

# Shroom for more

*A hidden world beneath your feet, a realm in the bark of trees, in numerous shapes, colours, and sizes, mushrooms have captivated human beings for centuries. Discover the incredible diversity of mushrooms and learn the most fascinating facts about these weird and wonderful fungal creations of nature.*

## Gucchi mushroom

**Scientific name:** Morchella esculenta

**Found in:** Gucehi mushrooms grow in the foothills of the Himalayas, especially in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh in coniferous and deciduous forests, as well as alpine pastures.

**Look and taste:** These delectable fungi, also known as morel mushrooms, have spongy, perforated caps that are often yellowish white in colour. They are renowned for their rich, meaty flavour and delicate texture.

**Mushroomy tidbit:** These mushrooms are one of the most expensive mushrooms in the world. Gucehi mushrooms are considered a delicacy in many parts of the world. Due to their scarcity and short growing seasons, they are sold at a premium price, often selling for 30,000 INR per kilogram in India.



## Death Cap mushroom

**Scientific name:** Amanita phalloides

**Found in:** The Death Cap mushroom is native to Europe but can also be found from North Africa to the south coast of Scandinavia and from Ireland to Poland and western Russia.

**Look and taste:** This mushroom has a distinctive white or pale-yellow cap, often with a greenish or brownish tint. It has a long, white stem with a ring around it and a cup-like structure at the base. These mushrooms are sweet smelling when young, but a strong odour develops as they age.

**Mushroomy tidbit:** It is considered the most poisonous mushroom in the world. It contains  $\alpha$ -amanitin, a toxin that can cause severe liver and kidney damage. Ingesting as little as half a mushroom can be fatal to an adult human. 90% of mushroom related fatalities worldwide are caused by the Death Cap.



## Bitter Oyster mushroom

**Scientific name:** Panellus stipticus

**Found in:** The Bitter Oyster mushroom is a widely distributed species found in Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America. It usually grows in groups or dense overlapping clusters on the logs, stumps, and trunks of deciduous trees, particularly beech, oak, and birch.

**Look and taste:** Identified by its fan-shaped cap, Bitter Oyster mushroom is typically white or cream-coloured and has a slightly bitter taste, although it should not be ingested. It has a short, sturdy stem and gills that run down the length of the cap.

**Mushroomy tidbit:** The Bitter Oysters from eastern North America are known to emit a faint, greenish glow in the dark. Genetic analysis has shown that several chemicals, including luciferin and luciferase, are responsible for this glow.



## Lion's Mane mushroom

**Scientific name:** Hericium erinaceus

**Found in:** It can be found on hardwood trees throughout the stretches of North America, Asia, and Europe.

**Look and taste:** The Lion's Mane mushroom is known for its appearance.

It has long, shaggy spines that cascade down from a central point, like hair, but thicker. It is typically white or cream coloured and has a round shape. This mushroom has a delicate texture and a unique seafood like flavour.

**Mushroomy tidbit:** This mushroom is packed with several nutrients like protein, vitamins B, C, and D. It is also used as a seafood substitute, particularly for vegetarians and vegans. It is known by several other names, including Bearded Tooth, Hedgehog, and Pom Pom mushroom.



## Chaga mushroom

**Scientific name:** Inonotus obliquus

**Found in:** It is commonly found in Northern Europe, Siberia, Russia, Korea, Northern Canada, and Alaska.

**Look and taste:** This mushroom is popular in the Western world due to its potential health benefits. It has a brown black, charred appearance, similar to burnt charcoal, and an earthy flavour with a slight bitterness.

**Mushroomy tidbit:** The Chaga mushroom has been used for centuries in Siberia and other parts of Asia as a traditional medicine to boost immunity and improve overall health. It was traditionally grated into a fine powder and brewed as tea, for a dose of antioxidants.

