



STRAWBERRIES

Besides being versatile and delicious, strawberries also pack a nutritional punch. They are an excellent source of Vitamin C, fiber, folic acid and potassium. Go ahead and eat as many as you want because they are also low in calories and fat-free.

Availability:

Late May through mid June is the primary harvest season for strawberries in the state of Iowa. It's best when picking strawberries, to do so in the early morning hours as the sun and heat of the day will make them more susceptible to bruising and they will not keep as long.

Purchasing:

When purchasing strawberries, you should select bright red berries with fresh green caps. Strawberries will not continue to ripen once picked so make sure the berries are a vibrant color. Visually check each package, making sure there are no signs of mold growth. If one berry is molded, mold spores will have traveled throughout the entire package. When purchasing strawberries by the pound, one-and-a-half pounds equal one quart. This will yield about four cups of sliced strawberries.

Handling & Storage:

Use strawberries as soon after harvesting or purchasing as possible. They are best if used within two to three days. They should be stored unwashed and loosely covered with plastic wrap in the coldest part of your refrigerator.

Preparation:

Wash the berries just before you are ready to eat them. Berries left in water will lose their color and flavor. After washing, remove the green cap with a plastic-tipped vegetable peeler or paring knife without removing the fruit. Strawberries should not be left at room temperature for more than a few hours as they will lose their color and turn brown when exposed to heat.

Nutritional Value:

Serving Size	8 strawberries
Calories	45
Carbohydrates	12 g
Protein	1 g
Vitamin C	140% of RDA
Fiber	16% of RDA
Folic Acid	20% of RDA (aids in the prevention of birth defects)
ORAC Value	3250 (provides anti-cancer and anti-aging benefits)

Uses:

Apart from being one of the worlds most popular fruits, strawberries can be found in jams, jellies, ice cream, pies, cakes, shakes, salads, dipped in chocolate, liquors and many other culinary treats. Berries not eaten fresh can be readily frozen or preserved.

Fun Facts



May is National Strawberry Month



Strawberry Point, Iowa is home to the "World's Largest Strawberry" which sits atop city hall, standing 15 feet high and 12 feet wide and weighing in at 1430 pounds.



The U.S. is the leading producer of strawberries, and supplies about 20% of the world's strawberries. California grows about 75% of the U.S. strawberries.



Strawberries are the only fruit with the seed on the outside. The average strawberry has 200 seeds.



Strawberries are the first fruit to ripen in the spring.



Strawberries are a member of the rose family.



94% of U.S. households consume strawberries.



Eight strawberries have more Vitamin C than an orange.



Strawberries are full of a special substance called ellagic acid which can help fight cancer. Ellagic acid retains its effectiveness even when put into shakes or baked into pies.



Besides their nutritional value, when used topically strawberries can be used to help whiten teeth, reduce blemishes and help skin look younger.

HERE AT HOME

While California and Florida are the top producing strawberry states, the strawberry market has a noticeable impact in Iowa as well. According to a 2001 study done by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture "Growers receive nearly 3.5 million in gross income as a result of strawberry production in Iowa." Iowa varieties include Tristar, Eariglow, Jewel, and Honeoye.

There are many opportunities to buy one of these varieties or others from a local grower near you. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) offers a Fruit and Vegetable Growers Directory. Fifty-four growers from thirty seven counties have enrolled on this website. View the directory on-line by going to: <http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/fruitvegetable.asp>.

Wondering where to buy your fresh strawberries? The information listed below has been compiled from those producers listed in the Fruit and Vegetable Directory.

Venue	# Selling by this Method	%
Farmers Markets	40	74
On Farm	36	67
CSA	7	13
By Order	27	50
U-Pick	17	32
Roadside Stands	11	20

Looking for another way to enjoy this delicious fruit? Three festivals are held in Iowa paying tribute to the strawberry. Mark your calendar and make plans to attend:

<u>County</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Date</u>
Scott	Long Grove	June 3
Van Buren	Farmington	June 8-10
Clayton	Strawberry Point	June 9

To obtain more information or for further assistance, please direct your calls or emails to:

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