



Morel Mushroom Harvesting in Yukon



In Yukon, forest fires are inevitable occurrences. For reasons not entirely understood, morel mushrooms tend to “fruit” in abundance during the spring in areas of coniferous forests that were burned the previous summer. This non-timber forest resource is prized as an ingredient for gourmet cooking, offering Yukoners a chance to indulge in this delicacy or to sell morels commercially should a buyer be available. Currently, a permit is not required to pick mushrooms on public land in Yukon.

Please show respect for the environment and lands that have traditional or historic values. Harvesting areas and campsites must be left clean, safe and sanitary.

Field Identification

There are a number of different species and varieties of edible wild morels. Some species you will see in wild mushroom guides include *Morchella esculenta*, and *M. deliciosa* and *M. crassipes*, commonly known as the Yellow Morel, and *M. conica*, *M. elata* and *M. angusticeps*, commonly known as the Black Morel. Harvesters must be diligent about observing each mushroom picked. Consulting a number of up to date mushroom guides is advised.





Warning!

Some wild mushrooms are very poisonous, including species that look similar to edible morels. In fact, even experienced pickers have been known to harvest "false morels" by mistake. Furthermore, there are important guidelines for the proper handling, preparation and consumption of edible morels. For example, morels should be cooked for at least five minutes and should never be eaten raw within 72 hours of drinking alcohol. If you are suspicious about the identity of harvested species, they should be separated into a different container from your morels and examined in more detail by a mycologist or at a buying station. Beginners should always pick with an experienced person.

Experimental consumption of unknown species is not recommended and could be lethal.

Habitat: Where To Find Morels

Morels may be found in abundance during spring/early summer in forest areas that were burned the preceding summer. In Yukon, prolific fruiting of the mushroom bodies happens during a two to three week period, usually during June following the retreat of winter snow and a period of warm weather. Yukon morels are also found on older burn areas as well, with some observations suggesting a period of up to four years of successive but diminishing fruiting. Morels prefer the southern aspects of well-drained slopes and will occur in concentration around the base of coniferous trees. Patches of morels may occur where small depressions have retained soil moisture.

Identifying Areas For Picking

Fire history maps are available through www.forestry.gov.yk.ca or by contacting the Forest Management Branch or Client Services & Inspections District Offices listed on the back of this brochure.

Public Land

In Yukon, you can currently pick mushrooms without a permit on public lands where public access is allowed. However, you should be aware that some public lands have traditional or historic values or may be actively used by local residents for specific purposes.

Private Property and First Nations Land

Mushroom pickers are not permitted to harvest mushrooms on private (Fee Simple or Leased) property without the owner's permission. Where potential harvesting sites exist on First Nations settlement lands, pickers are advised to contact that First Nation's office prior to any harvesting activities. Yukon government staff can help determine which First Nation(s) you should contact.

Remote Areas

Only experienced backcountry travelers should attempt picking in remote areas. Following proper safety precautions and practicing strict no trace camping (pack out what you pack in) is particularly important in remote areas which are often accessed only by boat, plane or helicopter. Prepare for encounters with wildlife by learning what to do before your wilderness trip.

Parking

To prevent accidents and unnecessary congestion please remember to consult local authorities regarding parking and other activities on highways and other right of ways.



Sustainable Harvesting Methods

By practicing proper harvesting techniques, pickers will get the best possible recovery of mushrooms year after year. Never disturb the forest floor in the vicinity of morels. This could harm the mycelium which produces the mushroom. Sensible care taken on mushroom sites this season is the best way to ensure abundant crops of Yukon morels in the future.

Pickers should never “clear cut” a patch of morels. Close observation will show that some of the specimens may be either too mature or too small. Always harvest healthy specimens. Never pull the mushroom out of the ground by hand. Always cut off the morel cap at the top of the stem with a sharp knife.

If harvesting commercially, buyers can provide size specifications. They may also request that you cut all stems off prior to buying them. If pickers harvest and carry specimens that are not acceptable to the buying station, they will have wasted energy and will not be reimbursed.

Forest Protection And Camping

Preventing damage to the fragile forest environment and personal safety are your responsibility. You are not permitted to cut live, healthy trees or erect any permanent structures. Land Use permits are required for camps of more than 2 people for more than 100 person days. All garbage is to be packed out and disposed of in an approved dumpsite.

Care should be taken to properly store food and garbage away

from the campsite.

Ensure that all human wastes are dealt with in a sanitary fashion.

Food, garbage and unsanitary practices can attract animals and result in unhealthy camp conditions.



Always be cautious of starting forest fires! Select your campfire sites carefully and put them out completely before leaving a site. When choosing an area to harvest, beware of fires that may have moved underground. Consult local authorities concerning up to date forest fire information and please report all wild fires!

Information on current fire bans, recent fire activity and road closures can be obtained through the Wildfire Update line at 1-800-826-4750.

**To Report Wildfires Call: 1-888-798-FIRE
(3473)**

Personal Safety In The Forest

When traveling in the forest, be prepared for changes in weather, rough terrain, dense brush and unexpected encounters with wildlife. Travelers should carry maps of the area and a compass and know how to use them for wilderness travel. Always know where you are on the map to ensure a safe return to your campsite or vehicle. You should also be aware of basic search and rescue procedures in the event you are lost or injured in the woods.



Additional Information

Additional information, including fire history maps can be found through www.forestry.gov.yk.ca or by contacting the Forest Management Branch or Client Services & Inspections District Offices listed below. Please call ahead so that we may serve you better by having the time to prepare materials.

Forest Management Branch

Whitehorse

Mile 918 Alaska Highway

PO Box 2703 (K-918), Y1A 2C6

Ph: (867) 456-3999

Fax: (867) 667-3138

Klondike District (Dawson & Old Crow)

Dawson City

1242 Front Street

PO Box 279, Y0B 1G0

Ph: (867) 993-5468

Fax: (867) 993-6233

Kluane District (Haines Junction & Beaver Creek)

Haines Junction

Km 246 Haines Road

PO Box 5370, Y0B 1L0

Ph: (867) 634-2256

Fax: (867) 634-2675

Northern Tutchone District (Mayo & Carmacks)

Mayo

22A Silver Trail Highway

PO Box 100, Y0B 1M0

Ph: (867) 996-2343

Fax: (867) 996-2856

Carmacks Sub District Office

Corner of River Drive and Nansen Road

PO Box 132, Y0B 1C0

Ph: (867) 863-5271

Fax: (867) 863-6604



Southern Lakes (Whitehorse & Teslin)

Whitehorse

Mile 918 Alaska Highway

PO Box 2703, Y1A 2C6

Ph: (867) 456-3877 Fax: (867) 393-7404

Teslin Sub District Office

Km 1246 Alaska Highway

PO Box 97, Y0B 1B0

Ph: (867) 390-2531 Fax: (867) 390-2682

Tintina District (Watson Lake & Ross River)

Watson Lake

Km 1007 Alaska Highway

PO Box 289, Y0A 1C0

Ph: (867) 536-7335 Fax: (867) 536-7331

Ross River Sub District Office

Across from the Ross River General Store

PO Box 107, Y0B 1S0

Ph: (867) 969-2243 Fax: (867) 969-2610

www.forestry.gov.yk.ca

Yukon

Energy, Mines and Resources
Forest Management Branch

