



NEW SCIENCE

Flavor-Enhancing Properties of Mushrooms

A new study from the Culinary Institute of America and University of California-Davis, published in the *Journal of Food Science*, explored the flavor-enhancing properties of mushrooms and found that blending finely chopped mushrooms with ground meat enhances flavor and nutrition.¹

Study Overview

The study, *Flavor-Enhancing Properties of Mushrooms in Meat-Based Dishes in Which Sodium Has Been Reduced and Meat Has Been Partially Substituted with Mushrooms*, conducted by University of California Davis (UC Davis), and the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), was published in the *Journal of Food Science*. Chef-instructors from the CIA developed eight test recipes, including recipes featuring The Blend, adding finely chopped mushrooms to beef, and a CIA registered dietitian performed nutrition analyses on the recipe. Six beef taco blend recipes differing in added salt and meat/mushroom blend ratios and two carne asada recipes differing in meat/mushroom blend ratios were developed. The intensity of the sensory attributes of the mushroom preparation taco blends and carne asada recipes differing in meat/mushroom blend ratios were evaluated by a trained panel of 13 judges using Quantitative Descriptive Analysis to determine the flavor effects of using a blend of chopped criminis, white button mushrooms and ground beef, as well as sensory mitigation of sodium reduction in the taco blends.

Key Study Findings

This proof-of-concept sensory study provides the basis for how mushrooms and meat can combine for healthier alternatives to iconic American dishes. As the study shows, a traditional ground meat recipe prepared with 50 percent mushrooms and 50 percent meat (or even 80 percent mushrooms and 20 percent meat) can:

- Reduce calorie, fat and sodium intake, while adding nutrients like vitamin D, potassium*, b-vitamins and antioxidants
- Enhance the overall flavor because of double the impact of umami
- Maintain flavor while reducing sodium intake by 25 percent

Tips for Cooking Mushrooms

The study demonstrated that cooking methods have an effect on the flavor profile of white mushrooms.

- Sear mushrooms for a more intense roasted, charred and smoky flavor and overall aroma.
- Roast mushrooms to get more sweet, salty and umami tastes with caramelized, nutty and buttery flavors.

When cooked properly, mushrooms can take on the texture and consistency of meat. For the best blend results, mushrooms should be chopped to match the consistency of the meat they're pairing with.

- One pan cooking (great for tacos, sloppy Joes and pasta sauces): brown meat in a pan until cooked through, remove and set aside. Then, add chopped mushrooms to the same pan, sauté and return meat to the pan to complete the recipe.
- Create a mushroom base (ideal for burgers, meatballs and meatloaf): roast or sauté mushrooms ahead of time to intensify flavor and then finely chop to add to ground meat dishes.

RECIPE

Make a Blended Burger Like the Pros

Chef Linton Hopkins, local Atlanta restaurateur and “Burger Time” originator, created the irresistible *Roasted Mushroom Blend Burgers*. The patties get a welcome blast of umami from three different types of mushrooms: crimini, shiitake and oyster. By adding this mushroom blend to ground beef, you can get the most out of your ingredients without sacrificing flavor or nutrition.

Ingredients

8 ounces crimini mushrooms
2 ounces shiitake mushrooms
2 ounces oyster mushrooms
¼ cup olive oil
3 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
½ pound ground chuck
1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F.
2. Thinly slice all of the mushrooms and toss in olive oil and 1 teaspoon salt.
3. Spread the mushrooms in a single layer on a metal sheet pan and roast in the oven for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and cool.
4. In a food processor pulse the mushrooms into a fine dice.
5. Gently mix the mushrooms with beef and form into four 4 ounce patties.
6. Refrigerate the patties for 15 minutes.
7. Heat a cast iron skillet over high heat and add the vegetable oil.
8. Season the patties evenly with 2 teaspoons of kosher salt.
9. Add the patties to the skillet. Note: The patties are delicate so be careful when laying into pan.
10. Press the patties firmly with a spatula and cook for 3 minutes until crisp on one side.
11. Carefully turn the patties over and press once with a spatula. Cook for 2 minutes.
12. Add a slice of American or sharp cheddar cheese on top. As the cheese begins to melt, place on top of your favorite toasted bun.
13. Serve with whole grain mustard and shaved red onion.

1 Myrdal Miller, A., Mills, K., Wong, T., Drescher, G., Lee, S.M., Sirimuangmoon, C., Schaefer, S., Langstaff, S., Minor, B. and Guinard, J.-X. (2014), Flavor-Enhancing Properties of Mushrooms in Meat-Based Dishes in Which Sodium Has Been Reduced and Meat Has Been Partially Substituted with Mushrooms. Journal of Food Science, 79: S1795-S1804. doi: 10.1111/1750-3841.12549

*A serving of white mushrooms supplies 8 percent of the daily value.

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