

METHODS OF PREPARATION, DRYING, AND PRESERVATION

There are many different ways to prepare magic mushrooms for human consumption. However, the organic method is probably the most popular means employed. Psilocybian mushrooms are usually eaten fresh (which supposedly produces the most powerful and intensely visual experience), or dried and consumed at a later date.



Fig. 32. 1. Mushroom tea (*Psilocybe cubensis*).

Some users freeze their mushrooms for later use, while others put them in capsules. Freezing the mushrooms for later use is not recommended. Ethnopharmacologist Jonathan Ott wrote about the problem of frozen mushrooms. I also had mentioned the frozen mushrooms sold in sealed tins that were laced with LSD and PCP to hide the effects of the acid in the canned shrooms. They usually consist of gooey globs of muck.

Ott wrote in Pharmactheon that “freezing fresh psilocybian mushrooms is perhaps the best way not to preserve their activity, besides complicating storage. There is only one reason a pharmacopolis might freeze mushrooms: to render them an amorphous mess so the prospective sucker would not realize what they are---garden-variety mushrooms with unknown adulterants.”

Mixing psilocybian mushrooms in milk or fruit shakes (known as mushroom smoothies) or tea are also common methods employed by those who dislike the natural taste of the mushrooms. Cooking the mushrooms in the soup, stew or omelette to alleviate the acrid taste of psilocybian fungi is also a popular means of ingestion. Another method of ingestion is to serve the mushrooms on toast with jam or honey.

Speaking of honey, there have been a few articles published under titles such as, ‘Blue Honey’ and ‘magic mead.’ I want to remind everyone that at the time of the conquest of Mexico, several of the Spanish codices mentioned that Aztec priests were known to have their followers

served both chocolate and honey with mushrooms to visiting dignitaries during Montezuma's coronation and at other Aztec festivals and celebrations.



Fig. 32. 2. Mushroom omelette (Psilocybe cubensis).

Again I want to note that the Aztec's never stored their mushrooms in honey. However, many members of the mushroom subculture do attempt to store their mushrooms in honey believing that it will preserve them for later use.

Again, Jonathan Ott also brought to light that storing mushrooms in honey is not a good method of preservation of the species. Ott had already spoken out about freezing the mushrooms as not a good thing to do. He added to his comment, "the same goes for curing mushrooms in honey. Chopping or shredding dried mushrooms will likewise accelerate the oxidative degradation of the active principles. While one of the sixteenth century accounts of teonanácatl states that the mushrooms, por ser amargos, "being bitter," were taken with honey, there is no tradition of preserving the mushrooms in Mexico. Indeed, embalming in honey is useless for preservation of mushrooms.

Nevertheless, during a 1976 field trip in the Zapotec zone of Oaxaca, I was surprised to be offered Psilocybe caerulescens for sale by a Zapotec Indian family...embalmed in honey! Predictably, this was a 'disgusting, fermenting mess, crawling with bugs,'

It is most unlikely any psilocybine had survived the fermentation, but the resulting metheglin may have possessed a modest amount of ethanol! What a tragic waste... fermenting the Pharmacotheon into mead... like transmuting gold to lead."

Ott continued his narrative by adding, "I was told that the Zapotec Indian family had learned of this honey-embalming practice from the mushroomic tourists, and prepared the mushrooms to

satisfy the tastes of the foreigners! This is an example of how quickly tradition can be corrupted by the sudden exposure of isolated pockets of traditional culture to foreign influences.”



Fig. 32. 3. Mushroom Pizza (Psilocybe cubensis).

Always consider that it is best to eat the mushrooms on an empty stomach. The mushrooms may be rinsed carefully in water, but take note that psilocybine is water soluble and some loss of the active ingredients might occur. And remember to take at least 15 to 30 minutes to consume a dosage of the species you have. That is the way of the shaman, the curandero, and the wise ones (sabias). They have consumed the mushrooms in that manner for at least 2 millennia. Their methods of ingestion seem to work best for them and it should be no different for us.

Although there are no laws against the mushrooms, always remember that the chemical alkaloids psilocybine and psilocine are controlled substances.



Fig. 32. 4. Mushroom spaghetti sauce (Psilocybe cubensis).

Methods employed for drying the sacred mushrooms is to put them in an opened pizza box and place some white paper in those boxes for spore print making. Leave the box open and place the box under a bed or on a closet shelf. If you want to you can lightly close the top of the box leaving only a slight opening to the cardboard carton and leave them as they are.

Within 2-3 days, the mushrooms will become completely bone-dry and ready to store them for further use. That is the method that I have used for over 30-years.



Fig. 32. 5. *Psilocybe cyanescens* drying on paper.

Many shroom cultivators like to apply modern methods to be used to properly dry their freshly harvested mushrooms. However, a dehydrator is probably one of the best methods for drying fresh harvested mushrooms. However, if a dehydrator is not available then the best method for drying the mushrooms at home is as follows: place several sheets of newspaper on a table or in a high dry area.

Separate and spread the mushrooms evenly across the newspaper and make sure that they are not touching one another. One may place these papers on a shelf in a cabinet or top shelf anywhere in the home high up or under a bed. Within 2-3 days the mushrooms will have shrunk down to virtually nothing as they dry. The shrinking occurs because the mushrooms are approximately 95% or more of water.

As these mushrooms dry, the color of the mushroom caps will change to a straw-yellow color. After a few days, handle a mushroom specimen to see if it has completely dried. It may feel rubbery but in no way will it break apart like a fresh stem would.

To further the drying process one may turn an oven on to 350 degrees. Then allow it to heat up for about 20 minutes. Then turn the oven off and crack open the oven door until it stays cracked open. Be sure to let the oven cool down for at least five minutes. Next place the dried mushrooms on several layers of newspaper sections and place them into the oven on the top rack and then leave the oven door cracked open which will allow the mushrooms to become very brittle.



Fig. 32. 6 Psilocybe cyanescens drying in pizza box.

After another 15 minutes, remove the mushrooms from the oven, place the newspaper piles with the mushrooms on them onto one's kitchen table and then let them stand in the open air for ten minutes. That will allow the dried mushrooms to cool down to room temperature. Once they are completely dry, try to crush a few with your fingers to see just how dried they are.

At that point in drying, the mushrooms should then turn to powder if crushed between one's fingers. Then the mushrooms may be stored in glass Mason Jars with rubber gaskets and a seal, or in a plastic container with a top.. Once dried in this manner, the mushrooms will retain about 70-80% of their potency for many years. Also be sure to keep the stored mushrooms away from direct light and heat and as noted above, never attempt to preserve those mushrooms in honey.

Dried mushrooms may be consumed fresh or one could grind the dried mushrooms up into a powder and place them into double-ought gelatin capsules for later use. Some people now make mushroom candies and I personally do not recommend or support that means of ingestion.

The unconventional practice of manufacturing mushroom candies often attracts the attention of law enforcement agencies. Over the past 7-years, news items appearing in local press in the Pacific Northwest reports that drug enforcement officers and traffic officers have confiscated hundreds of mushroom laced candies in both drug raids and from teenagers and others, many

who were arrested while transporting such candies during normal traffic violations when pulled over.



Fig. 32. 7. Psilocybe stuntzii drying on newspaper.

When law enforcement officials find such mushroomic candies, they immediately assume that such shroom-candies are more than likely being distributed and marketed at street level and in local schools to students.

As noted, mushroom candies have also been confiscated at Raves in the Pacific Northwest and reports now show that such candies are being marketed to friends at public schools as well as being passed around to friends at private parties in many locations along the west coast of America.

This is not good for the spirit of the mushrooms and these mushrooms should not be sold.