

AGARICUS BISPORUS

THE BUTTON MUSHROOM or CHAMPIGNON



The first mushroom to be grown on an industrial scale in Europe is *Agaricus bisporus*. Since the first major development of its cultivation occurred in France (about 200 years ago) near Paris, the most widespread trade name in use for the Button Mushroom is "Champignon".

In the kitchen

Although fresh specimens are classically eaten raw or sautéed, the Champignon mushrooms are suitable for a multitude of uses in the kitchen. During cooking they can change colour and become more or less yellow to brown, or even darker in the case of mature specimens with black gills.

The dried product

Although this mushroom has a large market also frozen and otherwise preserved or prepared (in oil, grilled, sautéed, etc...), it is worth to pay more attention to the dried product of European origin.

In fact, the drying process carried out at suitable temperatures, along with the cutting into thin sections, allows to obtain dried mushrooms which maintain their excellent aroma typically recalling almonds, and are also perfectly rehydratable.

The only qualitative variable is the stage of development of the raw material used (the best quality is given by specimens from early to intermediate stage). The dried champignons with these characteristics are suitable for many recipes with any kind of cooking, either alone or in mixed multi-species selections or even together with the black truffle or the summer truffle.



THE OYSTER MUSHROOM



In the world, several species of *Pleurotus* are grown for food. One of the most important is Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*), which boasts a long tradition of consumption in the areas where it also grows spontaneously. These mushrooms require, for a safe consumption as food, to be fully cooked and cannot be used raw.



Photo left: top, Oyster in a mushroom farm; Below, the same species grown spontaneously on wood.

Preserved products

The trade of Oyster mushroom in oil or sautéed is widespread, but the greater similarity with the fresh is certainly the prerogative of frozen product. The dried Oyster reaches better quality when cut thin, or not too coarse, because it's easier to rehydrate.

The king of mixed mushrooms

The ideal cooking, with whole caps of fresh Oyster mushrooms, is roasted (barbecued, in the pan or into the oven).

Preserved products instead are difficult to use in this way and are cooked especially sautéed or stewed.

The most classic commercial and gastronomic use for frozen and dried Oyster, is as component (often predominant) in multi-species mixed mushrooms selections, especially for its excellent consistency and fleshiness.

