

**Chanterelle**

One of the finest fungi on the market, the chanterelle is prized for its golden colour, meaty consistency, delicate frills and peppery flavour. The black chanterelle, or black trumpet, is highly fragrant.

**Truffle**

The king of fungi, this hugely expensive delicacy is usually found in wooded areas. Its distinctive, pungent flavour and high price mean it is used in small quantities or even as an oil.

**White button**

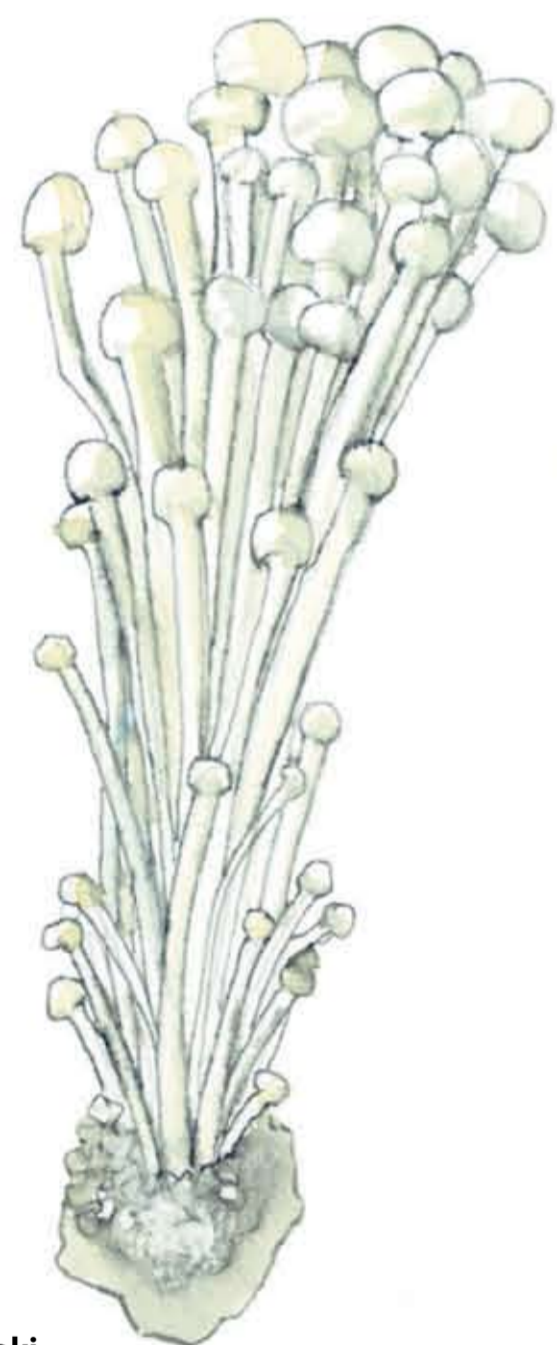
It may not be glamorous, but the common, or garden, white button mushroom has a multitude of uses, its own mildness making it an excellent filler and absorber of flavour.

**Cep**

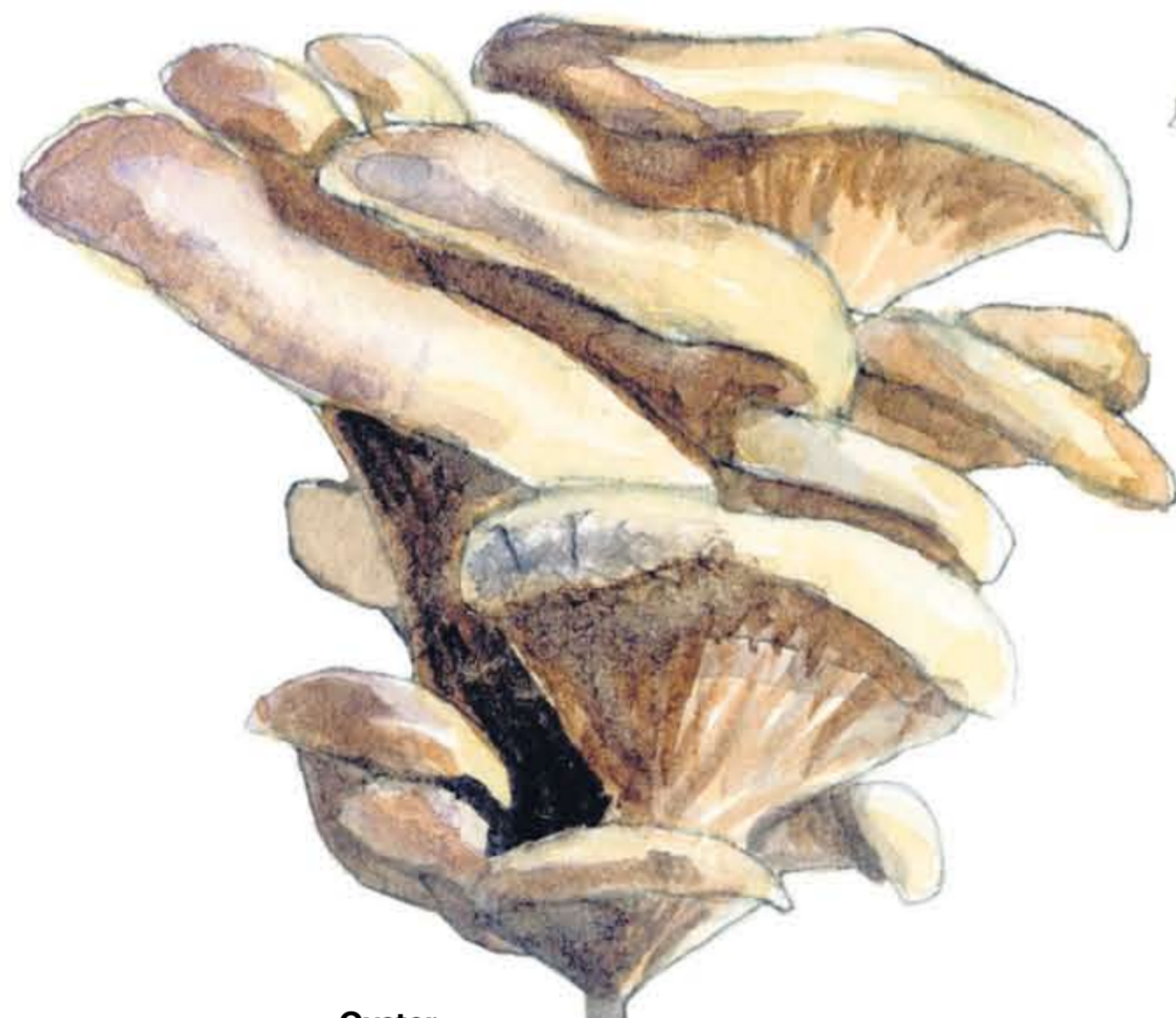
An unimpressive, brown-capped exterior belies the powerful flavour carried by the porcini, or cep. Meaty, nutty and creamy, it is a wonderful addition to Mediterranean food and packs even more punch when dried.

**Shiitake**

Native to China, the shiitake is a vital part of east Asian cuisine. Dried or fresh, fried, simmered or steamed, the umami flavour and delicate texture appeal as much as its many medical uses.

**Enoki**

There are few sights as enticing as a fragile cluster of tiny enoki mushrooms, the thin stems and small, glossy caps making a crunchy addition to salads and soups. Cultivated enoki are white and wild ones brown.

**Oyster**

Another mushroom most popular in Asian cuisine, this mild-flavoured fungus has a faint hint of anise when young. It makes an excellent stir fry ingredient and is believed to reduce cholesterol.

**Portobello**

Simply a mature chestnut mushroom, the Portobello can grow up to 12cm in diameter and is often served whole, stuffed or even in a bun as a non-meat alternative to a burger.

**Chestnut**

With its slightly firmer texture, slightly stronger flavour, richer colour and flaky cap, the cultivated chestnut – also known as brown cap or cremini – could be seen as the upmarket button mushroom.

**Morel**

This peculiar-looking mushroom enjoys a cult following for its nutty flavour as well as for its elusiveness: the morel season sees "hunters" traipsing through woods in search of the aromatic fungus.



# Mushroom madness

As Gourmet Abu Dhabi rolls on, our food horizons grow ever wider. The three-Michelin-starred chef Régis Marcon, for example, who will be hosting culinary events from Thursday to Saturday, is a great advocate of the humble mushroom, exploring new flavours in the edible fungi. Apart from the hugely rare desert truffle, there are few indigenous edible mushrooms in the UAE, but there is plenty of variety in the supermarkets and delis here. We take a look at some of the most easily available. As with all fresh mushrooms, keep them loose in a paper bag, not plastic, and wipe clean with a damp cloth rather than washing in water. If you are lucky enough to go picking wild mushrooms, make sure you take a reliable visual guide to the edible ones, as many are highly poisonous. Illustrations by Alexandra Field for The National