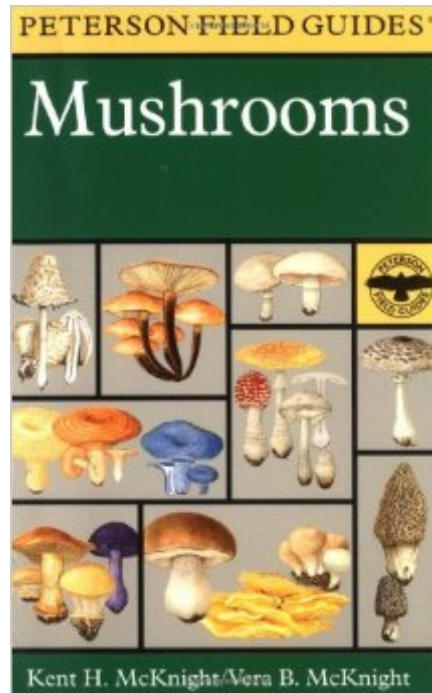


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# A Field Guide To Mushrooms: North America (Peterson Field Guides)



## Synopsis

More than 1,000 species of mushrooms described in detail. Over 700 paintings and drawings reveal subtle field marks that cannot be captured into photographs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This field guide is nearly twenty years old, but there are so few field guides to fungi that it still remains a standard reference. Like all Peterson field guides, it is handy and compact and can easily be taken into the field and pored over with the mushrooms in their wild habitat. The text is detailed and accurate and a "similar species" section is very useful. However, this guide uses painted plates whereas amateurs generally find it easier to identify fungi by photographs. I personally find photographs more accurate, but enjoy paintings in their own right. In this case the paintings are pleasing and quite faithful. Although this guide should be on every mushroom enthusiast's shelves, a better beginners guide might be Roger Phillips' photographic book which has now appeared in a revised edition (on .com: ISBN 1554071151). Phillips provides 1000 photographs compared to this guide's 700 illustrations. However, Phillips is rather large to take into the field except in a backpack. Bear in mind that no fungus guide is comprehensive - each treats a selection of species - so it is wise to have a good selection in order to be in with a chance of correct identification. So, until a compact photographic guide to fungi appears, this tried and tested Peterson guide will continue to fill a niche in the mushroom hunter's library.

We own several different guides. Each has it's own strength. I recommend this as the first guide for

those beginning to identify MR/Fungi. It covers most of the basic MR/Fungi family, but is not encyclopedic as Arora's 'Mushrooms Demystified' attempts to be, nor does it have the number of color photographs that either the Falcon Guide 'North American Mushrooms' or Audubon's Field Guide. But it's one of the easiest to use beginning with 48 (mostly color) plates, then branching off into related species.

I found this book to be well illustrated. And although not as comprehensive as I'd hoped, it is still the most complete guide I have found. Overall, I feel it is well above average--and I'm quite hard to please!

This Field Guide to Mushrooms is somewhat easy to understand, but requires the user to have basic knowledge of some characteristics of mushrooms. There could be mistakes in ID made. As with any mushroom guide, the user must pay strict attention, and be very careful. The print is very easy to read, and the pictures are extensive. I feel this would be a good book for the hunter who has some basic experience in the field.

I'm not 100% sure what I think of this guide. I like that it's a bit old-school in its layout, and I like that it covers some species of fungus that other guides don't, which for me is the reason I've bought so many of these types of books. I guess two things rub me the wrong way a little: the color plates are inserted together in the center of the book, which is fairly typical for this sort of book (black-and-white, paperback-style for the text and copy, while the plates are more expensive glossy color), but I find that cramming so many illustrations on each color plate makes for a confusing search, and I also feel like at this point in time they really should use proper photographs in these guidebooks. Because when identifying mushrooms, as the old phrase goes, the devil is often in the details, and paintings are great for a lot of things but details ain't one of them. Honestly if you have even a modest amount of experience foraging for mushrooms the chances of you mistakely eating something dangerous is slim anyway, but having an artist's version of a particular mushroom as opposed to a photograph of the real thing isn't helping much. In other words, I wouldn't want a beginner to use this. The other thing that confuses me is this: As an owner of a pretty good stack of mushroom guides (and an experienced forager), I can tell you that there are always discrepancies between the guides over the degree of edibility of some species of mushrooms. Usually though the discrepancy is small, maybe one guide says something is edible, while another says edible but it gives a lot of people a headache or something similar. I found myself with this guide really taken

aback by what I thought was WAY too much caution with some species... let me be clear also that this is my opinion. And mixing that degree of caution with the ambiguity of a painted color plate just sort of confused me. Besides those two things though, there is plenty of useful information in here. Which, when you're hunting for mushrooms, you can never have enough of.

The pictures in this guide are not quite as nice as in the audubon version but is still easy to use and a nice handy size for carrying in a pocket

It's got a lot of info but not too many colored pictures, most are done in pencil sketches and so hard to know if you are getting the right one, might be better if the color photos were with the descriptions instead the pictures all in the middle of the book.

I know slim to nothing about local fungi, but this book is helping me out plenty. Using the sharp drawings, ruler on back fold, and articulate descriptions, I have been able to identify all the mushrooms that are growing around my forest in the North East US. If you're well versed in fungi, buy a thicker book. If you're novice, this book is an excellent starter. I'd prefer color pictures over drawings, but I have managed fairly well.

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