable” would be healthier, but flavor is the main driver



Mushroom Flavor



“It’s a neat idea. If it tastes good, I would buy it. It’s a vegetable and it’s meat. Mushrooms are hearty and meaty so that could be a nice blend. It’s flavorful. Add salt and onion to it, it’s delicious.” – CT, Kelly



*“I haven’t before, but it’s a good suggestion. My girls like mushrooms and if it adds a savory flavor to it, why not?”
– CT, Vanessa*



*“It’s about the flavor. I try to be as healthy as I can, but when choosing what I eat, it’s flavor over everything.”
– CT, Lauren*



Healthier



*“It’s healthier. You’re getting more nutrients. It’s replacing some of the meat. I’m cutting down on red meat.”
– CT, Melanie*



“I like to have as much vegetables as possible. If I’m going to have a burger, if I can add a little something extra, then I’ll do that.” – CA, Brittany