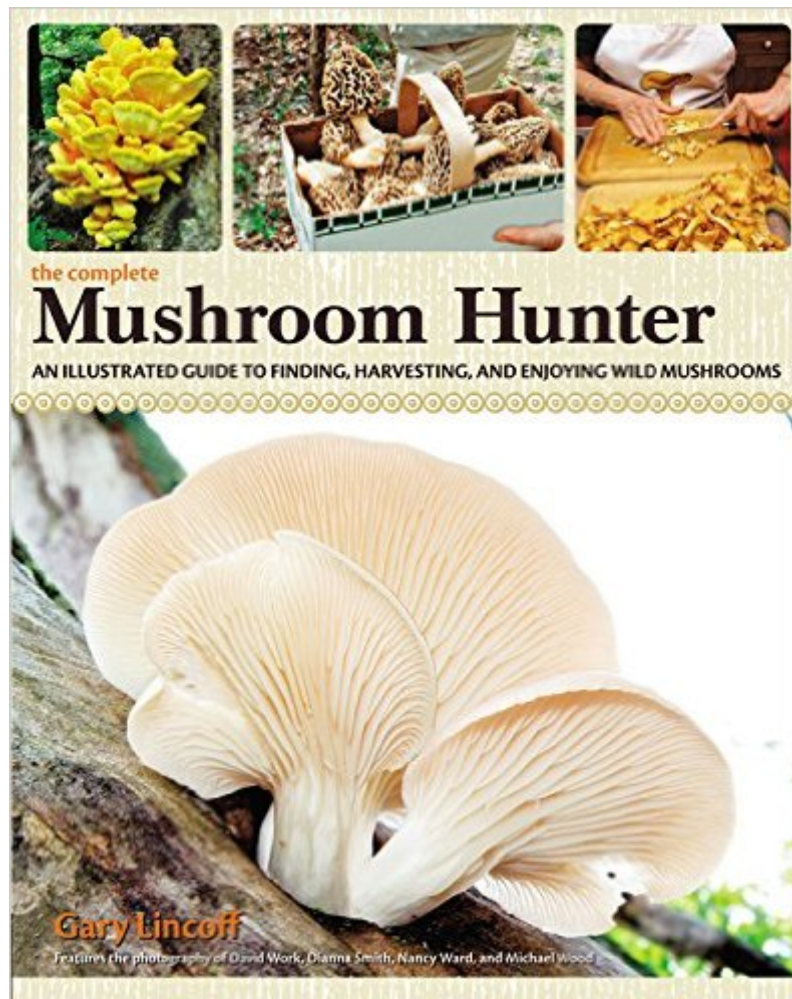


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The Complete Mushroom Hunter: An Illustrated Guide To Finding, Harvesting, And Enjoying Wild Mushrooms



Synopsis

Do you know your mushrooms? This is the only mushrooming book that will introduce you safely and with confidence to the not-so underground hobby of mushroom hunting and gathering. Gathering edible wild food is a lovely way to forge a connection to the earth. Mushrooms are the ultimate local food source; they grow literally everywhere, from mountains and woodlands to urban and suburban parks to your own backyard. The Complete Mushroom Hunter will enrich your understanding of the natural world and build an appreciation for an ancient, critically relevant, and useful body of knowledge. Amateur mycologists and mushroom enthusiasts will find this is a guidebook for their passion. Mushroom guru Gary Lincoff escorts you from the mushroom's earliest culinary awakening, through getting equipped for mushroom forays, to preparing and serving the fruits of the foray, wherever you live. Inside you'll find: A brief, but colorful history of mushroom hunting worldwide; How to get equipped for a mushroom foray; A completely illustrated guide to the common wild edible mushrooms and their poisonous look-alikes: where to find them, how to identify them, and more; How to prepare and serve the fruits of your foray, plus more than 30 delicious recipes; Plus, dozens of colorful, priceless anecdotes from living the mushroom lifestyle.

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Customer Reviews

I've got a bunch of books about mushrooms, but I think this is going to be one of the most useful. The way it's organized is very different from any of the others. Rather than organizing around species, this user-friendly book starts out by looking at our lawns and gardens to talk about what's

growing there, then progresses to the somewhat wilder backyard, then to parks, then to the wild. It's international in scope, and catholic in range, covering culinary, medicinal and recreational mushrooms. It's got all the necessary caveats and information to keep both new and experienced hunters from poisoning themselves. It's also got lots of information in chart form to quickly find seasonal mushrooms or to find mushrooms by habitat. Some of the photos are gorgeous and the pages are all corner indexed so that you can quickly find the section you want. You'll still need an Audubon Guide (which Lincoff also wrote) or other authoritative guide for more complete listings of various species, but one of the things I like about this book is that there are often many photographs of the same species of mushroom, which really helps to show how different they can look depending on all kinds of factors. I've just begun to try the recipes in the back, but the maitake and wild rice one is delicious.

This book is pretty and amusing but in no way what it claims to be. The pictures and descriptions of mushrooms that are used are insufficient for identification. Much of the information the book provides, although written in a pleasant narrative style, is also not relevant to identification of mushrooms which are safe to eat. For species which have poisonous look-alikes this author completely fails to give the details that would allow a person to tell the look-alike from the edible variety. I took the time to look many of the mushrooms in this book up in other books and found that this book could get you killed if you were inclined to trust it. This book suggests species and cooking techniques well but is in no way a field guide. If you are looking for a field guide, look elsewhere. 100 Edible Mushrooms is an example of a book that is a better field guide and will describe dangerous mushrooms much better.

This fills a gap in the literature - there are plenty of field guides out there, but very few that condense the complex knowledge required to safely gather edibles into anything resembling wisdom, and Lincoff's book does this. It's also full of fabulous, entertaining stories. One thing I especially appreciate about "The Complete Mushroom Hunter" is that the author separates out the psychotropic species from the poisonous ones, and also lists some of the more common medicinal mushrooms. Many guides simply lump the psychotropic species in with the poisonous ones, in a move that has "just say no" written all over it. This kind of conflation does not inspire confidence, particularly when one is relying on a guide for information that could mean life or death. I appreciate that this book takes the rational road in this regard. The other great thing about this book is its wonderful recipes, written by somebody who clearly knows how to cook, and also knows which

techniques work well for which species. I have long wanted to use chanterelles in a dessert, owing to their fruity apricot-like aroma; here was a recipe for chanterelle ice cream! Brilliant! In addition to my usual saute-then-freeze approach, this year I cooked some of the (many bags full of) chanterelles in syrup, pureed, and froze it. To make the ice cream was just a matter of thawing the syrup, adding cream, and freezing in the ice cream freezer. It got great reviews when I served it at Thanksgiving.

This is a beautiful book, fit for any coffee table. I am interested in identifying mushrooms just for fun. I'm not going to risk eating any of them. It's not worth the risk of a stomach ache or worse, in my opinion. I read this book cover to cover and thought maybe I might know something. I went outside on our 5 acre property and found 6 different mushroom varieties, and couldn't identify a single mushroom. Mushrooms are beautiful things. This book opened my eyes to the beauty of mushrooms, like the smells of individual mushrooms. I find it pleasing to go on a mushroom hunt; it helps me reduce stress from work and my everyday life, etc. But there is no way I would eat a mushroom based on this guide.

I live out here in the old Pacific Northwest, where we have an overabundance of fungi. I bought this as a gift for a budding mycologist in the family, who put it on her wishlist. The pictures are large and detailed, and for the entries it does have, it has quite a lot of information. However, even a smaller pocket guide she owns has more information and entries on mushrooms both nationwide and here in the Northwest. The issue really is that many of the mushrooms found out there are NOT going to be edible, therefore the focus should be on identifying them (as the pocket guide does) and less on providing recipes for cooking them (as Lincoff's book does). Any mycologist going out on a foray is a) going to be looking for morels or another edible mushroom and b) trying to determine if the mushroom he or she just found is edible. This does not help you do that.

The Complete Mushroom Hunter: An Illustrated Guide to Finding, Harvesting and Enjoying Wild Mushrooms... is as much a magazine as a book. It's is a collection of compelling windows into the author's life and experiences. Mushrooms are the vehicle for his wonderful anecdotal style of writing. It's a lot of fun and informative at the same time, striking just the right balance between caution and enthusiasm. If you've never considered hunting for wild mushrooms or if you think of yourself as an expert you'll be amazed at how much you learn and how much fun you have doing so. The photography is amazing and the design and layout of the book make it a wonderful gift for

anyone interested in foraging, food, the outdoors or looking at the world from a different point of view.

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