

## Hallucinogenic Mushrooms

**AKA:** Psilocin, psilocybin, Liberty Caps, *Psilocybe semilanceata*, Mushrooms, Shrooms, Mushies, "Mexicans"-*Stropharia Cubensis Mexican*, "Philosophers Stone, Truffle" - *Psilocybe Tampanensis*, Fly Agaric, and others

**SOURCE:** The Fly Agaric and Liberty Cap mushroom (along with some related species) grow wild in the UK. Until recently other strains were cultivated in the UK commercially or imported from mainland Europe. Some home-grown production still takes place, clandestinely, in the UK.

**APPEARANCE:** Varies according to type of mushroom, and the state of the mushroom. Accurate identification requires a good mushroom field guide and experience is valuable. Some UK mushrooms are highly toxic and so correct identification is essential.

**QUALITY:** Variable; mushrooms vary in strength. It can be very difficult to titrate dose, especially when mushrooms have been dried, or cooked. A moderate dose range of 10 to 30 could prove very strong or very weak depending on the quality and size of the mushrooms, and way they are taken.

**METHODS OF USE:** Mushrooms can be eaten raw, but are more often dried, made into drinks or eaten with food.

**EFFECTS:** Hallucinogenic, similar to LSD though typically milder and more manageable. Effects start working between 30 to 60 minutes, and last for 5 to 7 hours. Many users experience some nausea.

**HEALTH IMPLICATIONS:** Can cause lasting psychological impact in sensitive individuals. The risk is low for most users; however, people with a history of mental illness should steer clear of hallucinogens including Magic Mushrooms.

There is also a risk of poisoning, possibly fatal, where poisonous mushrooms are taken in error.

Fly Agaric mushrooms contain Ibotenic Acid which is toxic and causes unpleasant side effects such as nausea. These mushrooms are heated to break down the toxic compounds before consumption.

**LEGAL STATUS:** As part of the Drugs Act (2005) the possession of any mushrooms containing the chemicals Psilocin or Psilocybin is now illegal. Previously it had only been illegal to possess such mushrooms if the mushrooms had been prepared in some way. Exception has been made for those who may unknowingly have them growing on their land.

The legislation does not apply to mushrooms which do not contain Psilocin, such as the Fly Agaric mushrooms.

Spores do not contain the drug and so are legal to possess and supply. However, possession of growing kits could result in prosecution,

**OTHER INFORMATION:** The use of hallucinogenic mushrooms has been a feature of the UK drug scene for many years. The popularity of mushrooms increased massively as commercially grown mushrooms were legally sold in the UK exploiting a loop-hole in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 that viewed possession of fresh mushrooms as lawful.

However, legal changes in 2005 ended this quasi-lawful sale, and the popularity of mushrooms has dropped off accordingly. However, the collection of wild-growing mushrooms in the UK, although illegal, is still reasonably popular.