

Shiitake

Lentinula edodes · The Umami Standard · Locally Farmed in Indiana · NourishCap

Deep umami · Meaty cap · Holds under heat · Elevated fresh or dried · Available fresh & dried



Seared duck breast with shiitake & red wine reduction



Shiitake ramen with slow-poached egg & scallion oil



Shiitake risotto with parmesan & fresh thyme

FLAVOR & AROMA

Rich, savory umami with a faint smokiness and a garlic-pine note when cooked. One of the most flavor-forward cultivated mushrooms available. Drying intensifies guanylate — a natural umami amplifier — making dried shiitake measurably more umami-dense than fresh without adding mushroom flavor to the dish.

TEXTURE

Firm, meaty caps with a satisfying chew that holds under heat. Browns well without losing volume the way oyster mushrooms do. Stems are woody — not for serving but excellent for stocks. Slice thick for sauté and grill; thin for stir-fry.

BEST APPLICATIONS

Sautéed caps in butter or oil — brown deeply, hold shape
Grilled whole caps — char marks, meaty bite, strong plate presence
Ramen, miso soup & dashi — dried delivers depth without muddying
Braises & ragùs — adds body; rehydrated dried works especially well

PREP NOTES

Remove stems before plating — save every one for stock.

PAIRS WELL WITH

Butter · Sesame oil · Rendered pork fat
Garlic · Ginger · Scallion · Thyme · Marjoram
Soy · Miso · Sake · Dashi · Red wine
Pork · Chicken · Duck · Lamb · Tofu
Pasta · Rice · Barley · Polenta
Shrimp · Spinach · Eggplant · Ramps

QUICK REFERENCE

Flavor: Rich umami, earthy, faint smoke
Texture: Meaty, firm — browns and holds
Yield (fresh): ~50–60% after cooking
Fresh shelf life: up to 2 weeks, paper bag
Dried shelf life: 12+ months sealed
Ordering: 3 months ahead, subscription

ON THE MENU

"Shiitake" is familiar and sells.
"Seared shiitake," "shiitake dashi," "local shiitake" all work.
Cap shape is clean — plate whole or halved when possible.
Dried powder works as an umami finishing seasoning.



Indiana-grown, direct farm sourcing. No middleman markup.
Shiitake, oyster, pioppini & lion's mane. Order 3 months ahead on subscription.

The most recognized specialty mushroom — and still underused in Western kitchens. Fresh and dried behave differently enough to treat as two separate ingredients.

Buying & Quality

Caps firm, dry, and fully closed or slightly open — not flat and wide. Dark brown with a clean, earthy aroma. Avoid sliminess, soft spots, or any ammonia smell. Stems always woody; that's normal. Gills white or cream, not dark or wet.

Line Behavior

Fresh caps sauté in 4–6 minutes and hold well. Don't crowd the pan — moisture steams them flat. Stems too fibrous to plate but instantly flavor stock. Holds and reheats without degrading.

Portioning Guide

Fresh caps yield 50–60% cooked weight — better than oyster, comparable to pioppini. A 120g raw portion plates as roughly 65–70g finished. Dried: 10g rehydrates to roughly 70–80g and delivers intense flavor. Stems weigh 20–30% of the whole — factor into cost.

Ordering & Minimums

Available year-round on subscription from NourishCap, Indiana. Order 3 months ahead to secure consistent volume. Dried available for standing order — long shelf life keeps restocking simple. Contact Ben Ashpole: bashpole@NourishCap.com · 215-760-1613.

Waste & Recovery

Stems are the main trim — save every one for stock. Simmer 30–45 min with aromatics for a clean mushroom dashi. Over-age fresh caps slice and sauté well in compound butter or eggs. Dried and powdered trim becomes a zero-waste umami seasoning.

Health Notes

Contains lentinan, a beta-glucan studied for immune modulation — survives cooking and acts as a prebiotic fiber. Eritadenine supports healthy cholesterol levels. Also provides ergothioneine, B vitamins, selenium, and potassium. Among the most nutritionally dense cultivated mushrooms available.

Flavor Development

Cast iron or carbon steel at high dry heat develops deep Maillard browning and concentrates umami significantly. Low heat or liquid: flavor softens and integrates — ideal for braises and soups. Drying increases guanylate, making dried shiitake measurably more umami-dense than fresh.

On the Menu

"Shiitake" is familiar and sells. "Seared shiitake," "shiitake dashi," "local shiitake" all work. Cap shape is clean — plate whole or halved when possible. Dried powder doubles as an umami finishing seasoning.

Dietary & Concept

Vegan, gluten-free, allergen-free. The most versatile umami base for plant-forward menus. Works equally on Japanese, Korean, Italian, French, and American concepts. Local Indiana sourcing adds a provenance story.