



Gyromitra Esculenta, photo: Adobe Stock

False morels are toxic and require appropriate preparation

False morels contain a toxin known as gyromitrin, which is why you must prepare these fungi appropriately before eating. Gyromitrin is a water-soluble and volatile compound. In high concentrations, gyromitrin causes an acute poisoning. It affects the gastrointestinal tract, central nervous system and liver. Gyromitrin and its metabolites are potentially carcinogenic compounds.

False morel preparation

Boiling is the most effective way of reducing the gyromitrin concentration. Toxic residues remain in false morels even after boiling.

To reduce their toxicity:

- ▶ **Boil** false morels twice in a large volume of water (1 part fungi and 3 parts water). Boil the fungi for at minimum five minutes each time.
- ▶ After boiling, **rinse** the fungi well each time in a large volume of water.

You can preserve false morels by drying them until they are crispy. Preparation of dried false morels:

- ▶ **Soak** dried false morels for at least two hours before use (100 g mushrooms per 2 litres of water).
- ▶ After soaking, **boil** the false morels twice in the same way as fresh ones.

Take care of good ventilation when drying or boiling false morels. Do not reuse the water in which you have soaked or boiled false morels for cooking or food preparation.

Gyromitrin concentration can be reduced by appropriate preparation

While the amount of gyromitrin and its metabolites in false morels can be reduced by boiling and drying, no method can eliminate the toxin completely. Lack of information has made it impossible to determine a safe amount of gyromitrin or its metabolites in gastrointestinal exposure. Children and pregnant or breastfeeding women should never eat false morels. Because of the toxin residues, eating false morels is no longer recommended.

