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moisture," Janey said of her process. "Cut off the bottom of the morel's stem just above the picking level. Roll in egg wash and then in cornmeal and fry in hot oil until browned. Salt and pepper to taste. Unless they are very large or have a bug hole, I usually fry them whole. If they happen to be, just slice in half lengthways or cut away the bad spot. Be sure to rinse away anything inside. Unfortunately, they are hard to locate and the wildlife like them, too, so we usually only have one or two batches a year."

"Mushrooms pair very well with onions, meat, and pasta," Janey added. "At only 15 calories, 2 grams of protein, 1 gram of sugar, and 0 grams of fat per cup, they are a perfect option to bulk up your favorite soup recipes or top off your favorite pizza...Flavor is added when they are sautéed, grilled, microwaved, or roasted."

When hunting for morel

mushrooms, it's important to be well aware of what is called a "false morel" mushroom. All true morel mushrooms have hollow stems from the bottom to the top of the inside of the cone-shaped mushroom. False morels have what look like lumpy, brain-like shapes. They also do not have hollow stems, but rather cottony, fibrous stems.

The difference between a true morel mushroom and a false morel mushroom can be found in a diagram provided with this story.

According to the University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment fact sheet about wild mushrooms, there are seven important steps to follow when hunting these fungi.

1. Learn to identify mushrooms. Poisonous mushrooms can look similar to edible mushrooms.

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At right, this diagram details the difference between true morel mushrooms and false or poisonous morels.

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