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IN THE HEART OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST WINTER, WHEN THE SKY IS PAINTED OYSTER GREY, THERE IS GOOD REASON TO VENTURE OUTSIDE AND BRAVE THE WINDSWEPT RAIN. HIDDEN BENEATH THE FERTILE SOILS OF THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY, YOU CAN DISCOVER ONE OF OREGON'S BEST KEPT CULINARY RICHES



HUNTING THE GREAT *Oregon Truffle*



WRITTEN BY *Kerry Newberry*
PHOTOGRAPHED BY *Greg Kozawa*



IT'S LATE AUTUMN, and we are on the hunt for culinary gold—Oregon truffles. Elusive. Beguiling. Fleeting. Just a few of the terms used to describe the captivating mushrooms, coveted for their umami essence.

The morning begins chasing Christopher Czarnecki, a fourth-generation chef and restaurateur from the Joel Palmer House in Dayton. Past sleepy, bucolic towns of the Willamette Valley, up gravel-strewn roads into the forested hills above the Valley we follow his license plate, which reads: Fungi. He leads us to a private Douglas fir forest, draped in a garland of wispy fog. I find myself standing at the edge of the forest with Vitaly Paley, the chef-owner of Paley's Place and Imperial Restaurant in Portland and one of the pioneers of farm-to-table dining in the Pacific Northwest. Today is the first truffle foray for us both, so we listen for tips, and zip up raingear before venturing into the Tolkien-like terrain.

The three of us stalk across ochre pine needles and over moss-drenched tree roots. We are deep in a Douglas fir forest where the air is soaked with the scent of pine. A wispy fog garlands the evergreens, adding mystique to our hunt for buried treasure.

"The first sign I'm looking for is animal activity," says Czarnecki. We scan the damp earth for holes around the base of a tree, where scurrying moles, voles or squirrels stash the coveted edible riches. He pauses, "something was definitely just digging right here." The chef leans forward and lightly scratches the duff from under a Douglas fir tree with a four-prong garden rake. With the softest touch, chocolate earth crumbles toward our rubber boots.

TOP LEFT Truffles thrive in anthropogenic habitats, or human created habitats. Pictured here, a former Christmas tree farm populated with 15-25 year-old Douglas fir trees—exactly where truffles like to grow. TOP RIGHT Christopher Czarnecki and Vitaly Paley lightly raking the fir-duff. BOTTOM Czarnecki of the Joel Palmer House says the amount of mud you leave the forest covered in is an indicator of how successful a day you've had truffle hunting.

"Infectious isn't it?" muses Paley, who, like Czarnecki is eager to unearth culinary gold this morning.

Chefs prize these jewels of the forest for their umami essence, and ancient lore proclaims this earthy fungus an aphrodisiac. "They can, on certain occasions, make women more tender and men more lovable," wrote Alexandre Dumas.

Small but precious, truffles are spore-bearing fungi that live their entire lives underground. Animals such as grey squirrels and chipmunks dig up and eat the truffles, serving as the main dispensers of its spores. Oregon truffles develop in symbiosis with trees, and grow throughout the Northwest in low-elevation Douglas fir forests, from northern California to southern British Columbia. The fungi thrive in semi-cultivated environments, places like this. Tidy tree trunks surround us, reaching up to the sky as straight as arrows. A growing pattern indicating this forest was once a Christmas tree farm. "It was intentionally planted and that's the environment that the truffles like," says Czarnecki.

Of the 30 Northwest truffle species, only three are harvested for culinary use—two whites and a black. We are in pursuit of the winter white (*Tuber oregonense*). At its peak, the white truffle carries aromas of earth, herbs, garlic, and an almost petrol-like note. The provocative fragrance is just part of the allure. As British author Elisabeth Luard writes in her book *Truffles*, part of the magic of the mushroom is how it evades us: "Let me put the case for treasuring the truffle. Leaving aside culinary considerations, the truffle is not just a fragrance, a flavor, a face—though all these things contribute to its allure—it's a nugget of vegetable matter searching, as must all living things, for a niche in which it can thrive. And its niche is remarkably specific. Let one thing fall out of line, and the whole enterprise falters and fails."

Taking her words to heart, we change direction in the Tolkien-like terrain, skating

ENTER YOUR DOG IN THE JORIAD™

Amateur truffle hunting dogs are invited to compete in the first annual JORIAD™ North American Truffle Dog Championship at the Oregon Truffle Festival, Jan 21-22, 2015.

To see if your dog qualifies to enter the Joriad™ go to:

oregontrufflefestival.com

TRUFFLE DOG TRAINING AT OTF

Most dogs can be trained to hunt truffles. In fact "K9 nosework" (scent training) classes are sweeping the country as a new sporting event and truffles are just one example of what a dog might be trained to hunt. The Oregon Truffle Festival truffle dog training seminar, Jan 23-24 starts in the classroom, includes introductory training for both you and your dog, and ends on a hunt for wild Oregon truffles in their natural habitat.



WHAT'S OUT THERE?

POPULAR OREGON TRUFFLES

Oregon Black *Leucangium carthusianum*

Oregon Brown *Kalapuya brunnea*

Oregon Winter White *Tuber oregonense*

Oregon Spring White *Tuber gibbosum*

TRUFFLE DOGS

Private truffle forays



Lulu locates a truffle with handler Michael Baines of Umami Truffle Dogs.

Umami Truffle Dogs

A Eugene-based company, Umami Truffle Dogs offers private forays hunting Oregon truffles during peak season (late November through May) in the forest foothills of the Cascade Range and on private properties between McMinnville and Eugene. Forays for up to 8 people range from two to four hours per outing. The best part, participants not only learn the art and science of truffle hunting, they also share in the finds of the day. Umami Truffle Dogs is the Pacific Northwest's largest harvester and purveyor of canine-detected Oregon truffles, catering to chefs and customers around the country. Learn more at: umamitruffledogs.com



Happy Foragers

Unlike the formal European truffle forays, Oregon truffle hunting frequently requires layered rain gear, sturdy boots and waterproof gardening gloves for digging in the rich forest soils. Matt Haskins and Kate Duke of Atlanta, Georgia came to Oregon in the dead of winter solely for a "truffles, wine and food tour".



CHRISTOPHER CZARNECKI

A fourth generation chef and restaurateur, Christopher Czarnecki is the executive chef at the Joel Palmer House in Dayton, where the cuisine is built around wild mushrooms. The destination restaurant is housed in a historic home and is on the National Register of Historic Places and the Oregon Historic Register.



ABOVE Czarnecki is continuing his family's legacy of fine cuisine, great mushroom hunting and world-class wines. His father, Jack Czarnecki, who retired from the Joel Palmer House in 2008, offers his own line of all-natural truffle oils made entirely from wild Oregon truffles. If fresh truffles are not available, using a truffle oil is a good alternative.

across moss and fallen leaves to cover new ground. Standing about ten feet apart, we each cast our rake across a bed of fir needles, and pray for mushrooms. "Sometimes you find them right away," says Czarnecki, "other times they make you really look for them." If you find one truffle near a tree, you'll usually find more, he adds. The chef sweeps the soil a few times before sidling up to the next tree. Across the path, Chef Paley likens the truffle hunt to foraging for morels, a mushroom with similarly elusive properties. "Once you find one, you find a whole field of them," he says. "They reveal themselves to you."

Czarnecki knows the cat-and-mouse game well. He forages for mushrooms at least once a month, an activity pursued since he was seven years old. "My father always describes himself as a mushroom hunter who likes to cook," he says. (His father Jack, a celebrated chef, also wrote the James Beard Award-winning cookbook: *A Cook's Book of Mushrooms*).

Most of the areas he and his father forage are on private property, where his family has long-standing relationships with the landowners. "They let us hunt truffles and we buy them dinner at the Joel Palmer House," says Czarnecki. Who could resist such a deal?

Especially as the story of Oregon truffles unfurls. Historically, when gourmands would vet Oregon truffles against the famous French black (Perigord) and Italian whites from Alba, they looked down their nose at Oregon. Czarnecki attributes this to premature harvesting, when truffles are plucked before their maturation phase. Truffles fruit and ripen underground; when harvested too early, they lack their beguiling aromatics and have little culinary use. As local foragers and chefs learn the necessity of harvesting mature, ripe truffles—usually in the heart of winter, the perception of Oregon truffles is changing. One example of this is market value and demand, both of which continue to soar each year. In 2015, the market price for the Oregon winter white truffle is expected to reach \$560/lb., up from \$120/lb. a few years ago. The high price translates in the kitchen, where this indulgent ingredient dresses up dishes from risotto to ravioli, and elevates fare from satisfying to sublime.

Our quest for the heavenly taste continues, as the three of us, plus the truffle-dog-in-training, crest a hill, then scatter throughout the fir forest. "We could cover all the trees in this area, and not find one truffle," says Czarnecki, "yet be standing just ten feet away from where they are actually growing." This promise of discovery fuels us. Imagine if truffles frolic beneath the

SAUCE

- 1/4 onion, sliced thin
- 1T dry white wine
- 1t lemon juice
- 1c heavy cream
- Ground white pepper, cayenne and salt
- Fresh truffles or 2T truffle butter
- Parmesan

1. Bring wine and lemon juice to simmer with onion, dash of cayenne, salt and white pepper
2. Once onions have become translucent, strain them out and add heavy cream to pot
3. Reduce until sauce can coat a spoon, add heavy cream if over-thickened
4. Add cooked pasta and truffle/truffle butter
5. Plate pasta
6. Place butter-poached lobster on top of pasta
7. Top with Parmesan, fresh sliced truffle, garnish with fennel

LOBSTER

- two 1.5 lb Maine lobsters
- 1t salt
- 1/2 lemon
- 1T white wine vinegar
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 lbs butter

1. Bring enough water to submerge to boil, add lemon, bay leaf, vinegar, salt, then add lobster
2. Cook, covered for 5 minutes
3. De-shell meat from tail, claws, knuckles, and legs (leg meat optional)
4. Slowly melt 2 lbs butter in pot, add truffle
5. Add lobster meat ensuring that butter temperature does not exceed 140°F

Angel Hair Pasta with Maine Lobster Truffle Sauce

Recipe by CHEF CHRISTOPHER CZARNECKI
Joel Palmer House





very ground we stand on. As Czarnecki sifts soil, he details how white truffles will roll right out of the earth with a few soft rakes. Although truffles grow underground, the white truffles, especially, are found very close to the surface, where the soil is looser. That's one reason why the chef emphasizes the importance of delicate raking. When done lightly, raking aerates the soil, churning the decaying matter back into the ground. Vigorous raking can tear the roots from trees, destroying the truffle harvest for next year. "With foraging comes a responsibility and stewardship to the forest," says Czarnecki.

Behind the clouds, the silvery light of autumn's sun glints higher in the sky. Without rain, we trekked longer than planned, and the hours sailed by. For a moment, we stand in the lush forest, and it's serenely quiet. The only sound is the rhythmic tip-tap of dew on the tree branches. Then Czarnecki shouts: Bingo! And he falls to the ground. And he digs. He rises to his knees, holding what looks like a small, dirt-covered potato between two fingers. Czarnecki sniffs; checking aroma first, next color, then firmness. "It's a false truffle," he says with lament. Even though the find was an imposter, both chefs are exhilarated.

What's the secret? As we scabble over to one last section of forest, it's clear we are likely to return to the kitchen empty-handed. Yet, when we leave, we will continue to covet this strange and wonderful, sensual and sub-rosa ingredient. Is it the elusiveness that enhances its mystique?

"Isn't it human nature," says Paley, "to go after things that are hard to get?"

That answer satisfies until we drive back to the Joel Palmer House, where Czarnecki fortuitously has one black truffle on-hand. In the kitchen, both chefs whip up a dish—a classic *oeufs brouillés à la truffe*, and pasta with lobster. Each dish graced with chiffon-like slivers of Oregon black truffle. All it took was one bite from each plate. Little bites of heaven. And then the secret was revealed.

TOP Joel Palmer House's wine list focuses on Oregon wines, with many selections from local artisan producers. Pinot noir is the heart of the list, with over 500 individual pinots from which to choose. Following the truffle forage, Czarnecki asked Paley to lend his signature to the JP wall of fame descending to the restaurant's wine cellar, an honored area long-held exclusively for Oregon winemakers.

Oeufs brouillés à la truffe

Recipe by CHEF VITALY PALEY

I learned this recipe (more of a technique than a recipe really) in France while working as a stagier at a Michelin starred restaurant. In season it was served as a beginning course to every guest that dined there. The egg's sole purpose was to express the truffle.

The eggs were snipped to order, the brioche was cut and toasted on the spot. The truffle was sliced paper thin and, along with a knob of good butter, shavings were incorporated into the eggs. Then under chef's watchful eye this glorious mixture was stirred over a low flame, gently spooned back into their shells and, bien sur, garnished with more truffles. There are a million ways to serve an egg but this one is pure magic.

There are tools to snip the top of the egg. Still I prefer a sharp knife. Be patient as it may take a few tries to get it right. Of course feel free to skip this fancy touch. There is no shame in simply spooning the truffle scramble over toasted brioche for a very fine result.

One inch thick slices of brioche, crusts removed

4 eggs

2 tablespoons truffle butter

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons creme fraiche

several chive spears chopped very fine plus more cut into 1 inch lengths for garnish

1 small black or white truffle sliced thin for garnish (optional)





VITALY PALEY

Vitaly Paley is the chef and owner of Paley's Place and Imperial Restaurant. He received a James Beard award for Best Chef Northwest in 2005 and is the co-author of *The Paley's Place Cookbook*. He's also the creator and chef of DaNet, a Russian Pop-up Dinner series.



Buckwheat Crêpes Stuffed with Turnips and Truffles

Recipe by CHEF VITALY PALEY
RECIPE FOLLOWS ON PAGE 119

TO DRINK

The lovely berry flavor of Cabernet Franc, fruity with a dry finish, shines through in Olga Raffault's Chinon Rosé from France, forming a perfect bond with the buttery brioche, sweet crabmeat, and decadent truffles. The locally produced Soter North Valley Rosé, made from Pinot Noir grapes, is refreshing with raspberry overtones. It complements the sandwich nicely.

Truffled Crab Melt

Recipe by CHEF VITALY PALEY



Truffled Crab Melt

(serves 4)

I've served this decadent variation of that diner favorite the tuna melt as part of an elegant lunch or cut in bite-sized pieces as an hors d'oeuvre. It is definitely fun, not at all fussy or difficult. A good-quality purchased mayonnaise will do nicely here, but if you like, try homemade aioli (recipe follows).

We use an Italian sheep's milk cheese, Boschetto al Tartufo, for its intense truffle taste and good melting qualities. Swiss Gruyère, which is easy to find, works as well. If fresh truffles are not in season, substitute frozen ones. Truffle butter is available at specialty food stores or online.

- 4 thick slices brioche or challah
- 4 teaspoons truffle butter, melted
- 1/2 pound Oregon Dungeness crabmeat, squeezed dry and picked over
- 2 ounces fresh Oregon black truffle, brushed clean and coarsely chopped
- 1 apple, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced
- Generous dash of Tabasco
- 2 tablespoons finely minced sweet red onion
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped Italian parsley
- Juice of 1/2 lime
- 1/4 cup aioli
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 ounces truffle cheese, such as Boschetto al Tartufo, shredded (about 1 cup shredded)

Preheat the broiler. Brush one side of the brioche slices with the truffle butter and set on a baking sheet, buttered side up. Toast the bread until golden, about 3 minutes. Remove the toasts and turn the oven temperature to 400°F.

In a bowl, mix the crabmeat with the chopped truffle, sliced apple, Tabasco, onion, parsley, and lime juice. Fold in the aioli to incorporate. Season with salt and pepper.

Top the toasts, buttered side down, with the crab salad and sprinkle with the cheese. Bake in the upper third of the oven until the crab salad has warmed through and the cheese has melted, about 5 minutes. Serve immediately.

Buckwheat Crêpes Stuffed with Turnips and Truffles (serves 6)

We like to offer guests a new view of humble vegetables—in this case, turnips. We cook the turnips in butter with shallots and honey, then elevate them with truffles. Once the crêpes are filled, we dip them in egg and pan-fry them until crispy. The resulting packet is a surprise of flavors, textures, and aromas.

Buckwheat flour in the batter produces a slightly sturdier crêpe that will better hold the stuffing and stand up to frying. Because making crêpes can be tricky, this recipe produces more than you'll need here.

- 1/2 cup buckwheat flour
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 6 large eggs
- 2 cups milk, plus more if needed
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted, plus 3/4 cup, melted, to fry the crêpes
- 3 tablespoons truffle butter
- 2 shallots, thinly sliced
- 1 large Oregon black or white truffle (about 2 ounces), coarsely chopped
- 1 pound turnips, peeled and coarsely grated
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups chicken stock

To make the crêpe batter, sift the flours with a pinch of salt into a bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour and add 3 of the eggs. Using a whisk, slowly incorporate the flour into the eggs so the batter develops without lumps. Add 1 cup of the milk, whisking until smooth, then remaining 1 cup milk, and 1 tablespoon of the melted butter. Cover and set the mixture aside for 30 minutes at room temperature.

To make the stuffing, in a large skillet, melt the truffle butter over medium heat without browning. Add the shallots and truffle, and cook until the shallots are translucent but not colored, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the turnips, honey, and cider vinegar. Season with salt and pepper. Add the stock and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring to mix the ingredients.

Decrease the heat to low, cover, and simmer very gently, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking and browning, until the turnips are very soft, about 1 hour. Adjust the seasoning if necessary. Transfer the stuffing to a bowl and set aside to cool. The

stuffing can be done a day in advance and refrigerated until ready.

To cook the crêpes, heat a 10-inch nonstick crêpe pan or skillet over high heat until hot, about 5 minutes.

Brush the pan with melted butter. Remove from the heat and pour 1/4 cup of the batter into the center of the pan, rotating the pan so the batter runs evenly to the edges in a thin layer. Return the pan to the heat. Cook the crêpe until the edges brown, about 2 minutes. Slip a flexible spatula under the crêpe, carefully flip it over, and cook on the other side for 30 seconds. Transfer the cooked crêpe to a plate. Repeat until all the batter is used, stacking the crêpes as they are done.

To stuff the crêpes, place one on a work surface, set a generous spoonful of turnip-truffle mixture in the center, and spread it to within 1 inch of the edge of the crêpe. Fold the filled crêpe in half and then in half again. Repeat with the remaining crêpe and stuffing.

Preheat the oven to 200°F.

Place the remaining 3 eggs in a shallow pie plate, beat them with a fork, and have ready. To fry the crêpes, heat 2 tablespoons of the melted butter in a large nonstick pan over medium-high heat. Carefully dip one stuffed, folded crêpe into the beaten eggs, turning it to coat on all sides. Lift the crêpe with your fingers, allowing excess egg to drip back into the bowl, and place the crêpe in the hot skillet. Fry until crisp and browned on both sides, 45 seconds to 1 minute per side. Transfer to a baking sheet and keep warm in the oven while cooking the rest. Repeat the procedure, using more melted butter as needed to fry the remaining crêpes. Serve hot.

METHOD PHOTOS ONLINE
PORTRAIT MAGAZINE/RECIPES





Truffled hen leg with leeks, spaghettini, black pepper & truffle butter

Recipe by CHEF JASON FRENCH
RECIPE FOLLOWS ON PAGE 122

TO DRINK
The protein neutrality of this dish lends itself to red or white wine. There are so many great wineries in Oregon, but one of the region's best producers is Jason Lett and the team at Eyrie Vineyards. Eyrie's 2013 Estate Chardonnay or 2012 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir will balance the richness of the dish without diminishing the aromatic and flavor of the truffles.



JASON FRENCH

Jason French is the chef and owner of Ned Ludd, a Northeast Portland craft kitchen fueled by a mighty wood-fired oven. On Mondays, the restaurant hosts a hip-hop pizza night called Pizza Monday. Most recently, he opened Elder Hall, an event and gathering space offering craft cooking classes and a supper series.



Truffled Hen Leg With Leeks, Spaghettini, Black Pepper & Truffle Butter

(serves 4-6)

- 4 hen legs, skin on
- 2 leeks
- 4-6 oz fresh Oregon Black truffle
- 1/2 lb softened butter
- Small bunch thyme
- 1 box spaghetti, or 1 lb fresh pasta
- 1/2 cup white wine
- juice of 1 lemon
- good quality parmesan cheese for grating
- Salt & pepper to taste

METHOD

1. Preheat an oven to 425°F. Chop the truffles, reserving one truffle for slicing. Mix 1/2 the chopped truffles with 1/2 the softened butter. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper.
2. Thinly slice leek greens and wash under cold water to remove excess dirt. Place in a roasting pan. Strip thyme leaves from the stem. Add cup of white wine to pan.
3. Pull the skin back off of the chicken. Season the chicken flesh with salt & pepper. Spread truffle butter on the chicken flesh. Replace skin back over meat and place legs over the chopped leek tops in the pan. Cover the pan with parchment paper and foil.
4. Place the chicken on the top rack of the oven and bake for 15 minutes, reduce the heat to 300°F and continue to bake for 40 minutes. Remove the foil and parchment for the last 20 minutes.
5. While the chicken cooks, bring well seasoned pasta water to a boil. Thinly slice the white of the leek and saute in the remaining butter. Cook the pasta and drain and add to the sautéed leeks. Add the remaining chopped truffles and toss with lemon. Divide amongst 4 plates.
6. Remove the chicken and place a leg on the pasta on each plate. Spoon any juices from the pan over the chicken, grate the cheese over the pasta and shave the truffle to finish.

"There are so many great wineries in Oregon right now but one of the region's best producers is Jason Lett and the team at Eyrie Vineyards. They are a vital part of the great storytelling and great wine that complements the natural bounty of the region and the amazing fabric of our culinary community." -Jason French, Ned Ludd

HERE'S A FEW EVENTS NOT TO MISS AT THE OREGON TRUFFLE FESTIVAL

Better Together:
Black & White Dinner Series
Portland, Jan 15-18, 2015

(Choose from three restaurants). The chef lineup includes Vitaly Paley, chef/owner of Paley's Place and Imperial Restaurant; Jason French, chef/owner of Ned Ludd and Elder Hall; and Executive Chef Sarah Schafer of Irving Street Kitchen.

Walk on the Wild Side - Portland
Friday Jan 16, 6:30-9:30pm
(World Forestry Center)

Friday Night Walk Around Chef Showcase and Oregon Truffle Celebration. Oregon and Northwest chefs will each showcase two dishes of Oregon black and white truffles. Chefs include: Elias Cairo, Olympic Provisions (Portland); Jason Wilson, Crush (Seattle); Jason Stoller Smith, Timberline Lodge (Mount Hood); Stephanie Kimmel, Marché (Eugene); Justin Wills, Restaurant Beck (Depoe Bay); Tyler Malek, Salt & Straw (Portland); Gregory Gourdet, Departure Restaurant + Lounge (Portland); Brian McCracken and Dana Tough, Spur Gastropub (Seattle)

Walk on the Wild Side - Eugene
Friday Jan 23, 6:30-9:30pm
(Emerald Valley Resort)

Walk Around Tasting/Pairing. Chefs will prepare small plates of both Oregon black and white truffles, paired with Oregon wine, beer and spirits.

Oregon Truffle Festival Cooking Class
Eugene, Sunday Jan 25, 2-4:30pm

Oregon Truffle Marketplace - Newberg
Sunday Jan 18, 11am-4pm
(Chehalem Cultural Center)

Event includes truffle tastings, artisan foods, fresh truffles, a truffle dog demonstration, and lecture series.

Oregon Truffle Marketplace - Eugene
Sunday Jan 25, 11am-4pm (Hilton Eugene)
(see above)

For the complete schedule of events, go to: oregontrufflefestival.com



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*Handpicked in Oregon
100% Natural
oregontruffleoil.com*

From Jack Czarnecki's kitchen at the Joel Palmer House in Dayton, Oregon comes the first all-natural truffle oil ever produced in the United States. Made entirely from wild Oregon truffles, this unique product with its rich, sumptuous flavor and aroma will enhance your larder with a truly unique culinary treasure.

Oregon Black Truffle Oil can at first come across in the nose as excessively pungent, earthy and organic. Upon aeration aromas of chocolate, coconut, and pineapple begin to show themselves along with their earthy qualities.

Oregon White Truffle Oil is floral and herbal with strong hints of garlic and onion grass and even lychee. However, it may first smell like petrol. Some people experience an aroma like old oil and some smell nothing at all.

What to expect: Like wine, truffle oil benefits from some aeration to show off its complex and beguiling aromas.

2015 OREGON TRUFFLE FESTIVAL

Jan 15-25, 2015
oregontrufflefestival.com



Oregon Truffle Festival's Grand Truffle Dinner

© Langdon Cook

Truffle-topia A week long celebration of all things truffle!

Celebrating all things truffles, Oregon Truffle Festival, now in its 10th year, expands to two weekends of festivities Jan 15-25 with culinary events in Yamhill wine country and Portland in addition to Eugene, where it all began. Attendees will find many epicurean opportunities ranging from informal dining and wine tastings to gourmet multi-course luncheons and dinners. Over 50 top chefs from around the country will be preparing extraordinary truffle dishes paired with wines and spirits throughout the festival. Events include forums on growing and harvesting truffles, cooking classes, "hands-on" foraging expeditions, truffle dog training classes and the first ever "JORIAD" National Truffle Dog Championship. The event attracts national and international truffle experts, chefs, cookbook and foraging authors, food and wine enthusiasts and lots of press.



BUYING FRESH TRUFFLES

Oregon truffles are generally available from November to March, but are not always for sale at the market so it's best to buy them as soon as you see them. Fresh, mature truffles will have a delicious odor and be nearly firm to the touch. Look for floral and fruity notes in black truffles and spicy scents in white truffles. Avoid any truffles reminiscent of ammonia or with soft spots as they are probably old.

Taking care not to bruise the truffles, use them right away for optimal flavor or wrap them in paper towels and refrigerate for 2-3 days. When you are ready to prepare your mushroom meal, keep in mind that you don't cook the truffle itself as heat destroys the delicate flavors. Instead, try shaving or grating the truffle into your recipe. And a little goes a long way, so paper-thin shavings or delicately sliced rounds are plenty for most recipes.