What are Avocados good for?

DID YOU KNOW that the avocado is actually classified in the flowering plant family and is part of the berry family? It's one of the few fruits that can provide you with high amounts of fat and protein. There's actually a lot more to avocados than meets the eye, so check out these interesting facts about this fruit.

BASIC INFORMATION AND HISTORY

BOTANICAL NAME:
Persea Americana

OTHER NAMES FOR AVOCADO INCLUDE:

- Alligator Pear
- Vegetable Butter
- Butter Pear

A California avocado tree can produce about 500 avocados (200 pounds of fruit) a year – the average is 150 avocados (60 pounds of fruit).

Over **80** varieties of avocados currently exist. The most common is the **HASS AVOCADO** which grows all-year round.

San Diego County is the **Avocado Capital of the US** and accounts for **40%** of all the avocados grown in California.

California grows **90%** of avocados in the US, with **5,000** avocado growers and almost **6,000** groves today. The average avocado grove size is **10 acres**

Avocado-inspired drawings and artifacts in Early Aztec settlements show that avocados have grown in Central and South America for almost 10,000 years.

TRIVIA "Avocado" comes from the Spanish word "aguacate," which in turn comes from the Aztec word "ahuacatl," meaning "testicle tree." Ancient Aztecs considered avocado a fertility fruit, while the Mayans used it as an aphrodisiac.

AVOCADO USES

BEAUTY

- Nourishes and moisturizes your skin
- Works as a natural sunscreen
- For getting rid of eye bags
- Used as a hair mask or conditioned to rejuvenate your scalp and hair
- For making a facial mask or scrub to exfoliate your skin

CULINARY

- Fed to babies in lieu of processed baby food
- Added to salads, desserts, and sandwiches for a sweet flavor
- Brazilians add avocados to ice cream
- Filipinos puree avocados with sugar and milk to make a creamy dessert or smoothie
- Used as a spread or dip, or added to sauces, smoothies, and salad dressings
- Can be blended with coconut cream to make whipped cream
- Used as a fat replacement in baking Simply replace the oil, butter, or shortening with an equal amount of avocado

OTHER USES

- Crushing the pit releases a milky liquid that turns red or black when exposed to the air – it was used as ink for writing during early times
- Ink from avocado pits can be used as a natural food dye

TRY GUACAMOLE! This famous dip is made from mashed avocados mixed with tomatoes, onions, and other ingredients like lime juice, garlic, serrano or jalapeno peppers, and cilantro.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Avocados are very high in essential vitamins and minerals, including fiber, vitamins K, B5, B6, and C, folate, and potassium.
- One avocado can have twice the potassium of a banana, which helps balance your potassium to sodium ratio.
- Avocados have very little sodium, and are low in fructose.
- It is one of the few fruits that will provide you with "good" monounsaturated fats. A medium Hass avocado contains about 22.5 grams of fat.
- Eating avocados helps maintain cholesterol levels already in the healthy range and lower your risk for heart disease.
- It enables your body to more efficiently absorb fat-soluble nutrients, such as alpha- and beta-carotene and lutein, in other foods eaten in conjunction.

FUN FACTS

43% About 43% of US households buy avocados.

This fruit ripens quicker when placed beside a banana or an apple.

Avocados were once a luxury food reserved for the tables of royalty, but are now enjoyed around the world by people from all walks of life.

If treatment for pests is necessary, only the softest chemicals are used on avocados to have the least impact on the environment and beneficial organisms.

To find out if an avocado is ripe, look under the dry little spot on the stem end. If it's green, the avocado is perfectly ripe. If it's brown, the fruit is overripe.

Avocados rank among the lowest of all fruits and vegetables for pesticide use. Their thick skin also protects the inner fruit from pesticides and the need to purchase organic varieties for protection from pesticides.

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