

VARIATION

Tomates Farcies Duxelles

[Tomatoes Stuffed with Mushrooms]

Follow the preceding recipe, but use the mushroom filling described in the recipe for stuffed mushrooms on page 476.

CULTIVATED MUSHROOMS

Champignons de Couche—Champignons de Paris

Fresh, cultivated mushrooms are an essential element of French *cuisine* and appear not only as a vegetable or in a garnish, but as an important flavour factor in numerous dishes, sauces, and stuffings. Mushrooms should never be submitted to prolonged cooking or they will lose most of their taste and texture. Therefore if they are to go into a sauce they are usually cooked separately, then added to the sauce to simmer a moment and blend their flavour with the sauce.

CHOOSING MUSHROOMS

It is always advisable to buy mushrooms in bulk rather than in a packet, so that you can hand-pick each one. Some varieties of cultivated mushrooms are creamy white, others have brownish caps. The freshest of fresh mushrooms are closed on the underside of the cap so that you cannot see the gills. Caps and stems should be smooth, unblemished, fresh looking, and fresh smelling. As a mushroom ages in the shop, the cap expands to expose the gills, the mushroom darkens, and begins to dry out.

If you are not going to use fresh mushrooms immediately, refrigerate them in a polythene bag and they will keep perfectly for two to three days.

PREPARATION FOR COOKING

Trim the base of the stems. If the gills are even partially exposed, break the stem off inside the cap so that you will be able to wash out any soil which may have lodged in the gills.

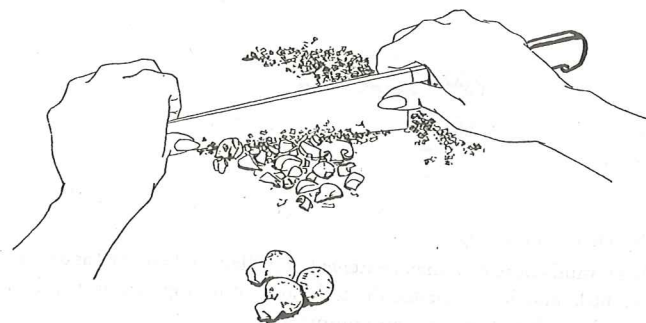
Just before using them, drop the mushrooms in a large basin of cold water. Rapidly rub them between your hands for several seconds to dislodge dirt particles. Immediately lift them out into a colander. If there are more than a few grains of soil left in the bottom of the basin, wash the mushrooms again. Dry them in a cloth.

HOW TO CUT MUSHROOMS

After they have been washed and dried, here are the various ways in which mushrooms may be cut.

To chop or dice

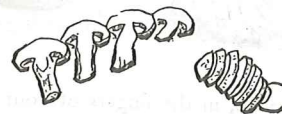
Place the mushrooms in a heap on the chopping board. Chop them with a big, sharp, straight-edged knife, holding an end of the blade in the fingers of each hand. Use rapid up and down movements, and repeatedly brush mushrooms back into a heap with the knife. Chop until the pieces are less than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch.

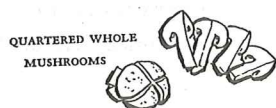


Chop mushrooms with a big chef's knife held between the thumb and forefinger of each hand



SLICED WHOLE MUSHROOMS

SLICED CAP
STEM CUT OFF AT BASESLICED CAP
STEM REMOVED ENTIRELY*Sliced mushrooms*

QUARTERED WHOLE
MUSHROOMS

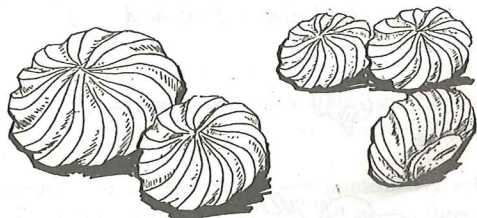
QUARTERED CAPS

Quartered
mushrooms

QUARTERED STEMS

To flute mushroom caps

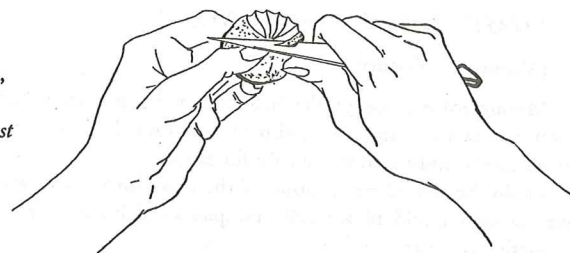
Fluted mushroom caps may be stewed or grilled, and are used as decorations. It takes a little practice to master the technique of fluting, but it is quite a nice professional touch to have at your command.



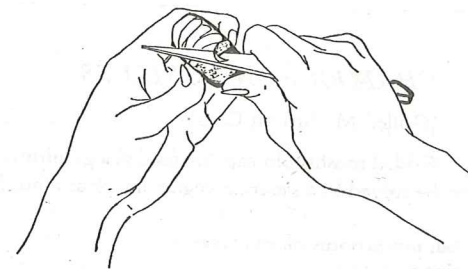
Fluted caps

Hold the mushroom, cap up, in the fingers of your left hand. Its blade pointing away from you, hold a very sharp, small knife rigidly in your right hand. Rest the thumb of your right hand on the mushroom cap to act as a guide. Then rotate the cap toward you against the blade of the knife starting at the crown, thus removing a very shallow strip, or flute, down one half of the cap. Note that the knife remains stationary; the mushroom cuts itself as it rotates against the blade. It is your left hand, controlling the mushroom's movement, which determines the depth and direction of the cut. Continue in the same manner all around the cap.

Starting at crown,
rotate mushroom
toward you against
rigidly held knife
blade



Left hand guides
mushroom against
knife blade and
regulates cut

*CHAMPIGNONS À BLANC*

[Stewed Mushrooms]

When mushrooms are used in white sauces, or in a garniture in which they must remain white, they are cooked this way.

$\frac{1}{4}$ lb. fresh mushrooms

$\frac{1}{2}$ oz. butter

$\frac{1}{8}$ pt. water

A $1\frac{1}{2}$ - to $2\frac{1}{2}$ -pt. enamelled saucepan

$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ tbl lemon juice (which helps keep
mushrooms white)

Trim and wash the mushrooms; cut as directed in your recipe, or as shown in the preceding illustrations. Bring the water, salt, lemon juice, and butter to the boil in the saucepan. Add the mushrooms and toss to cover them with the liquid. Cover and boil moderately fast, tossing frequently, for 5 minutes. Put aside until ready to use.