

PINYON MESA – GRAND MESA

Mushroom hunting in Western Colorado is always fun, but often frustrating. It all depends on whether there has been adequate rainfall at the right time.

Grand Mesa: This mesa is reached by taking I70 West to highway 65, or highway 330 off of 65, with a right turn at Collbran. The mesa is a large area. The following may help you find mushrooms:

- 1) *Gyromitra gigas* – Look for this mushroom as the snow is melting [around Memorial Day], on the edges of snow banks. Try the Bonham, Atkinson and Cottonwood Lakes areas.
- 2) *Morchella angusticeps* – look for morels and *Verpa bohemica* on the sides of the mesa in North sloping Aspen groves when the snow has melted and the aspens are just beginning to leaf out.
- 3) *Boletus edulis* – Late July and early August is often a good time to look for *Boletus edulis*, *Suillus brevipes* and *Leccinum insigne* along the high trails on top of the mesa. Any year there are some, and in a good year they are everywhere.
- 4) *Lactarius deliciosus* – From mid-August to early September, look in swampy areas or where there are underground water seeps. North facing slopes are especially good places to look. You may find many varieties of *Russula*, *Hygrophorus*, *Cortinarius*, *Armillaria*, *Lactarius*, etc. The Big Creek area is usually productive.
- 5) *Ramaria botrytis* – *Ramaria*, *Hygrophorus*, *Amanita* and others are common in Blue Spruce stands on top of the mesa in August.
- 6) *Cantharellus cibarius* – Chanterelles on the mesa are usually small and hard to find, but they taste good. Look in mossy seep areas of North facing slopes, in open areas between Spruce stands.
- 7) *Coprinus comatus* – *Coprinus* are abundant all Summer if there has been enough rain. Look on top of the mesa around old drill sites and back roads.

Pinyon Mesa: This area is good for mushroom hunting *if* there has been enough moisture. The mesa is reached from the East entrance to Colorado National Monument, with a left turn at Glade Park. Anywhere above Mud Springs Campground may have *Boletus*, *Agaricus*, *Coprinus*, *Pleurotus*, etc. in any of the small Aspen groves near the road.

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