

## Fungi as a Food

Fungi are non green thallophytes which are basically saprophytic or parasitic in nature. However several fungi are used as food items. Since early times, the edible fungi are commonly grown in hills, mountains, decaying vegetable & animal remains & in lawn etc.

Some of the edible Mushrooms are as follows:—

(i) Agaricus Comgestris:— (Field Mushroom) — It is found in India & grown in lawn & hills etc. It is also cultivated for chemical purposes. The fruiting body of the fungus is — leathery & fleshy, which is used as food. It is a delicious food item. The fruiting body is rich in vitamins like vit C, K & D & also contains amylase, Maltase, glycogenase, protease, Tase, polyphosphate etc. Its juice contains proteolytic enzymes — which is used for — tenderising meat. It is also a source of protein. The fungus is a member of basidiomycetes & the fruit body is umbrella like in shape.

(ii) Morchella esculenta:— (Common name Guchi) — It is an ascomycete fungus grown in Kashmir and Punjab plains, It develops on decaying vegetable matter

The fruit body is stalked & fleshy, which is used as delicious food items. It is very costlier & sold 90 Rs/kg.

(10) Lycoperdon (Puff Ball, Bhoen Bhan) It is a member of basidiomycetes, which is large creamy white, flattened pumpkin like fungus which is grown in Northern India. It is eaten in young condition.

(11) Cantharellus species - This fungus is used in fresh & dry condition. The cartilaginous tissue of this fungus is very tasty. It is rich in several vitamins such as Thiamine, Riboflavin, Ascorbic acid & Vit D. It also contains Iodine which is useful in Goiter disease.

(12) *Tuber* spp - It is also a member of ascomycetes & reported from Kashmir and Kangra where it is eaten up Curry.

(13) *Toxulopsis utilis* :- It is used for the large scale production of yeast for food purposes. Yeast is used in bread making industries.

Other edible Mushrooms -

found in India are -

(a) *Hymenomycetes* - *Armillaria* spp. -  
*Entoloma*, *Foames*, *Polystichus*,  
*Coprinus* etc.

(b) *Deuteromycetes* - *Bovista*, *Gracilaria* spp.  
& *Malanogaster* spp.