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How to Find, Identify, and Understand Wild Mushrooms
Mushrooms grow everywhere. Here's how to start finding and identifying the best ones to eat—and how to bring them to the table.

2 Common and Poisonous
A Few Toxic Mushrooms
Poisonous mushrooms grow everywhere in Illinois. Before you pick and eat any wild mushroom, learn to recognize toxic species.

3 Into the Forest
Mushrooms Found with Trees
Edible mushrooms often grow on or around living and dead trees.
4 The Morels

*Morchella esculenta, Morchella elata, and Morchella semilibera*

The most popular wild mushrooms in Illinois look like a sea sponge. There are three basic morel species—plus several varieties.

5 The Chanterelles

*Cantharellus cibarius, Cantharellus lateritius, Cantharellus cinnabarinus, Craterellus cornucopioides, and Craterellus foetidus*

Yellow, black, orange, and red—wildly popular chanterelles are a group of vase-shaped summer mushrooms that often grow near oaks.

6 The Boletes

*Xanthaconium separans, Strobilomyces spp., and Gyroporus castaneus*

These terrestrial mushrooms have pores on the underside of the cap. There are hundreds of bolete species; here are a few easy ones to identify.

7 The Puffballs

*Calvatia gigantea, Lycoperdon pyriforme, Lycoperdon perlatum, Calvatia cyathiformis, and Calvatia craniformis*

You can stomp on them when they’re old, or eat them when they’re fresh.

8 Take the Field without Getting Hurt

*Agaricus, Coprinus, Macrolepiota, and Lepiota*

Wherever there’s grass, look for these edible wild mushrooms.

9 Let’s Eat

*Recipes and Advice for Cooking Wild Mushrooms*

From simple fried morels to a champagne breakfast with fungi, fourteen great chefs from Illinois tell you how they get wild with mushrooms.

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