

eureka! ☞ Americans have found the flavorful, satisfying experience of mushrooms. From their fresh, nutty and woodsy taste and aroma, to their subtle interaction with partner flavors and their delectable texture, mushrooms create a taste sensation that consumers are delighted to discover again and again.

And that's not all – Americans say mushrooms are a fresh, natural, low-calorie ingredient in the foods they love. They agree that mushrooms are ***nature's hidden treasure***.

a wealth of flavor ☞ Mushrooms' incredible versatility makes them a welcome element in appetizers, entrees, soups and more. A quick sauté or a slow simmer draws out mushrooms' complex flavor and smooth, toothsome texture, melding them with the aroma and essence of companion ingredients, and bringing definition and substance to any dish.

“It's so rewarding to see our guests respond to umami, the sublime experience that mushrooms bring to our signature dishes. When I see someone's eyes close briefly as they are eating, or the sauce wiped clean from the plate, that's when I know I've earned a guest that will come back again and again.”

— CHEF ALEX GUARNESCHELLI, BUTTER RESTAURANT, NYC

cashing in on the craving ☞ Americans can't get enough of mushrooms, which is why retail sales were up 4 percent in 2006. Operators nationwide are cashing in on that popularity and the added value that mushrooms bring to the plate.

“At Black Angus Steakhouse, we know our guests crave mushrooms because our sautéed mushrooms are the number one addition to our steak orders. Our servers know mushrooms are a natural add-on to our steaks; it improves the guest experience, and delivers profit right to our bottom line.”

— CHEF DAVE OHLSEN, BLACK ANGUS STEAKHOUSE

added value... naturally ☞ From pre-sliced to packs of mixed specialty varieties, mushrooms come in a wide array of labor-saving forms that help operators control costs. At the same time, mushrooms' naturally exotic image helps drive interest and sales.

“Mushrooms fit seamlessly into the WELL (Wolfgang's Eating, Loving and Living) program, Wolfgang Puck's initiative to source exclusively local, natural, sustainable and organic ingredients. The pre-sliced and value-added forms available help us in the back of the house, and mushrooms can also be featured as the 'hero' ingredient that helps us sell a menu item out front.”

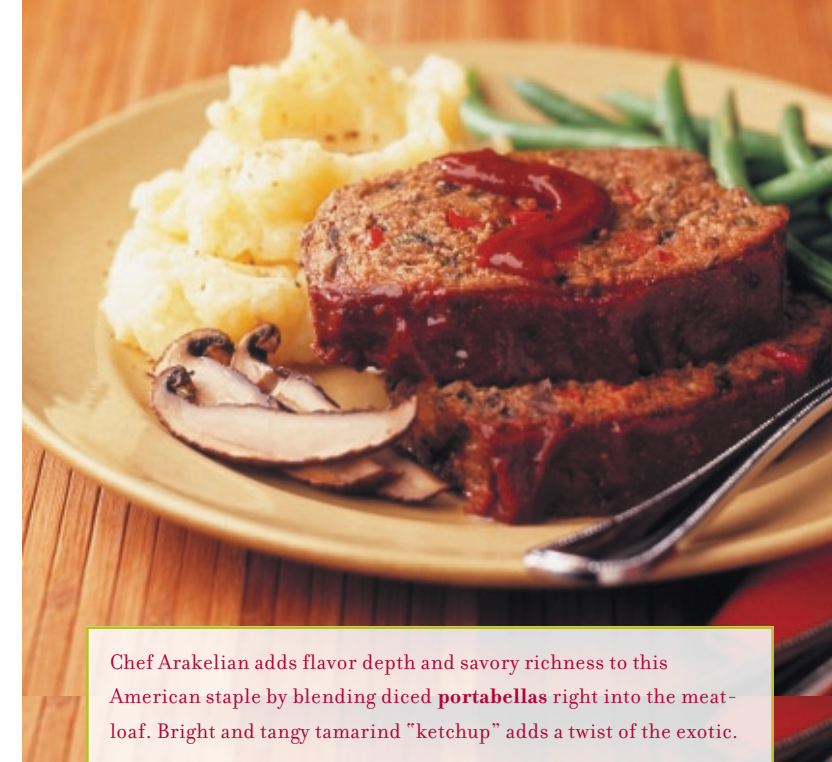
— CHEF ANDREW HUNTER, WOLFGANG PUCK EXPRESS

purchasing, storage and handling ☞ Fresh mushroom producers use state-of-the-art growing methods and handling practices to ensure high quality. A few simple steps will help preserve your supplies.

- For optimum shelf life, mushrooms should arrive between 34 – 38 degrees F.
- Immediately refrigerate both bulk and pre-packaged mushrooms between 34 – 38 degrees F.
- Optimum humidity: 85 – 90 percent — also helps maintain quality and shelf life.
- Store in original containers. Do not store in non-porous plastic bags, as plastic accelerates mushroom deterioration.
- Do not store near pungent items as mushrooms may absorb strong odors.
- Do not stack heavy items on top of mushroom containers.
- Do not wash before storage.
- When ready to use, brush off any dirt with a damp cloth or soft brush. Rinse only briefly under running water and pat dry. Never soak them, as they absorb moisture. Trim the end of the stem before using.

Portabella Meatloaf

chef rich arakelian, *Sodexo*



Chef Arakelian adds flavor depth and savory richness to this American staple by blending diced **portabellas** right into the meatloaf. Bright and tangy tamarind “ketchup” adds a twist of the exotic.

Fungi Fritti

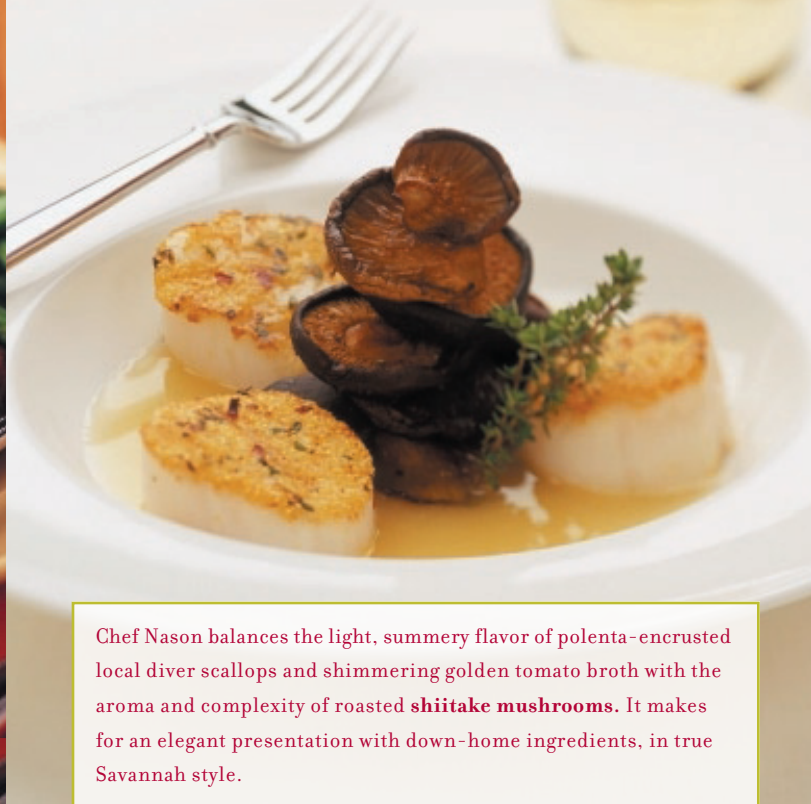
chef riccardiullio, *Fritti Restaurant* (Atlanta, GA)



Chef Ullio's innovative rice flour batter is light and crispy, the perfect foil for a small plate of deep-fried **crimini, portabella, shiitake and button mushrooms**. It's exquisitely simple, and infinitely adaptable with any combination of dipping sauces.

Diver Scallops & Roasted Shiitakes

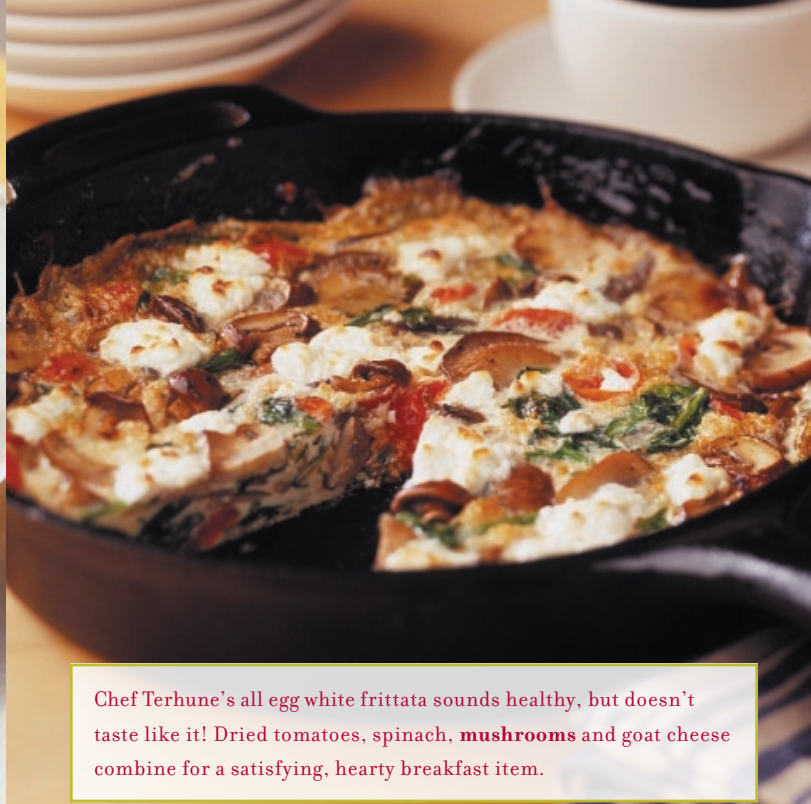
chef chris nason, *Sapphire Grill* (Savannah, GA)



Chef Nason balances the light, summery flavor of polenta-encrusted local diver scallops and shimmering golden tomato broth with the aroma and complexity of roasted **shiitake mushrooms**. It makes for an elegant presentation with down-home ingredients, in true Savannah style.

Egg White Frittata

chef heather terhune, *Atwood Café* (Chicago, IL)



Chef Terhune's all egg white frittata sounds healthy, but doesn't taste like it! Dried tomatoes, spinach, **mushrooms** and goat cheese combine for a satisfying, hearty breakfast item.

cooking techniques ☞ Mushrooms are 90 percent water. When cooked, some water evaporates, concentrating juices and intensifying flavor. Also, the longer mushrooms cook, the firmer they become.

to sauté: Mushrooms must be dry, the fat hot, and the skillet large enough so they are not crowded. For each four ounces of mushrooms, melt 1/2 tablespoon butter or heat 1/2 tablespoon oil in a large skillet. Add mushrooms and sauté only until golden and released mushroom liquid has evaporated. If mushrooms are overcrowded, they will steam rather than brown.

to roast: Drizzle mushrooms with olive oil; season with salt and pepper. Bake uncovered at 400 degrees F in a single layer, about 20 minutes, until brown, stirring occasionally.

to grill or broil: Preheat grill or broiler. Prepare mushrooms as you would for roasting. Arrange on skewers or on the rack of a grill or broiler pan. Cook two inches from heat, brushing occasionally with melted butter or oil, until golden, three to four minutes.

to smoke: Smoked mushrooms are not actually cooked. To smoke whole or sliced mushrooms, follow the smoker manufacturer's directions. If desired, sauté smoked mushrooms briefly and use as a side dish or topping for steaks, chicken, seafood, etc.

convection oven cooking: Preheat convection oven to 375 degrees F. Place two pounds mushroom caps on a lightly oiled 13 x 18-inch sheet pan. Brush caps lightly with oil; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast for three to five minutes. Note: Convection cooking yields a more succulent product, with less shrinkage.

suggested flavor pairings

For Whites, Crimini and Portabellas:

Allspice, Balsamic, Basil, Cardamom, Chives, Cilantro, Coriander, Creole Seasoning, Chipotles, Curry, Garam Masala, Horseradish, Harissa, Herbes de Provence, Marjoram, Montreal Steak Seasoning, Olive Oil, Oregano, Tellicherry Pepper, Pestos, Red Wine, Rosemary, Sea Salts, Shallots, Soy Sauce, Spanish Smoked Paprika, Tandoori Seasoning, Tarragon, Thyme, White Wine, Worcestershire Sauce

For Shiitake, Oysters and Maitake:

Almonds, Bean Paste, Bonito Flakes, Char Siu Sauce, Celery Root, Chinese 5-Spice, Coconut Milk, Red and Green Curry Paste, Fennel, Galangal, Garam Masala, Ginger, Hoisin Sauce, Lavender, Lemon Peel, Lemongrass, Lemon-Verbena, Miso, Mint, Pine Nuts, Pink Peppercorns, Rice Vinegar, Sesame Seeds, Saffron, Scallions, Sesame Oil, Light/Dark Soy Sauce, Szechuan Peppercorns, Sake, Shallots, Star Anise, Tamarind Paste, Taro Root, Tarragon, Thai Curry, Yuzu

nutrition ☞ With fewer calories than a rice cake and zero grams of fat, mushrooms are still a source of several important nutrients. Below are a just few examples of ***nature's hidden treasures*** found in mushrooms^{1,2}:

- Antioxidants
- B Vitamins
- Copper
- Phosphorus
- Potassium
- Vitamin D

Overall, consumers identify mushrooms as³:

- Fresh
- Natural
- Low in calories
- Satisfying

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. 2006. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference. Release 19. Nutrient Data Laboratory Home Page. <http://www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnrc/ndl>

² U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Center for Food Safety & Applied Nutrition. A Food Labeling Guide. September, 1994 (Editorial revisions June, 1999) <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/flg-toc.html>

³ Source: Mushroom Council Ethnographies Topline, July 2006