

# 3 Easy Ways To Cook Mushrooms (Plus How To Clean Them)

Though these are done mostly by sauteeing in a frying pan in bacon drippings or butter, mushrooms are occasionally stewed to serve on toast snippets or to add to cream sauce to make cream soups — or in preparation for a variety of casserole dishes or sauces to serve with other vegetables and some meats. Very large ones are sometimes broiled in the oven or over coals. They also take kindly to baking...and we definitely take kindly to them!

## **Preparation:**

- Always use very fresh ones, scrubbing them clean with a soft vegetable brush or cloth and work quickly. You'll find more detailed instructions at the bottom of this page.
- Trim off any discolored ends of stalks.
- As a rule, those that have been cultivated do not require peeling, especially if they have been grown indoors and are quite small. However, when peeling, do so quickly, lifting skin back.
- Large ones, unless for broiling or baking whole, are cut in halves or quarters. If they are to be used in sauces or soups, they are usually diced in small pieces to extract as much flavor as possible.

## **Stewed – Method #1**

Use this method to cook stems cut in pieces or in preparation for soups and sauces.

- Place prepared pieces in pot; add about 1/4 cup of boiling water, cover pot tightly and simmer gently for about 6 to 8 minutes; season with salt, pepper and butter after stewing and use as desired.

## **Sauteed – Method #2**

- For every 1 lb. being sauteed, allow 4 tablespoons of bacon dripping or butter; melt fat in frying pan and add prepared pieces; saute slowly over low heat, turning frequently, for about 10 minutes or until they are just tender.

## **Broiling – Method #3**

- Choose very large ones; after preparing, brush with vegetable oil or soft fat, and sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper; place on hot greased broiler, cap side up, and place broiling pan 3 inches below top heat of oven; broil in oven pre-heated and broil for about 8 minutes; very large ones may take 10 minutes.

*Quantity:* Approximately 1 lb. for 3 servings however, if using for a sauce or soup, 1 lb. would be enough for 6 servings of the finished dish.

*Source:* “Vegetable Cook Book” by McFayden Seeds (1948)

Should they be washed with water right before cooking? No because they will absorb the water which then adds too much moisture to the dish you’re making, and depending on what you’re preparing—you may not appreciate the extra liquid.

Here are a few tips for cleaning them: (first published December 15, 2006 and moved to this page for better organization)

- Briefly rinse them in water then lay them out on a towel for a few hours so they have time to release the moisture. A quick tip is to use a colander and your sink’s spray hose.
  
- Never soak them or leave them sitting in water.
  
- Rather than washing them in water, try using a mushroom brush with soft bristles (you can find these at kitchen gadget stores). You could try a vegetable scrubber too, but use lightly since the bristles are stiffer.
  
- Another method is to use a barely damp cloth or paper towel and rub the skin.
  
- My preferred method: cut the woody stem tip off then take your knife and use the blade to grab the edge of the skin (underneath the cap), then pull the skin back and off (it will peel off to the center top of the cap). Repeat around the edges until the top layer has been completely removed.

Storage:

- Store in a closed paper bag rather than plastic, or in an open container. Helps them to breathe better and they won’t get wrinkly and dried up as fast. Keep refrigerated.