

# FRESH MUSHROOMS: A VERSATILE VEGGIE

Fresh mushrooms' versatile qualities help serve up endless promotion opportunities – which is great news for retailers because the average shopping basket containing mushrooms is worth more than double the value of a shopping basket without mushrooms.<sup>1</sup>

How can the mighty mushroom benefit your customers? They will get more daily produce servings and a suite of health and wellness advantages. Plus they're flexible for more than one meal during the week, adding convenience, and more produce, to your customers' grocery shopping cart.



Encourage your customers to purchase fresh mushrooms for endless meal options:

- Thinly slice to top off pizzas
- Sauté and add to marinara or cream pasta sauces
- Slice to include in omelets or frittatas
- Finely dice and mix into hamburgers or meatloaf
- Toss into stir fries or salads
- Add to chili, rice or traditional macaroni and cheese
- Quarter and use in soups or casseroles
- Grill whole or as a kabob
- Top off steaks or sandwiches

## VARIETY FARE

While some shoppers may cook with maitake, enoki, oyster or shiitake mushrooms, your customers are likely more familiar with the most common varieties – white button, portabella and crimini. They may not be exotic varieties, but these supermarket staples offer unique traits to suit your customers' taste buds:

- **White button mushrooms** are the most popular mushroom and easily recognized. They have a mild taste, so they're incredibly flexible and can blend well with almost any ingredient. These hidden treasures intensify the flavor of any dish because of their absorbent properties, making them the perfect ingredient for pizzas, salads, omelets, pastas or even sautéed on their own.
- **Portabellas** are a larger variety, sometimes measuring up to six inches in diameter. Their robust taste and meaty texture make them a preferred meat alternative. Try them grilled as "burgers" on toasted buns.
- **Criminis** are also known as baby portabellas. They have a deeper, earthier flavor than buttons and their hearty, full-bodied flavor makes them a tasty addition to beef, wild game and vegetable dishes.

## A WEALTH OF HEALTH

Mushrooms are an every day, every way superfood. Not only can they be cooked and served in a number of different ways – they also offer a wide variety of nutritional benefits. Mushrooms, the only source of vitamin D in the produce aisle, are also:

- Low in Calories (only 20 calories per serving)
- Low in Sodium
- Fat Free (0 grams)
- Cholesterol Free
- Contain antioxidants including Selenium and Ergothioneine
- Packed with potassium (contain as much Potassium as one small banana)
- A good source of B Vitamins like Riboflavin (B2), Niacin (B3) and Pantothenic Acid (B5)
- Full of umami flavor

## FRESH MUSHROOM PROMOTION BEST PRACTICES

Promotions can be unique, but the frequency should be consistent. Here are some tried and true “best practices” to follow in order to get the most out of your fresh mushroom promotions:<sup>2</sup>

- Promote eight times per quarter.
- Discount mushrooms by more than 25% when on promotion.
- Promote packaged and bulk mushrooms together.
- Do not promote packaged whole and sliced mushrooms together at the same price point because consumers often choose sliced for convenience.
- Feature multiple mushroom varieties in the same advertisement.
- When promoting brown, specialty and dried mushrooms, include a white mushroom item in the same advertisement, as white mushrooms remain the foundation for a strong category.



Super Mushroom Veggie Pasta

### SUPER MUSHROOM VEGGIE PASTA

**Yield:** 6

**Preparation Time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking Time:** 10 minutes

- 1 14.5-ounce box multi-grain spaghetti
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound white button mushrooms, sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 cup bite-size broccolini pieces
- 1 pint grape tomatoes
- 1/2 cup vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup prepared pesto
- 1 cup baby spinach leaves
- Freshly grated Parmesan (for garnish)

Bring a large saucepan of water to boil and prepare pasta according to package directions.

While water comes to a boil, heat olive oil in large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Add a single layer of mushrooms, red bell pepper and onions and cook, without stirring, for about five minutes or until mushrooms become red-brown on one side. Turn ingredients and cook about five minutes more, until other side is same color. Add broccolini, tomatoes and broth, and then stir in pesto. Bring to a simmer, and then add spinach and cooked pasta.

Transfer to serving bowl and sprinkle with fresh Parmesan.

For an additional source of protein, just add meat!



<sup>1</sup> Encore Associates Retail Best Practices Study, 2009 (page 8).  
<sup>2</sup> Encore Associates Retail Best Practices Study, 2009 (page 14).