

Nutrition – Nature's Way

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HOW TO FIND MORELS

Morels are inevitably the most-sought after fungi in the spring. Many a forager has ventured out several times a season only to be blanked. Finding morels can be difficult but there are some tips that may help you narrow your search.

First, the best tip is weather. When you have a week of 10 degrees Celsius (50 degrees F) nights and some rain, this will help to get things happening. Morels appear when the ground temperature 10cm (4") below the surface reaches 12 degrees Celsius (55 degrees F) and they'll stop fruiting when the ground temperature reaches 17 degrees Celsius (62 degrees F). Although not a steadfast rule, it sure is a good rule of thumb. Supposedly black morels can grow in soil temperatures as low as 8 degrees Celsius (47 degrees F).

Next, look to the oak leaves. Many well-seasoned forgers like to go by the size of the oak leaves. When the leaves are the size of about a dime, then it is time to go morel hunting.

Know your trees! Morels are most commonly found in forested areas around elm, sycamore, hickory, and ash. Morels like fruit too, especially old apple orchards.

For more information on identification [click here](#). Read my latest blog for a more in-depth look as to [how to find morels](#)!

Edible of the Month MORELS



A 100 grams serving gives us over 50% of the daily requirements of vitamin D and almost 70% of the daily value required for iron.

- Vitamin B6
- Calcium
- Copper
- Magnesium
- Manganese
- Phosphorus
- PotassiumS
- Selenium
- Sodium
- Zinc



Fresh morels can be stored up to 48 but must be kept cool, slightly damp air circulation.

Stored in the fridge so that there is air circulating around them is recommended!



Morel poppers! Make these by modifying your favourite jalapeno popper recipe!



HOW TO DRY WILD MUSHROOMS

If your mushrooms are wet from rain or warm from being in a vehicle, before processing, cooking, or cleaning them, spread them out on a cookie sheet and refrigerate them immediately; cover with a slightly moist towel or rag. They need to aerate, cool quickly, and breathe to retain their shelf life. Once cooled (about a half hour), you will have the best success drying them.

Heat is the enemy of flavour in dried foods and will harm the aroma of mushrooms if used in excess. Mushrooms dried without heat will have the best results.

If you use a dehydrator to preserve your mushrooms, take a close look at the heat settings. When you turn the dehydrator on does the air feel warm? If the air feels warm on the lowest temperature setting, open the door of the dehydrator during the preservation process.

Thinly slice your mushrooms you intend to dry, this will help them dry faster and also help them to have a better mouth-feel and texture when re-hydrated. When placing mushrooms in a dehydrator, make sure they do not touch each other, remember they retain heat, and air circulation is key, especially with boletes.

Mushrooms are done dehydrating when they are dry like a cracker; they should almost be brittle. If there are any in your dried collection that still have soft spots, leave the top of whatever container you are going to store them open, that way they will continue to aerate. After a week or two put the lid back on, and should have no problems. After they're dehydrated, they can be ground into a flavourful powder that can be used in creating stocks, rubs and in anything else you may want to experiment with.

Oven Drying

Preheat oven to 150F/65C. Slice cleaned mushrooms 1/8 to 1/4 thick. Arrange mushrooms on a baking sheet, making sure that none of the pieces touch or overlap. Place the baking sheet in the oven and leave for 1 hour. Turn the mushroom slices over and put in oven for another hour. Take them out of the oven and let them cool before checking to see if they are crispy-dry. The cooling off period is important, like cookies, they will crisp up considerably as they cool.

If the mushrooms are not completely dry, turn them over again and return them to the oven for 30 more minutes. Keep turning them over and checking for dryness every 30 minutes.

Dehydrated or Oven Dried: Allow dried mushrooms to cool completely before storing in glass mason jars. Cover tightly with lids. Store jars away from direct light or heat. Use within 8 to 10 months.

For those of us in the northern climes we've finally been feeling some of the sun's warmth. After an ice storm that dumped about 15 cm (6") of ice pellets 1 1/2 weeks ago, the new growth of wild edibles are still looking great. It just goes to show you that these nutrient-dense plants are truly meant to be a reliable source of food for us.

Here are a few older blogs I wrote you may be interested in that are relevant to the spring season:

<https://www.ediblewildfood.com/blog/2013/06/edible-springtime-fungi/>

<https://www.ediblewildfood.com/blog/2017/04/dryads-saddle/>

<https://www.ediblewildfood.com/blog/2017/03/how-to-take-a-leek-in-the-woods/>

<https://www.ediblewildfood.com/blog/2015/05/may-is-morel-month/>

<https://www.ediblewildfood.com/blog/2016/06/lilac-flowers-for-eye-health/>

<https://www.ediblewildfood.com/blog/2014/03/spring-wild-edibles/>

Remember that [making healing salves](#) are easy and relatively cheap. With fresh growth out there time to think about what to gather! Click here for a blog on [how to make healing salves](#).

And another shout-out request for support on social media. I'm almost at 1,000 subscribers at YouTube so if you can, [please subscribe!](#)

I get a lot of supportive e-mails and thank you to all of you who have taken time to write! It truly is an incredible world full of free food and healing plants!

I'll be traveling Ontario a fair bit this summer so be sure to check out my events page in a couple of weeks for details! While in Thunder Bay at the end of July I am looking forward to going into Minnesota! If anyone is in the Grand Marais area let me know!

I'll be in the Ottawa area on Saturday, June 16, to team up with Earthly Essential's Wendy Morris! This will be an event that covers not only the edible and medicinal aspects of plants but where applicable, but also the aromatherapy values of plants. For more information and to sign up [please click here](#). It will be an exciting day!

