

FISH

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Morel mushrooms are considered a tasty, spring-time treat in south central Kentucky.

PHOTO/Submitted

with an empty bag."

After morels are collected, there are varying opinions on how to purify, store, and cook the mushrooms. Research is strongly suggested.

"If you are storing the mushrooms short term, do not wash with water," said Janey Cline, a University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent. "Simply wipe with a damp cloth, and store in a paper bag in the refrigerator for up to 10 days. If you prefer long term storage, they can be frozen or dried in a food dehydrator. Your local extension office can provide information on the drying and freezing processes."

To avoid the possible ingestion of insects, slugs, and other small creatures, some sources suggest cutting mushrooms in half and checking them thoroughly. Others suggest cutting morel mushrooms lengthwise and soaking them in hot saltwater to get insects out of the pores and hollow stems.

"I cut my mushrooms in half-length ways, place in bowl with bottled

spring water. I heard chlorine in tap water was not good for them," Ashley explained. "(Add) a little dash of salt to kill any insects that burrow in the mushroom. Refrigerate 1 to 2 days until ready to cook. If not going to cook soon, rinse them well, and lay them out on cardboard or newspaper to dry. Once dry, put them in a mason jar in a cool, dry place to keep until ready to eat. Once ready to eat, just dump some in a bowl to rehydrate and cook to your liking."

The name dry land fish comes from the practice of slicing the morel mushrooms in half lengthwise and then breading and frying them like one would fish.

"I roll mine in flour and pan fry in butter, dash of salt, and they are delicious," Ashley said. "You can't eat just one."

Janey also has a specific process when it comes to preparing and cooking morels.

"Wash morels gently and lay on paper towels to absorb extra

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