



Maitake (Hen of the Woods):



Maitake mushrooms are now cultivated and available year-round and are certified organic; they are grown on sterilized sawdust in small jars, and are packaged in small “Balloon” packs of 4 ounces each. The packaging keeps the delicate mushrooms from being damaged during handling and also facilitates a long shelf life for this mushroom. Maitake mushrooms form a brown to gray cluster of “petals” or fronds on a fused, central stalk. Growing in the wild they are found at the base of oak trees, where they resemble a hen with its feathers ruffled up; thus the common name “Hen of the Woods”.

Do not wash this mushroom unless you are using the wild-harvested product in season. Just slice, then sauté in butter or oil. Maitake is wonderful in egg dishes, tempura, pasta sauces, soups, stews, and any other recipe calling for mushrooms. It adds a rich flavor to any dish, and is most similar in flavor to Shiitake mushrooms. Like Shiitake, the Maitake mushroom is the subject of many studies to determine medicinal qualities; there is evidence that Maitake is helpful in the treatment and prevention of certain kinds of cancers, high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol.