

The Cedar Culinary

News that's good enough to eat!

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A Dozen Egg Safety Tips For Your Easter Holiday

If you're planning to decorate Easter eggs this year, or if you're preparing hard-cooked eggs for your Passover, here are safety tips to help you and your family stay healthy.

- Use one set of eggs for decorating and hunting, and another for eating. Or to be *really* safe, use plastic eggs for your Easter egg hunt instead of real ones.
- Keep everything clean. Wash utensils, countertops and other surfaces that eggs come in contact with. That includes washing your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water before and after handling raw eggs or cooked eggs that will be eaten.
- Coloring Easter eggs can be fun, but if you're planning to eat the eggs you dye, make sure that you only use food-grade dyes.
- Keep hard-cooked eggs intended for eating in the refrigerator until the last possible minute.
- Check the temperature of your refrigerator with an appliance thermometer to make sure that it is at 40°F or colder.
- Under no circumstances let anyone eat eggs that have been unrefrigerated (whether at room temperature or outside) for more than two hours. That includes hard-cooked eggs used as part of the Passover display.



- If you hollow out eggshells by blowing the raw egg through holes in the shell, you could expose yourself to salmonella from raw egg touching your mouth. To be safe, wash the egg in hot water and rinse it in a solution of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach per half cup of water.
- If you plan to use the raw eggs you have blown out of their shells, cook and eat them right away — don't try to store them.
- When preparing hard-cooked eggs for an egg hunt, be on the lookout for cracks in the shells. Even tiny cracks

can allow bacteria to contaminate the egg. Eggs that have any cracks whatsoever should be discarded.

- If you're hiding eggs outside, choose the cleanest hiding places you can, and avoid areas that pets or other animals might visit.
- Keep track of time to ensure that the hiding and hunting time don't exceed a cumulative 2 hours. And remember, the eggs that are found must be refrigerated right away — or discarded if the 2 hour limit is exceeded.
- Nothing lasts forever! Even hard-cooked eggs that have been refrigerated properly must be eaten within 7 days of cooking.

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The articles on the following pages were provided by foodsafety.gov. For more information about these stories and more please visit their websites.



The Hunt Is On!

The Morel season for most of the United States typically runs from early-to-mid April on through mid-June. Depending on your geographical location, your season could be plus or minus a week.

Where should I start looking? Many seasoned hunters have their favorite areas. Dead or dying elms, old apple orchards, old ash, poplar trees and yes, even pines. It truly can be a hit and miss adventure at times. Not every elm you cross will have morels around it so don't get discouraged. Depending on your region, you may have to look harder than others.



What effect does the weather have on the morel's growth habits? Most hunters will agree that the weather more than any other variable has the most impact on the morel season. This includes air and ground temperatures along with moisture levels in the ground. Typical spring weather, with daytime temperatures moderating between 60-70 degree range and nighttime lows of not less than the mid-40's, are usually ideal. Too much soil moisture is not a good thing nor is too dry of soil.

What type of equipment do I need to get started? There is debate among "shroomers" on what type of bag or sack one should carry. It seems the most highly recommended is an onion bag of some kind or a mesh bag. For several reasons, one being it allows your morels to breath thus keeping them fresh and lets some of the little critters fall out. Some believe this also allows the spores to disperse out of the sack and replenish the woods. Pillowcases are good too, yet you'll bring those critters home with you then. Plastic bags are not highly recommended.

What is the life cycle or how do I know when to pick them?

Usually you can tell when they start to look unhealthy or they are announcing "pick me" by examining the cap (or head) of the morel as well as the base of the stem. You will typically find the morel begin to darken along the stems, as well as the cap as it ages. The amount of discoloration is a good indication as to if the morel is on the down side or not.

How should I harvest them? Many believe you should pinch the morel right at ground level. Of course one could use a knife, but a simple pinch and twist will usually do. There are several reasons for this. One, it helps keep dirt that is on the root from making a mess of the rest of the morels in your bag. The other reason which again is another theory, but it is believed that by leaving the root you are assuring that the patch will reproduce next season.

What is the most common way of cleaning and preparing prior to cooking? Once you've got your catch back home, its bath time. Take them to the sink and rinse them with cold water to remove any loose dirt and foreign particles. Foreign particles also include bugs, so do not be alarmed or disgusted. This is more easily done by slicing the morel lengthwise into halves.

This next step is optional and may not need to be done. Once you've rinsed them thoroughly, fill the sink with cold water and add some salt to the water. Drop your morels into the sink and soak your morels. Note though, this is only needed to help bring the critters out of the morels.



For more information on Morel mushrooms visit www.thegreatmorel.com.

Diabetic Recipe:

Pork Chops w/ Wild Mushrooms

Serving Size: 4

Ingredients:

1/8 ounce dried wild mushrooms, such as morels, mixed Italian, etc.

1/2 cup boiling water

Olive oil cooking spray

4 center-cut boneless loin pork chops, 4 ounces each, all fat removed

Freshly ground pepper

3 ounces fresh oyster or shiitake mushrooms

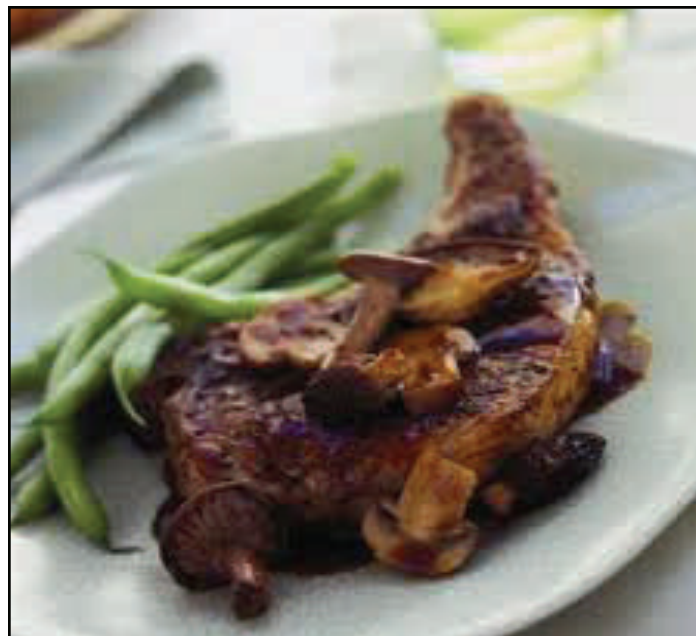
1/2 cup canned fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth

1/4 cup dry white wine

2 springs fresh thyme

Directions:

1. In an bowl, place the dried mushrooms and cover with boiling water. Follow package directions to dehydrate. Drain the mushrooms. Reserve 1/4 cup of the mushroom soaking liquid.
2. Lightly coat a nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Add the chops and cook uncovered for about 5 minutes over medium heat. Turn the chops, season with pepper, reduce heat, and cook for another 8 to 9 minutes. Transfer the chops to a plate, cover and keep warm.
3. Recoat the same skillet with cooking spray and add both the dried and fresh mushrooms. Sauté for 4 to 5 minutes. Raise the heat and add the chicken broth, wine, reserved mushroom soaking liquid and thyme. Reduce the liquid by half.
4. To serve, place the pork on separate plates. Divide the mushrooms between the portions and spoon the sauce on top.



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Kids Corner: Egg Decorating



Crayon Eggs



What you'll need:

- Crayons
- Boiled eggs
- Neon food coloring and white vinegar (optional)

How to make it:

1. Be sure that boiled eggs are cool and dry.
2. Place a double folded kitchen towel and place it on the table underneath child's hands so if the egg slips out it will have a soft cushion to land on.
3. Use crayons to draw designs on the egg.
4. Have kids hold the egg gently so they do not crack the shell.
5. This step is optional but adds a fun effect. If you like, mix 1 Tbsp. of white vinegar into a coffee mug of water (filled 3/4 full) then add several drops of food coloring.
6. Dip the crayon colored egg into the dye and let sit for about a minute.
7. Remove and let dry. The dye makes the crayon look brighter, especially if you use neon food coloring.

TIPS

- To boil perfect eggs, place into a shallow pan, cover with water and boil gently for three minutes. Turn off heat and cover pan with a tight fitting lid and let sit for 15 minutes. Place pan in sink, carefully drain out hot water and let cold water run over them for sev-

eral minutes. Turn off water and add several ice cubes and let sit for about 5 minutes more.

- Try different types of food coloring, we used neon colors! The longer you leave the egg in the dye, the deeper the color will be.



What you'll need:

- Easter egg dye or food coloring and white vinegar
- Boiled eggs
- Paper towel
- Cooling rack
- Newspaper
- Tiny stickers in different shapes

How to make it:

- Cover work area with newspapers.
- Place cooling rack on newspapers.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for preparing the Easter egg dye OR place 1 Tbsp of white vinegar into a wide mouth cup (coffee mugs work great) and fill 3/4 full with water, then add several drops

- of food coloring.
- Use a separate cup for each color of dye.
- Dry off egg completely with paper towel.
- Stick on reinforcements and any tiny stickers desired on egg. Make sure that all edges are firmly applied to egg.
- Dye egg according to manufacturer's instructions on Easter egg dye.
- Let egg dry on cooling rack
- After egg is completely dry, peel off stickers. You will see white where the sticker had been.
- If desired, dye egg again using a lighter shade (such as yellow) to fill in the white spaces.
- Let dry completely.

Decal Eggs

