

# MUSHROOM STORAGE AND HANDLING TIPS

Morels are highly perishable and must be handled with care. However, you need never lose a fresh Morel to spoilage. They may be readily dried, dehydrated, or frozen. The key to keeping mushrooms fresh as long as possible is to keep them cool and dry, with a little ventilation. Refrigerate in a loosely closed paper bag is one method. **Do not** refrigerate in a sealed plastic bag! This keeps in moisture and leads to rot.

To clean fresh Morels it is best to brush them with a soft brush and pick off any dirt unless they are very dirty. Cut mushrooms in half lengthwise and soak them in a bowl of water to remove the tiny insects and debris on the inside of your Morels. Remind yourself that these guys know what's good and consider them extra protein. Unless there are a lot, don't think about it, just cook and enjoy.

## METHODS OF PRESERVING MOREL MUSHROOMS

1. **FREEZE:** To clean, soak in water to remove debris. Drain mushrooms and dust with flour, place on a cookie sheet and freeze solid. Remove mushrooms from freezer, place them in a freezer bag, and store in freezer. Flour keeps the mushrooms from sticking inside the freezer bag.
2. **FREEZE:** Cut the mushrooms in half lengthwise, soak in water to clean them, and pat dry with paper towels. Dip them into beaten eggs, roll in flour and let them fry in oil for 2 minutes on each side. Remove and let cool. Place in a freezer bag and store in freezer.
3. **DEHYDRATE:** You can also dehydrate your mushrooms. Follow dehydrator instructions. Dehydrated mushrooms can be stored in jars or zip lock bags in a cool dark cabinet or refrigerator. When you are ready to prepare for eating, re-hydrate them in half & half or milk until they are tender and cook as above.
4. **DEHYDRATE:** Here's an old way of preserving your mushrooms. Take a large sewing needle, enough to handle some heavy thread. Thread each morel through the base of the stem and hang them upside down in a garage, attic, etc. Then tie the two ends of the thread as far apart as necessary to insure that the morels don't touch each other. The tighter you stretch the thread, the easier it will be to keep them from touching together. Now, just let them hang there and dry out. Once they are thoroughly dried (some people let theirs hang for months at a time), place them in a zip lock bag and store in the refrigerator. When ready to eat them, in a large bowl of water soak mushrooms overnight (because the mushrooms will swell back to their original size), drain and pat dry in paper towels, and cook as you would fresh morels. Remember to save the soak water for planting in your flower beds.