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**VITAMINS:
Yes or No?**



Mushroom mania

The capped crusaders get a bad rap, but mushrooms are as nutritious as other veggies and pack a ton of flavor for very few calories. That's reason enough to unearth the tastiest, healthiest ways to enjoy them—stems and all.

By CAMILLE NOE PAGÁN

FAB FUNGI

From a nutritional standpoint, darker isn't necessarily better when it comes to mushrooms. In fact, most varieties—including cremini, portobello, oyster and shiitake—boast similar perks. "Many are rich sources of selenium, which research has shown may reduce the risk of various cancers," says Robert Beelman, PhD, director of the Center for Plant and Mushroom Products for Health at Pennsylvania State University at University Park. To boot, a review study in the *Journal of Nutrition & Food Sciences* found that those who eat mushrooms consume more nutrients (including protein, selenium and vitamins B1 and C) overall than those who don't.

This week, aim to try one new mushroom. Some ideas to get you started:

➔ **Enoki and maitake** Each of the fungi contains 9 percent of your daily need* for **constipation-preventing fiber**.

➔ **Oyster** The 'shroom has 6 percent of your daily need* for **satiating protein**.

➔ **Cremini** This mushroom boasts 11 percent of your daily need* for **blood-pressure-helping potassium**. ➔

*Based on a three-ounce serving

Portobello

GET EXTRA D

One of the best food sources of bone-fueling vitamin D: Portobellos exposed to concentrated bursts of UV light, which contain 63 percent of your daily need per three-ounce serving. (Look for "high vitamin D" on the label.)

Cremini

FOUND: NATURAL MSG

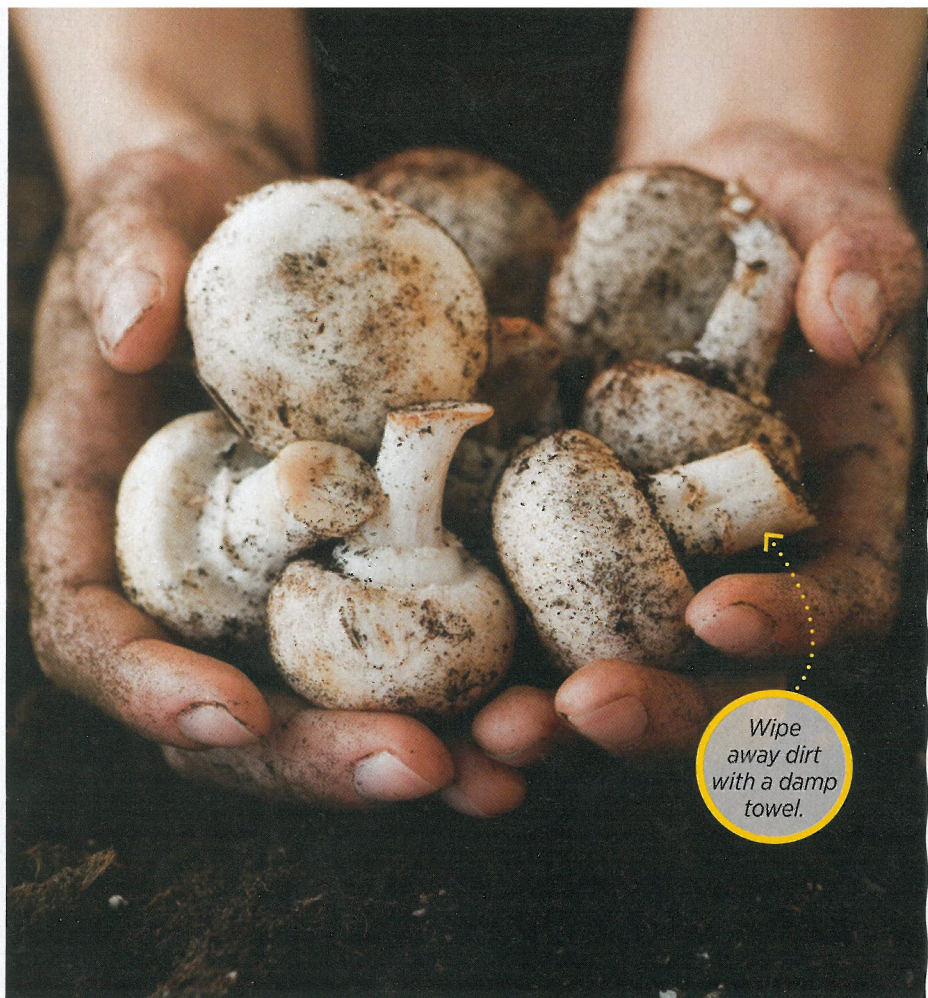
Mushrooms get their savory taste from umami, known as the fifth taste (along with sweet, salty, sour and bitter).

Re-created artificially in packaged foods in the form of monosodium glutamate (MSG), umami enhances the flavor of other ingredients—which is why it's commonly found in dishes at Chinese restaurants. One benefit of umami: You may consume up to 40 percent less sodium when you include it in a dish. In one *Physiology & Behavior* study, people rated reduced-sodium, umami-containing soup as more pleasant than an otherwise identical umami-free variety.

NUTRIENT SHOWDOWN

RAW or COOKED?

Fresh mushrooms are more nutritious, but just narrowly. While sautéed or grilled tend to be tastier (possibly because heat releases flavor compounds from their thick cell walls), heating 'shrooms unlocks additional nutrients from their skin while simultaneously diminishing others. For example, when white button and portobello mushrooms are cooked, their total dietary fiber content jumps by up to 14 percent, but they lose as much as 22 percent of their protein, according to a *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* study.



TRADE PROTEINS

Looking to scale back on meat? Making mushrooms your main course could fuel your losing streak. In a new *Appetite* study, people who ate eight ounces of white button mushrooms three times a week instead of red meat lost 4 percent more body fat than red-meat eaters. While the mushroom eaters cut calories, they didn't report feeling hungry several hours after eating. Try these easy mushroom-for-meat swaps:

1 Grilled Use a whole portobello cap in place of a patty. Or go bunless, topping it with mozzarella and marinara sauce.

2 Chopped Finely dice mushrooms, and use them to replace up to half the lean ground turkey in meatballs or meat loaf.

3 Sautéed Slice, cook and use mushrooms in place of beef strips in Mexican dishes like tacos or fajitas.



FYI The gills are the richest source of a mushroom's antioxidants, according to a French study. But that doesn't mean you should discard the stems—they actually have slightly more antioxidants than the cap. Bottom line: Leave stems intact; remove only the hard ends. 