

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

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### Mushrooms in your Meals

If you're like a lot of us, maybe the only mushrooms you've eaten are the little white ones, probably sautéed beside a steak. Or maybe you've never gotten past the cream of mushroom soup in a green bean casserole. If that's the case, now might be a good time to try expanding your range a little. There are lots of varieties, to provide a different taste and different texture to your plates. And there might even be some great health benefits tagging along. Here are some to look for in the grocery.

The common little white button mushrooms are available fresh, or choose the canned ones for super quick cooking. These have probably the most mild taste, and you've probably tasted, or at least seen them, sliced on your pizza with all that gooey cheese. If you ever ordered a mushroom and Swiss burger, these were the ones you enjoyed. Take another step and try slicing them raw into salads.

Crimini mushrooms look like white button mushrooms with a sun tan. These are the brown ones. They are firmer, and hold their shape more when they're cooked. They also have a stronger, meatier flavor. They're great sautéed for omelets, added to bread stuffing or cooked into spaghetti sauces.

Portabellas are the huge mushrooms. These can be as large as a hamburger, and with a deep meaty taste and chewy texture, some people just grill them instead of the burger. They can be broiled or roasted, stuffed or chopped.

If you want to add some exotic colors to your soups and salads, look for Oyster

mushrooms. These velvety soft 'srooms can be grey, yellow or even pale blue! Just a light sauté in butter is enough to make their mild flavor more noticeable, but they can be eaten raw in salads or stirred into soup as well.

Enokis look like tiny buttons on toothpicks. Their little round caps sit on top of very long slender stems. While the flavor is quite mild they are surprisingly crunchy when they're added raw to a salad or on top of a sandwich. And the crunch means that they keep their shape nicely if they're stir-fried with other veggies or meat.

Maitake mushrooms have a fan shape instead of the stem and cap we're mostly used to seeing. They have a stronger taste and smell that will remind you of cool dark woods. For that reason they're best used with other strong-flavored foods like roasted meats, stews or to add flavor to rice or barley.

Shiitakes look like dark brown little umbrellas. But the stem of a shiitake is tough enough that it should be trimmed off before using. Like maitakes, these have a strong flavor and meaty, chewy texture so they work well with strong sauces in stir fried dishes, pasta sauce or other main dishes. If you buy dried ones, the flavor will be even stronger. Soak them in warm water to soften before adding to the recipe.

Once you decide which one to try next, handle them nicely. Mushrooms do not like water, so don't wash them until you are ready to use them. Use cool tap water to rinse, and trim the end of the stem. If you see any dirt, rub it off gently under running water. If you don't use the whole package they'll keep for a week or more in the refrigerator. Put the opened package in a paper or plastic bag, but do not seal it shut. Mushrooms will last much longer if they have fresh air. If they get slimy, or deep brown spots on them, they're done for. Get a fresh package and enjoy the good flavor, healthy

