

TRUFFLES FAQ

Truffles are considered one of the great delicacies in gourmet cooking. Truffles are a fungus, but they differ from mushrooms in that they are found below ground near tree roots.



Harvesting of white truffles has proved largely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, some successes have been achieved in the harvest of black truffles.

Truffles that are wild may be harvested throughout the year, but the quality and aroma will vary significantly. [Black and white truffles are the most prized](#), but *bianchetto* and *scorzone* truffles are also quite good. Fresh truffles have a very short shelf-life and a short harvesting season.

What are some typical food ideas for serving truffles?

Fresh truffles should always be the star of the show. With its intense flavor, a few shaved slices are great on [pasta and risotto](#). Avoid using truffles on foods with other complex flavors that may compete with the unique taste and aroma of the truffle.



What are the differences in the types of truffles?

Black and white truffles from northern and central Italy are the most prized, but *bianchetto* and [scorzone or "summer truffles"](#) are also quite good and somewhat less expensive.

Where are the best truffles to be found?

White truffles are commonly found in the region of Alba in Piedmont, Italy but may occasionally be found in other areas of central and northern Italy.

Black truffles are less expensive than white and are commonly found in Italy, in Périgord (southwest France), Spain and several other countries. White truffles are wild and resist cultivation, but there has been some success in cultivating black truffles.

Bianchetti and *scorzone* are out-of-season truffles that lack the aroma intensity of white and black truffles harvested in season.

What is the best season for truffles?

The white truffle season in Italy runs from late September to mid-December, while black truffles may often be found from mid-November to March.

The less intense *bianchetti* can be found beginning in mid-January to the end of March and the "summer truffle" or *scorzone* is harvested from April through August.



How long will fresh truffles last?

Fresh truffles should be eaten soon after being purchased - preferably from a reliable fresh market dealer. Nevertheless, truffles that are refrigerated under proper conditions may retain its aroma and flavor for up to a week.

How best to preserve fresh truffles?

Given the short life of fresh truffles, many are refrigerated. Dehydrated truffles and truffle slices preserved in olive oil are becoming increasingly popular and an affordable option for those wishing to savor the exquisite taste of truffles year-round.

Under no circumstances should fresh truffles be preserved on a bed of rice! Gently wrapping in a damp cloth is preferred.

How much of the truffle should I use in a serving?

A little bit goes a long way. The aroma of truffles is almost overwhelming. A few slices or shavings (3 to 5) should be sufficient for most pasta or risotto dishes.

Should I purchase truffles preserved in olive oil?

It is not uncommon to see minced or sliced truffles preserved in “extra virgin olive oil.” While this tends to add a level of sophistication to the sales pitch, the intense flavor of an olive oil often competes with the flavor of the truffle. It is best to seek truffles preserved in a neutral-flavored oil such as sunflower oil.

Should I purchase “truffle-flavored” or “truffle-flavoured” olive oil?

This is a personal choice, but the evidence would suggest that most of these products are artificially flavored and have no real truffles. Furthermore, the overpowering flavor of truffles (artificial or otherwise) tends to distort the complex flavor of a premium extra virgin olive oil. No less of an authority as the late Anthony Bourdain would caution anyone from using truffle oil.

Please Drop by the Gourmet Living Shop for Great Truffles

Unless you can afford a trip to Italy or France during the truffle season, you may want to consider preserved truffles. Gourmet Living provides a couple of alternatives: [Slices of scorzone truffles](#) preserved in a neutral-flavored sunflower oil and our very popular [truffle mill gift set](#) with an additional two bags of refills.

Do visit the Gourmet Living Store for your [gourmet cooking essentials](#).

