

Ezra Alya Foraging

The Wild Mushroom Prep Method

Double Processing Wild Mushrooms

Why I Double Process My Foraged Mushrooms Before Freezing

One of the most common questions I hear is:

"Why do you process your mushrooms before freezing instead of freezing them fresh?"

Over years of harvesting and cooking wild mushrooms, I've found that taking one extra step before freezing creates a better mushroom for cooking later. This method improves texture, concentrates flavor, removes excess moisture, and may help reduce the chance of digestive discomfort that some people experience with wild mushrooms.

While every mushroom species is different, this is the process I use for many of the edible mushrooms I harvest.

Why I Double Process My Mushrooms

This extra step offers several benefits:

- Removes excess moisture before freezing.
- Helps preserve texture.
- Concentrates the mushroom's natural flavor.

- Prevents large ice crystals from forming.
 - Makes mushrooms easier to portion for cooking.
 - May reduce digestive discomfort that some people experience with certain wild mushrooms.
 - Saves time when preparing meals.
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Step 1: Clean Your Fresh Mushrooms

Begin by brushing away leaves, pine needles, dirt, and other forest debris.

If your mushrooms contain insects (a perfectly normal part of wild mushrooms), place them in a bowl of **cold salt water** and soak for about **30 minutes**. This encourages hidden insects to leave the mushrooms.

After soaking:

- Rinse thoroughly with clean water.
 - Drain well.
 - Pat dry with towels or allow excess moisture to evaporate before moving to the next step.
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Step 2: Cut to Your Desired Size

Slice or chop your mushrooms into the sizes you most commonly cook with.

Processing them now saves time later and allows them to cook more evenly.

Step 3: Dry Sauté (Sweat the Mushrooms)

This is the step that makes all the difference.

Place **only the mushrooms** into a dry skillet.

Do **not** add:

- Butter
- Oil
- Salt
- Seasonings
- Water

Set your stove to **low or medium-low heat** (around a 2–3 on most stovetops).

The goal isn't to brown the mushrooms.

The goal is to slowly allow them to release their natural moisture.

Step 4: Be Patient

Every **10–15 minutes**, gently stir the mushrooms.

Bring the mushrooms from the bottom of the pan up to the top, then leave them alone again.

At first, it may seem like nothing is happening.

Eventually, the mushrooms will begin releasing a surprising amount of liquid.

This is exactly what you're looking for.

Continue cooking slowly while stirring every 10–15 minutes.

Step 5: Cook Off the Moisture

As the water begins to evaporate, continue stirring occasionally.

Once only a small amount of liquid remains, stay with the pan and stir more frequently to prevent sticking.

When the moisture has completely evaporated, you'll begin hearing the mushrooms lightly **sizzle**.

That sound tells you the excess water is gone.

At this point, remove the mushrooms from the heat.

Step 6: Freeze

Spread the mushrooms in a single layer on a lightly oiled or parchment-lined baking sheet.

Freeze until solid.

Once frozen:

- Break apart any clumps.
- Transfer to freezer bags or airtight containers.
- Label with the mushroom species and harvest date.

Now you have perfectly portioned mushrooms that can be added directly to recipes without thawing.

Ready to Cook

Your mushrooms are now ready to use in:

- Pasta dishes
- Risotto
- Soups
- Gravies
- Stir-fries
- Egg dishes
- Stuffing
- Pizza
- Sauces
- Roasted vegetables

Simply remove what you need from the freezer and cook as you would fresh mushrooms.

A Note from Ezra Alya Foraging

Every mushroom species is unique, and proper identification and preparation are essential before eating any wild mushroom. Some edible mushrooms require thorough cooking and may have species-specific preparation methods.

This guide shares the preparation process I use for many of the wild mushrooms I harvest to create a convenient, flavorful product that's ready whenever inspiration strikes.

Thank you for supporting **Ezra Alya Foraging**, and happy cooking!