

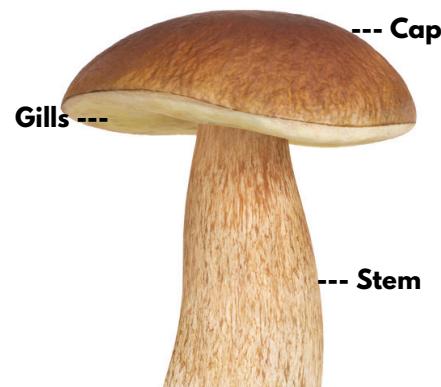
Engaging Questions

- Raise your hand if you've ever seen a mushroom growing outside!
- Mushrooms can be big or tiny- where do you think the best place would be for a mushroom to grow?
- If you could add mushrooms to any food, what would you choose?

Reasons to Eat

- Mushrooms offer a decent amount of plant-based protein compared to many other vegetables.
- The nutrients in mushrooms, especially selenium and vitamin D, play a role in supporting a healthy immune system.

Botanical Facts



Scientific Name: *Agaricus bisporus*

Family: Phylum Basidiomycota

Classification: Fungi

Produce Tips

- To maximize freshness, store mushrooms in a paper bag in the refrigerator, allowing for air circulation and moisture absorption.
- They should have a fresh, earthy scent, not a musty or off odor.

How do they grow?

- Mushrooms grow from spores through a fascinating life cycle that involves several stages.
- Mushrooms do not require soil; they can grow on various organic materials as long as they provide the necessary nutrients.
- Mushrooms thrive in dark, cool and humid environments. Ideal temperatures for growth typically range from 50 to 70 degrees.

Fun Facts

- Mushrooms are fungi, not plants. This means that unlike plants, mushrooms don't use sunlight to make their own food through photosynthesis.
- Mushrooms break down dead plants and animals, recycling nutrients back into the ecosystem.
- The main body of a fungus, called mycelium, lives underground as a giant network of tiny threads.
- Mushrooms have a fifth primary taste called "umami," along with sweet, sour, salty, and bitter.

Connection to California

- California is known for its specialty mushrooms which come in a range of flavors, colors, and textures.
- With the farm-to-table movement, mushrooms have become a popular ingredient in CA cuisine.
- The commercial growth of mushrooms in CA has been for over 50 years starting in Moss Landing, CA.

History

- Mushrooms date back to around 1 AD, with Romans appreciating them as gourmet ingredients.
- Egyptians regarded mushrooms as sacred, believing they provided energy and vitality, and were often reserved for royal consumption.
- In ancient China, mushrooms were used for medicinal purposes.