

The Ten Commandments of Eating Wild Mushrooms **by Moses Mycophagist**

1. Never eat a mushroom unless it is positively identified as edible. Mistakes can result in toxic reactions ranging from mild gastric distress to hospitalization and death. When in doubt throw it out!
2. Eat only fresh mushrooms that are free from infestation by insects or larva. Mushrooms can spoil, and eating any spoiled food can cause food poisoning and adverse reactions.
3. Cook all mushrooms thoroughly. Some mushrooms contain toxins or gastrointestinal irritants that are rendered harmless only by cooking.
4. Eat mushrooms only in moderate quantities. Mushrooms are not easily digested; over-eating them is an easy way to get sick.
5. When trying a mushroom for the first time, eat only a small portion, and don't try any new kinds for 48 hours. As with many foods, some people are sensitive or allergic to mushrooms commonly eaten by others. Individuals with known food allergies or sensitivities should be extra careful when trying new mushrooms, especially those known to present problems for some individuals.
6. Don't pick mushrooms from contaminated habitats. These include chemically treated lawns, ornamental trees, power line right-of-ways, railroad right-of-ways, highways, and areas close to landfills, toxic waste areas, crop fields, and firebreaks. Contaminants may accumulate in wild mushrooms.
7. Never assume that a wild mushroom that you find in another country is the same edible species you know from North America, or vice versa. Many serious cases of mushroom poisoning occur when vacationers and immigrants gather and eat dangerous look-alike species not found in their native lands.
8. Be conservative about feeding wild mushrooms to children, the elderly, and the infirm. Avoid edible species known to cause adverse - reactions in some people. Limit portion sizes for children, the elderly, and the sick because they are generally more susceptible to toxins than other people.
9. When trying a wild mushroom for the first time, save a few intact, uncooked specimens in the refrigerator for 48 hours. If one develops an illness or reaction within two days after trying an unfamiliar mushroom, a physician may need an uncooked specimen for identification to rule out the mushroom as a culprit.
10. Examine every specimen in every collection to avoid inadvertent mixing of different species.

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