

FRESH TAKES

This month, our food editors share a mind-blowingly easy way to wash mushrooms, a new cookbook from an old friend, and retro pantry staples that deserve some respect.



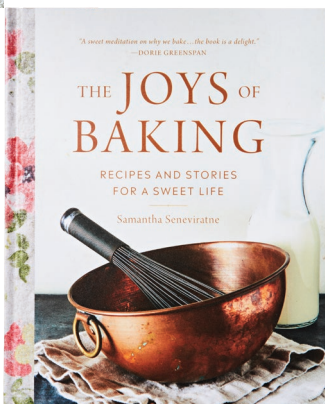
To keep mushrooms from turning soggy, refrigerate them unwashed in a paper bag (it won't trap moisture like plastic does).

The Rinse Cycle

Cleaning mushrooms with a vegetable brush has always been our go-to method, but let's be honest: It can be tedious (and doesn't always get them pristine). Then we figured out a genius shortcut: Fill a bowl with cool water, float whole button or cremini mushrooms in it, and bob them around with your hands to release any stuck-on dirt. Briefly drain them on a towel, then prep and cook them immediately. No grit or grime, and no wasted time. —Greg Lofts

One Sweet Read

We couldn't be more excited to get our hands on the latest cookbook from former *Everyday Food* editor Samantha Seneviratne. In ***The Joys of Baking: Recipes and Stories for a Sweet Life*** (Running Press), she shows you how making treats can do more than satisfy a craving or celebrate a success. "Sam weaves together personal anecdotes with truly delicious—and beautiful—recipes," says *Living* food and entertaining director Sarah Carey, who's cueing up the chocolate-cardamom babka, apple snack cake, and banana-bread scones.



Second Acts

You say outdated, we say *au contraire*. Here, odes to three old-school ingredients.



ICEBERG LETTUCE

What it lacks in pedigree, it makes up for in mellow sweetness and unparalleled crunch. Senior food editor Lauryn Tyrell uses it on sandwiches and to give oomph to softer greens.



CELERY SALT

Whip out that bottle you bought for one recipe and haven't touched since: "It adds fast flavor to popcorn, baked potatoes, and soups," says deputy food editor Greg Lofts. Try **McCormick Gourmet celery salt** (\$4 for 2.5 oz., jet.com).



SUNDRIED TOMATOES

They were a power couple with pesto and served in everything in the '90s, but only pesto had staying power. However, assistant food editor Riley Wofford loves **Agromonte semi-dried cherry tomatoes** with pasta and herbed goat cheese, or as a snack right from the jar (\$10 for 7 oz., amazon.com).