

Frequently Asked Questions

Personal Use Mushroom Program Management

Public Lands Center Salmon-Challis National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management

Who needs a permit to harvest mushrooms?

A Mushroom Permit is required if you are 12 years or older on an annual basis to harvest mushrooms from Public lands. There are two separate permits for mushroom harvesting: Personal Use and Commercial Use. Personal use permits are free.

Personal Use – Non commercial (Not for resale): Personal use permits allow an individual to pick up to 5 gallons of mushrooms per day. All personal use harvesters will be required to get a *Forest Product Free Use Permit* before removing mushrooms from the National Forest. This permit is free of charge and valid for the entire season. Permittees can pick in the areas designated for personal use harvest. **Mushrooms picked under this permit must be cut in half lengthwise at the time of picking, and are not to be resold commercially.** Resale of the mushrooms is prohibited.

Where can I pick mushrooms?

Areas where mushroom harvest may be prohibited could include active timber sales, areas of historical or prehistoric interest, areas closed to protect wildlife, areas where human safety is a concern, areas where soil erosion is a concern, and areas where spring weed spraying is likely to occur.

Most weed spraying is planned along roads. Watch for signs - the areas will be posted. Check at a Forest Office for updated information. **Contact the nearest [Forest office](#)**

Do children need permits?

Children 12 years of age or older need permits if they plan to harvest mushrooms.

If the harvester is under age 18, a parent or guardian's name will be included on the minor's permit. The permit must be kept with the parent or legal guardian when collecting and transporting mushrooms. Minors must be accompanied by an adult guardian when collecting and transporting mushrooms.

What happens if I don't follow the terms of my permit?

If a permittee does not follow the requirements of the permit, the Public Land Center Salmon-Challis National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management reserves the right to revoke the permit. In addition, citations may be issued which could require appearance in court and/or a fine if found guilty.

What if I just want a few mushrooms for my own use?

There is no charge for free use mushroom picking but a permit is required. Free use mushrooms harvested from Public lands are not to be sold or exchanged.

Are all roads open to drive on?

No. Some roads are gated or blocked with rock and/or earthen barriers and signed with permanent, temporary, or seasonal restrictions.

Forest travel maps are available at all Public Land Center offices. Be sure to pick one up before heading out to harvest mushrooms. Compliance with road closures is mandatory.

Forest roads generally are NOT suitable for bus travel. Most roads have few turnouts and the hillsides are very steep in some sections. Passenger vehicles and pickups may safely negotiate some roads if they are familiar with mountain driving conditions and are prepared to back down the road if they meet oncoming traffic.

Do not park in front of closed gates. Road access may be needed for emergency or work travel.

Harvesters are asked not to drive on water saturated, muddy roads in the spring or early summer. Vehicle weight and maneuvering cause road damage which makes road maintenance difficult and costly. Check the local ranger district office for updated road conditions.

What should I bring?

General Items

Personal Use Mushroom permit
Drinking water
Picking bags/buckets
Mushroom identification book
Knife
Map
Compass
Watch
Whistle
Flashlight and batteries
Axe, shovel, bucket
Garbage bags

Personal Items

Camping gear
Grooming necessities
Food
Extra clothing
Toilet paper
Prescription medicine
Sunglasses
Insect Repellent

I've never harvested mushrooms before. How is it done?

Due to the complex life cycle of mushrooms, there are a few things you can do to protect the species in your favorite areas:

- Leave some of the mushrooms you find. Do not collect mushrooms from previously harvested areas: leave the rest for wildlife food and to reproduce other mushrooms.
- Minimize impacts to the fungus by not disturbing the ground habitat. Do not dig, rake, or scrape the forest floor.
- Use a knife to cut the mushrooms or break stem off at ground level.
- Don't harvest more mushrooms than you need.

In forested areas, beware of falling snags and stump holes, especially in burned areas.

What mushrooms should I harvest?

Proper identification and determination of whether a mushroom is edible is the responsibility of the harvester. Many forest mushroom varieties are poisonous. There are many guidebooks available to assist with identification. When in doubt ... leave it in the forest.

What do I do if I get lost?

Before you leave, tell someone where you are going. Carry a map and compass and know how to use them.

Check the surrounding country and attempt to orient yourself. Do not walk aimlessly. If you can reach a road or trail, follow it until you can determine if you are moving in the right direction. As a last resort, travel downhill parallel to a stream or drainage.

If you are unsuccessful in finding your way, keep calm and don't panic. Stay in one place. Select a sheltered spot and prepare a camp. Conserve your strength, and build a fire so that smoke may be seen by searchers. Use your whistle to alert others of your location.

Don't depend on your cell phone. There are many areas of Public Lands where they don't work.

Can I drink out of the creeks?

Do not drink untreated water from a surface water supply such as a pond, lake, or stream. The water may appear to be clean, but it may contain Giardia parasites.

The parasites cause a gastrointestinal infection. Symptoms usually appear 7 to 10 days (and sometimes as long as 4 weeks) after ingesting the parasite. The most common symptoms are diarrhea, foul greasy stools, abdominal cramps, bloating, increased gas, weakness, and weight loss.

There are several medications that are effective in treating the infection. They are only available by prescription from your physician.

Bring water from a safe source or use bottled water to prevent becoming infected.

If you must use creek water, use a water filter that removes particles one micrometer or less in diameter (certified by NSF International per NSF Standard 53 or labeled as an absolute one-micrometer filter), or boil water vigorously for 3 to 5 minutes.

What about ticks?

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Colorado Tick Fever are transmitted by ticks in the mountainous regions of the northwest. The tick season generally lasts from late March to early July, although it varies at different elevations. Wear layers of clothing to prevent ticks from reaching your body, and keep clothing snug around your ankles, wrists, and waist. Examine yourself at least twice daily to check for ticks. If a tick is embedded in your skin, remove it immediately without crushing it. Pull it gently with the fingers, forceps, or tweezers, being careful not to leave the head in your skin, and apply an antiseptic. If a flu-like, moderately severe illness occurs several days or weeks after finding a tick on your body, consult a doctor immediately.

Can I fish?

To fish in Idaho requires a Fishing License. Vendors in nearly every town sell licenses. Refer to the Idaho Fishing Regulations for details regarding species, limits and methods of take.