

Lion's Mane Mushrooms

By Janie Atwood

OSU Moore Family Center Fellow

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With fall approaching, it's time to start thinking about warm comfort foods like soups, pasta dishes, and casseroles. Mushrooms are a delicious addition to many dishes due to their umami flavor and nutrients like fiber and B vitamins. One type of mushroom that offers a variety of health benefits is Lion's Mane. Lion's Mane is a large white mushroom whose texture looks like the mane of a lion. It has both culinary and medicinal uses. It grows wild in Oregon and can be found on walnut, oak, and birch trees in the spring and fall.

Lion's Mane has been shown to benefit the brain, heart, and gut. It contains compounds that stimulate the growth of brain cells and can offer protection from dementia and/or Alzheimer's disease. A study in older adults with mild cognitive decline showed that just 3 grams of Lion's Mane every day for four months improved their mental functioning. Additionally, Lion's Mane contains a compound that can decrease the rate of blood clotting, lowering risk of heart attack and stroke.

Lion's Mane has a similar flavor to crab or lobster meat. This makes it a great vegan alternative to seafood. Consider adding Lion's Mane to soups, pasta, and risotto. In its powder form, Lion's Mane can be added to smoothies or tea.



Photo credit: marthastewart.com

Lion's Mane, in its whole food form can be found at some farmer's markets, supermarkets, or online. It typically ranges between \$10 and \$18 per pound, which is significantly higher than button mushrooms which cost about \$2 per pound. However, the flavor and health benefits of Lion's Mane make it a decadent treat.

In its powder form, Lion's Mane can be found at most grocery stores or online and cost can vary between \$20 and \$30 for 3.5 ounces. The powder form has a slightly bitter taste and can be added to smoothies or oatmeal. The whole mushroom can be enjoyed raw, tossed in salad, sliced on sandwiches, or with veggie dip. Try adding Lion's Mane mushrooms into soups, stews, casseroles or stir fry.

Due to its beneficial effects on cognitive function, Lion's Mane could serve as a healthy and delicious addition to many dishes.

For a tasty meal, you may want to check out this plant-based crab cake recipe (*next page*).



Photo credit: medicine.net

Plant-Based Crab Cakes

Recipe adapted from aubreyskitchen.com

Prep: 10 min

Cook: 4 min

Servings: 3

Cost: \$10

Ingredients

8 oz Lion's Mane mushroom

1 egg (or flax egg*)

½ cup Panko breadcrumbs

¼ cup onion, finely diced

1 Tbsp regular or vegan mayonnaise

1 tsp Worcestershire sauce

¾ tsp Old Bay or Italian seasoning

1 tsp Dijon or dark mustard

1 Tbsp fresh parsley, finely chopped

¼ tsp salt

¼ tsp black pepper

2-3 Tbsp oil (to fry cakes)

Optional garnish: lemon wedges and chopped parsley



Tartar sauce

¼ cup mayonnaise or vegan mayonnaise

1 Tbsp dill pickle relish

¼ tsp Old Bay or Italian seasoning

* **Flax egg** 3 Tbsp warm water plus 1 Tbsp flax meal.
Stir and let sit 2-3 mins to thicken before using.

Instructions

1. Hand shred mushroom into small pieces resembling texture of flakey crab.
2. In large bowl, combine egg, mayonnaise, onion, Worcestershire sauce, seasoning, mustard, parsley, salt and pepper. Mix well.
3. Stir in Lion's Mane mushrooms and breadcrumbs.
4. Form mixture into 3-4 equal-sized round flat patties (about ½ to ¾ inch thick).
5. Heat oil in sauté pan on medium/high heat.
6. Cook patties for approximately 2-3 minutes per side. Should be golden brown and crispy.
7. Garnish with lemon and parsley if desired.
8. Refrigerate unused cakes for up to 48 hours.

