



COOSEMANS SHIPPING OF LOS ANGELES
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Cultivated Mushroom Primer



Fresh Alba Clamshell Mushrooms (Bun Shimeji)

Available organic and non-organic, various pack sizes

The white Alba clamshell mushroom (or Bun Shimeji) adds drama and elegance to any presentation. It's subtle flavor, evocative of shellfish, is typical of most clamshell varieties, and is more pronounced than in its brown counterpart (Hon Shimeji). These mushrooms are sold in clusters. Each mushroom on the cluster has a small cap, light gills and a long stalk. Gently break up the cluster to cook them but do not discard the stalks. These zesty mushrooms, with a crisp texture, are excellent sautéed in butter and served as a vegetable. They remain firm with longer cooking and have a sweet nutty flavor.



Fresh Hen of the Woods Mushrooms (Maitake)

Available organic and non-organic, various pack sizes
YIELD: 99%

Light to dark brown in color, named for how the mushroom grows in 'feathers'. *Hen of the Woods* mushrooms have a fresh earthy taste. *Hen of the Woods* retains its flavor and texture, even after cooking. Also known as "**Maitake**" in Japan, this delicious (and healthy) mushroom is suitable for all cooking methods and is used in Asian as an immune system stimulant.



Fresh Trumpet Royale Mushrooms, also known as King Trumpet, King Oyster and Oyster Royale, Eryngii

PACK: Non-Organic – 6 lbs.
Organic – 3 lb. bag
YIELD: 99%

Sandy beige in color with 1-2 inch caps and a long stem. Thick and meaty, like a Cepe, with an enticing, nutlike flavor. Use with meat or poultry, or sautéed with garlic and butter as an appetizer or side dish. The Tops can be maintained whole while the stems can be finely diced to make an exceptional duxelles. Unlike other oyster



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mushroom varieties, which can have tough, fibrous stems, the eryngii's stem is prized for its tasty, meaty and chewy texture. The eryngii is also low in moisture and very adaptable to Western, Asian and Mediterranean dishes. When received, the tops should be whole and protected and the shafts should be pearl-white in color with minimal bruising. The mushroom's large, stout stem and small, light brownish gray cap makes for a very unique looking fungus. In the wild, these mushrooms are found near the roots of hardwood trees, but in a commercial environment they grow to an average of 3 to 5 inches in a variety of mediums.

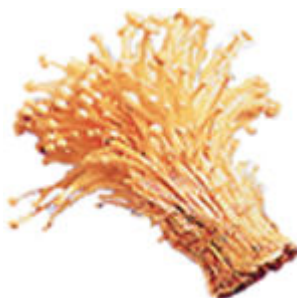
Shiitake



YIELD: 99%

Range in color from tan to dark brown with broad, umbrella-shaped caps, wide open veils and tan gills. Caps have a soft, spongy texture. rich and woody with a meaty texture when cooked.

Special notes: Before using, tear off and discard tough woody stem. Discarded stems can be used to flavor stocks.



Enoki

Fragile, flower-like Enoki mushrooms, with long slender stems and tiny caps, grow in small clusters. Mild, light flavor with a slight crunch.

Special Notes: Before using, trim roots at cluster base. Separate stems before serving.

Cultivated Mushrooms

The Pharaohs thought mushrooms were a food from heaven. The first written accounts of how to grow cultivated mushrooms date from around 1650. Mushroom growing originated in France where they were grown in caves and today, mushrooms are grown in dark houses on mushroom farms around the world.

Cultivated mushrooms are grown on composted wheat straw. (Only cultivated shiitake mushrooms are grown on logs). Mushroom growers imitate the ideal conditions in nature as closely as possible. Farmers buy wheat straw from farms and stables and make this into rich dark compost; this compost is then pasteurized to ensure that all harmful microbes and pests are destroyed.

Mushroom spores are too light to handle, so they are collected and inoculated into rye grain. The grain is scattered into the pasteurized wheat compost and the mycelium that grows on the surface of the grain, colonizes this compost and grows into mushrooms. In about a month, mushroom growers can harvest their crop.

Afterwards, the mushroom compost is returned to the land - either to arable farms or to garden centers - making mushroom growing very eco-friendly. Growing mushrooms this way means they are available all year round rather than just in the autumn.

THE FACTS RELATING TO ORGANIC AND NON-ORGANIC MUSHROOMS

There is very little difference between all types of cultivated mushrooms. They are grown in specially designed tunnels or houses where the environmental conditions are made to mirror those found in the wild, in woods and pastures.



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Growers find that if rigorous hygiene standards are maintained; the use of chemicals is not an essential. Using such standards together with modern growing and harvesting techniques, it is often possible to complete the production cycle without the use of pesticides or fungicides. There is also the economic benefit of not having to use chemicals.

However, there are circumstances where some artificial help may be needed. In these situations growers comply strictly with the chemical manufacturers' recommendations and record usage and application rates studiously. Such attention to detail is not only good practice; it is also essential in an industry where the bulk of sales are made to supermarket groups. Supplier audits are a regular feature in supermarket relationships. A considerable level of random sampling takes place at approved independent laboratories. This involves residue tests for approved chemicals. Growers themselves also carry out taste tests - they pick mushrooms every week and eat them raw to check for consistency and flavor.

Non-Organic: Preventative pesticide or fungicide applications are allowed in the pre-cropping phase - dissolved or suspended in ordinary tap water, which only contains accepted levels of chlorination.

If a later application of fungicide is needed, it is applied during the harvest interval. There is another economic reason for not using such chemicals in that they can depress yields. The preferred method of dealing with outbreaks of disease in either organic or non-organic mushroom growing is to apply the requisite amount of common salt over the offending area.

With regard to pests such as flies, these can be dealt with biologically, at the larval stage, by introducing predatory mites to the surface peat. These mites attack the larvae, kill them off and when there is no food left they themselves die. Another approach to dealing with airborne pests is to use ultra violet electrocutions.

After two or possibly three mushroom crops are harvested, the growing unit is emptied, cleaned and made ready for the next fill. The prescribed methods of cleaning are to use steam heat or biodegradable disinfectants.

Organic: No application of any chemical is permitted on the pasteurized organic substrate. Similarly, cultivation specifically excludes all applications of chemicals. Moreover, no proprietary disinfectant is allowed in the production area. The raw materials used must also meet certain criteria. For example, the individual components of the compost - i.e. horse manure, pig or chicken litter and straw must be organically produced.

MUSHROOM CARE

STORAGE

Don't store mushrooms in cling film or plastic. Instead, use the paper bags in the dispenser beside the mushrooms, or transfer them to a paper bag or parchment paper. Take the cling film off the pre-packs and slide the pre-pack into a paper bag. Always store mushrooms in a cool and dark place, avoid freezing temperatures. Store for 5 days maximum.

PREPARATION

Never soak mushrooms. Simply rinse them under cold running water just before use. The reason is that fresh produce could be handled by other customers before you buy it. Mushrooms are hand picked but all pickers wear gloves.

COOKING

As a cooked vegetable, allow 175g per person. Always cook mushrooms quickly. If you are cooking a slow dish like a casserole or a roast, add the mushrooms towards the end of cooking - last 20 minutes. Mushrooms can be eaten raw in salads. Allow 100g per person. If you prefer, poach them and chill them. Mushrooms are ideal in stir-fries, pasta sauces, on top of pizzas and for soups.