



# Mushroom: A Global History (Edible)

*Cynthia Bertelsen*

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The mushroom, while thought of as pallid and low-born, has by contrast a rather colourful history, fraught with murder and accidental death, hunger and gluttony, sickness and health, religion and war. *Mushroom: A Global History* examines the complex role of mushrooms in human history and food culture, explaining why some peoples revere mushrooms and others shun them, as did Diderot, who wrote that: ‘. . . they are not really good but to be sent back to the dung heap where they are born’. The book shows how some cultures imbued mushrooms with life’s messiness and rottenness, whilst others recognized the delights of cooking and eating them. Still others linked ‘magic’ mushrooms with ancient religious beliefs.

In the nineteenth century, after millennia being picked from the wild for use in everyday cooking and medicine, mushrooms entered the realm of haute cuisine. This new demand for mushrooms drove entrepreneurs and farmers to seek cultivation methods for mushrooms, and brought them into the world of industrial agriculture.

*Mushroom* showcases many recipes both historic and contemporary, as well as presenting numerous images of mushrooms diminutive and enormous, nondescript and outlandish, from around the globe. Essential reading for those who already appreciate the dark, savoury delights of cooking and eating mushrooms, the book will also appeal to those who wish to know more about the history of this surprising, earthy fungus.



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