

Foraging

In the Bathurst Region & Surrounds



This autumn step beyond the city centre and into the tranquil forest areas of the Bathurst region. Foraging for mushrooms can be a rewarding and exciting experience.

Mushroom Season in the Bathurst Region

From late Summer to early Winter depending on the seasonal weather and conditions, the pine forests and plantations in the Central West are home to several wild gourmet mushrooms that anyone can go looking for.

The information in the guide is not a complete guide to mushroom foraging and should not be your only reference point when picking mushrooms. It is up to you to make sure you are picking safe mushrooms. **Many wild mushrooms are poisonous and can lead to liver failure, kidney failure, or even death.** The Bathurst Visitor Information Centre strongly advises taking a guided tour with **Simmo's Offroad Tours**. The author of this guide, Bathurst Visitor Information Centre, and Bathurst Regional Council take no responsibility for any misidentification or improper food handling which results in adverse effects to the reader. **It is up to you to follow safe practises.**

Simmo's Offroad Tours Mushroom Foraging

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Simmo's Offroad Tours specialise in fun & exciting Eco-Certified 4WD Tours for small groups, showcasing the best of Bathurst the Central West and Blue Mountains. Simmo's tours are perfect for couples, families, or groups of friends.



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Safety First

While all care has been made to provide accurate information. This guide may not be enough for a novice or inexperienced forager to accurately identify edible mushrooms 100% of the time. It is up to you to make sure you are picking safe mushrooms. It can not be stressed enough, that if you are unsure about the mushroom it is better to not pick it. **A “maybe” or “could be” is not good enough.** Remember **“when in doubt go without.”**

When foraging there is also a risk of cross contamination if you touch a non edible mushroom with your hands or knife. You should not pick up non edible mushrooms for inspection or photography. To avoid touching non edible mushrooms, you should use a stick to move pine needles so that your hands are not touching the ground. You may wish to bring hand sanitiser as well.

It is also 100% necessary to clean and cook any wild mushrooms you harvest. Forest bacteria can have it's own adverse effects. Gently wiping off all debris with a wet cloth and thoroughly cooking can prevent food poisoning.

If you become unwell after eating wild mushrooms call the poison centre hotline **13 11 26**.

Other Safety Considerations

State forests are used for a multitude of purposes from conservation, to timber production. While in a state forest you may see signage on site relating to Forestry Corporation usage. Please obey all on site signage and do not obstruct roads, including fire management trails and unsealed paths. Some examples of signage you might see:



Where to Go:

The best spot to go looking for mushrooms in Bathurst is in Sunny Corner State Forest, just 20 minutes from Bathurst. When looking for a good spot to search for mushrooms, look for areas with older trees. Mushrooms need years of pine needle fall to develop the right environment to grow and by choosing areas with older trees you will have a better chance of finding some. Beware of road closures due to logging, baiting, or back burning and obey any signage from the State Forestry Corporation.

When you find a spot to look. Make sure you are parked off the road and take note of your surroundings. It can be easy to get disorientated. So it is best not to search too deep in the forest away from your car.

Some of the better state forests to visit near Bathurst are:

Sunny Corner State Forest - Bathurst

Vulcan State Forest - Oberon

What to Bring:

1. Something to collect your finds. A small basket or box is great.
2. Something to cut the stem of mushrooms. A pocket knife or multitool will work best.
3. Some good walking shoes, snacks and water. Be prepared to spend a couple hours out in the forest.

Foraging is not only about finding mushrooms, but enjoying your time out in nature and exploring the complex ecosystems around you. Take a camera and a picnic and make the most of a day out in the forests.



How to Find Mushrooms:

If you are lucky enough to go foraging at the right time with the right conditions. You will easily find mushrooms in abundance. However through most of the season you will need a keen eye be happy to search for a little while. The best times to go are in the days after heavy rain.

If no mushrooms are easily found on the surface, look for small mounds of pine needles. When you find a mound take a nearby stick and brush off the top of the mound, it might just be a mushroom trying to break through the pine needles. Don't move the needles with your hands or knife, instead use a stick. This can prevent you from touching inedible mushrooms and protects against contamination.



How to Harvest:

When you find a mushroom, go through the identification information on the next page and use it as a check list to make sure you have correctly identified the mushroom. If you are in doubt about any of the points it is better to not pick it, as the saying goes **“when in doubt, go without.”**

Next, check it for any signs of decay or mould, if it has any sign of significant decay it is better to leave it alone. Some light blue/green bruising is ok, but you may want to cut off the bruised sections.

When you are 100% certain that the mushroom is correctly identified and safe, cut the stem and place it in your basket. Cutting the stem is better for the mushroom as the mycelium below can recover faster and you will take less dirt and debris with you. Double check the bottom of the mushroom for decay, mould, or insects before placing it in your basket. Try not to pinch the stem when you pick it, instead gently lift the mushroom to avoid bruising.



Considerations

Only pick what you can eat or preserve in 24 hours. Wild mushrooms have a very short shelf life and will be heavily bruised within 24 hours. As such we advise only taking what you can eat in one day, this ensures you are only eating fresh mushrooms and that there is enough for nature as they also make up a significant portion of local wildlife diets.

If you need to preserve mushrooms, place them in an airtight container with some paper towel in the fridge to extend their shelf life. Alternatively if you have a dehydrator you can slice the mushrooms for dehydrating for long term storage. Saffron Milk Caps can make a great soup stock once dehydrated.

Safe Mushroom Identification

The two mushrooms below are the most common edible and most easily identifiable mushrooms you are likely to encounter. The Forestry Corporation of NSW advises that you only pick these two mushrooms, and leave any others you find alone.

Saffron Milk Cap (*Lactarius Deliciosus*)



Identification indicators:

Colour: Orange.

Cap: Button shape when young, trumpet shape when maturing.

Stalk: Hollow stalk, bleeds orange when cut. Light in colour with orange spots on the outside.

Gills: Thin orange membranes radiating from stem. Easily bruise.

Bruising: Bruises green-blue.

Preparation: Lightly wipe down with wet cloth to clean off any debris. There are some great recipes online for Saffron Milk Caps.

Slippery Jack (*Suillus Luteus*, *S. Granulatus* & *S. Quiescens*)



Identification indicators:

Colour: Brown cap, light cream coloured stem, yellow pores.

Cap: Button shaped brown cap, often sticky or slimy. (peel cap skin prior to cooking)

Stalk: Light in colour, smooth, with a veil. (Rough stalk without veil is a close cousin and still edible)

Gills: Spongy light brown/yellow pores.

Bruising: No bruising

Preparation: Peel the top of the cap, wipe off forest debris from stem with a wet cloth. Slippery Jacks are also enjoyed by many insects, cut in half to make sure none are in the stem. There are some great recipes online for Slippery Jacks.

Bathurst Visitor Information Centre

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Open 7 Days

9.30am-4.30pm



Visit Bathurst NSW



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All effort has gone into ensuring that the information in this guide is correct at the time of writing 20/02/2022.

The Bathurst Visitor Information Centre recommends you take a tour with an experienced mushroom forager before attempting mushroom foraging by yourself. The Bathurst Visitor Information Centre takes no responsibility for any damages or harm that occurs from the consumption of poisonous mushrooms. It is up to you to make sure you follow safe practises.

