

Apple

Apples come in all shades of red, green and yellow. Apple varieties range in size from a little bigger than a cherry, to as large as a grapefruit. The peel is good to eat and has many nutrients. Apples have five seed pockets. Do not eat the seeds.

Apples are fruit which grow on trees.

The apple can be traced back to the Romans and Egyptians who introduced them to Britain.
The pilgrims planted the first apple trees in North America in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Americans eat about 120 apples apiece each year.

Apples are the most popular fruit in the United States. 36 states grow apples commercially with the following as top producers: Washington, New York, Michigan, California, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

VARIETIES

There are about 2,500 varieties grown in the United States. Golden Delicious, Red Delicious, Fuji and Granny Smith are available year round.

Choose apples which are firm with no soft spots. Wash under clean, running water before eating.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of fiber
- Good source of vitamin C

USES

Apples can be eaten raw or cooked. They are great to eat as a quick snack. Chop and add to fruit salads. Bake in cakes, pies and cookies. Other popular ways to enjoy are as applesauce or 100% juice.

Many apples are grown in Nebraska.



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Apricot

A relative of the peach, the apricot is smaller and has a smooth, oval pit that falls out easily when the fruit is halved. The skin and flesh are a golden orange color.

Apricots are fruit which grow on trees.

Apricots originated in China over 4,000 years ago.

Spanish explorers introduced apricots to the New World and they were planted at missions all over California. The first major production of apricots in America was in 1792 south of San Francisco, California.

In the United States
95% of apricots grow in the San Joaquin Valley and other parts of northern California.

VARIETIES

There are many varieties of apricots raised in the United States. Some of the most common varieties are Patterson, Blenheim, Tiltons and Castlebrites. Apricot season is from late May through June.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Sodium free
- Cholesterol free
- High in vitamin C
- High in vitamin A
- Good source of potassium

USES

Apricots are great to eat raw or dried, and are also terrific cooked. The nutrients are more concentrated in dried than fresh apricots – dried apricots also have a higher sugar content, which makes them more likely to stick to your teeth.

Some apricots are grown in Nebraska.



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Artichoke

Artichokes should be firm, compact, heavy for their size and have an even green color. Artichokes are actually a flower bud – if allowed to flower, blossoms measure up to seven inches in diameter and are a violet-blue color.

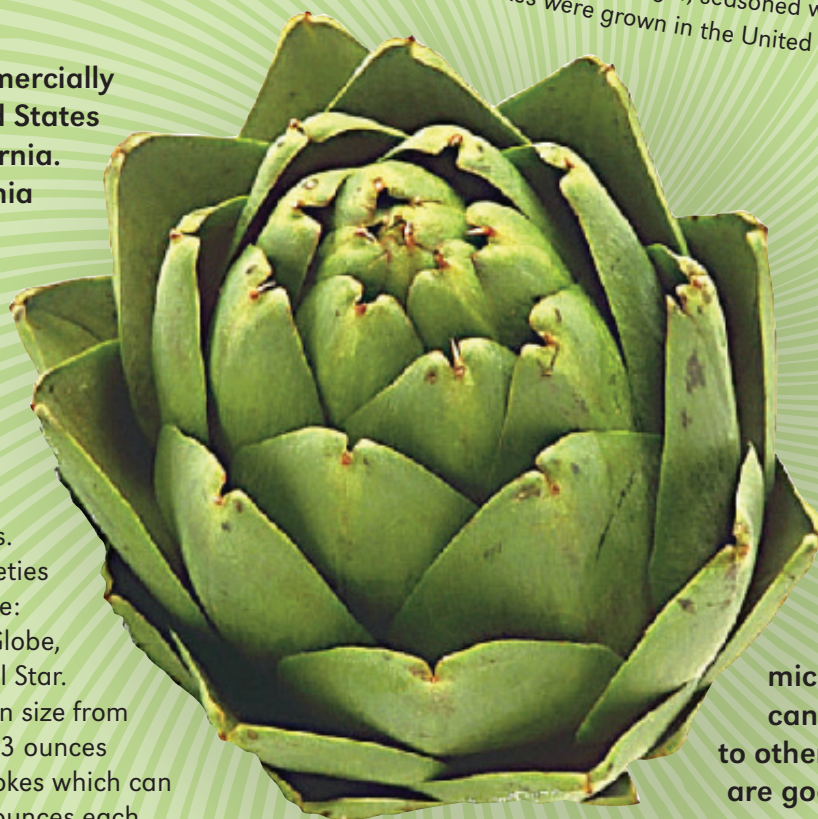
Artichokes are vegetables which grow as flower buds on plants.

The artichoke was known to both the Greeks and the Romans. Wealthy Romans enjoyed artichokes prepared in honey and vinegar, seasoned with cumin. It was not until the early 20th century artichokes were grown in the United States.

All artichokes commercially grown in the United States are grown in California. Castroville, California claims to be the “Artichoke Capital of the World.”

VARIETIES

There are more than 140 artichoke varieties. The most popular varieties in the United States are: Green Globe, Desert Globe, Big Heart and Imperial Star. Artichokes can range in size from small artichokes—2 or 3 ounces each—to jumbo artichokes which can weigh as much as 20 ounces each.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- High in sodium
- High in fiber
- High in vitamin C

USES

Artichokes can be boiled, steamed, microwaved or sautéed. They can be eaten whole or added to other dishes. Small artichokes are good for pickling, stews and casseroles; medium size are good for salads; and large size are good for stuffing.

Some artichokes are grown in Nebraska.



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Asparagus

Choose green stalks with dark green to purplish tips which are closed and compact. Thinner stalks are more tender than thicker stalks.

Asparagus are vegetables which grow as plant stalks (stems).

Many Greeks and Romans not only enjoyed the taste of asparagus but also believed the myth it possessed medicinal properties (from healing toothaches to preventing bee stings). Asparagus gained popularity in France and England in the 16th Century and was then introduced to North America.

In the United States 80% of asparagus are grown in California. Asparagus season is early spring.

VARIETIES

Asparagus can be found in two varieties. Green asparagus is the most common in the United States, while white asparagus is more popular in Europe. White asparagus is grown under the soil.

Many asparagus are grown in Nebraska.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of fiber
- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of iron

USES

Asparagus is good steamed, stir-fried or cooked in the microwave. It can be used in salads, pasta dishes, stir fries or eaten cold with your favorite dip.



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Avocado

Avocados skin range in color from yellowish green to dark purplish black depending on the variety – most have a yellow to a pale green flesh. The skin and large seed need to be removed before eating.

Avocados are fruit which grow on trees.

Avocados were first cultivated in South America with later migration to Mexico. It was believed a Mayan princess ate the first avocado and it held mystical and magical power. European sailors traveling to the New World used avocados as their form of "butter."

One tree can produce up to 400 avocados a year. California is currently the largest producer of avocados in the United States. Avocados are available year round in stores.

VARIETIES

There are several varieties of avocados, and each have a unique flavor and texture. The most common varieties found in the United States are: Fuerte, Gwen, Hass, Pinkerton, Reed, and Zutano. Most avocados are pear shaped.

Avocados are not grown in Nebraska.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- High in vitamin B6
- A good source of vitamin C
- High in vitamin E
- A good source of potassium, magnesium, folate and fiber

USES

Avocados can be used to make guacamole, added to salads, put on sandwiches, used as butter on your toast, or in place of sour cream.

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Banana

Bananas are a long, thick-skinned fruit. They have a peel which comes off easily. Bananas ripen after they have been picked. They are ripe when the skin is yellow and speckled with brown spots. Avoid bananas with brown spots that seem very soft.

Bananas are fruit which grow in hanging clusters on plants which look like — but are not — trees.

Bananas originally came from the Malaysian area in Southeast Asia.

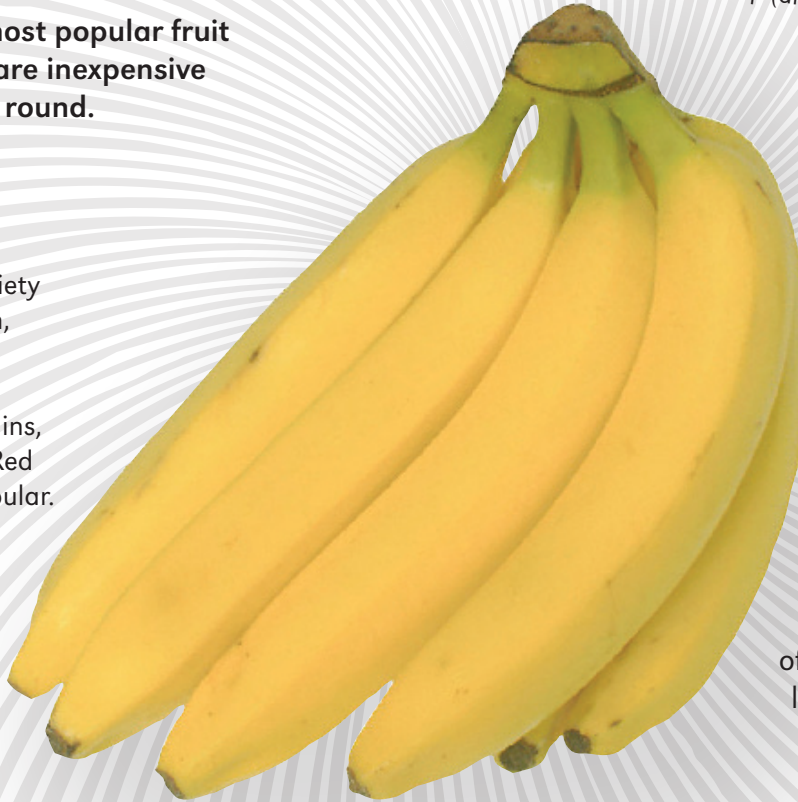
Grown in many tropical regions, bananas are the fourth most important food crop (after rice, wheat and corn).

Bananas are the most popular fruit in the world. They are inexpensive and available year round.

VARIETIES

The most popular variety of banana, Cavendish, is the familiar yellow type found in most grocery stores. Plantains, Finger Bananas and Red Bananas are also popular. Plantains need to be cooked before eating.

Although some wild varieties have hard seeds, almost all bananas people eat are seedless.



NUTRITION FACTS

- High calories
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- High in potassium
- High in vitamin C
- High in vitamin A

USES

Bananas are delicious eaten after peeling off the skin. Enjoy a banana for lunch or as a snack. Eat sliced bananas in cereal, yogurt or on a peanut butter sandwich. Banana bread and muffins are very popular.

Bananas are not grown in Nebraska.



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Bell Pepper

Bell peppers come in a variety of colors, sizes and shapes. Their skin should be firm and the stem should be fresh and green. Take out the seeds on the inside before eating.

Bell peppers are vegetables which grow on plants.

Peppers were originally grown in **Central and South America**.

Peppers can be grouped into two broad categories—sweet peppers (which are mild) and chile peppers (which are hot).
Bell peppers are the most common sweet pepper.

California and Florida grow about 78% of the bell peppers grown in the United States.

VARIETIES

Bell peppers can be found in a rainbow of colors and can vary in flavor. The variety of the pepper plant and the stage of the ripeness determine the flavor and color of each pepper. For example, a red bell pepper is simply a mature green bell pepper. As a bell pepper ages, its flavor becomes sweeter and milder.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Very high in vitamin C
- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of beta-carotene

USES

Peppers are good to eat raw or with vegetable dip. Use a variety of colored peppers in your salads. Add peppers to your pasta, Chinese, or Mexican dishes.

Many bell peppers are grown in Nebraska.



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Broccoli

Choose bunches with tight florets that are dark green, purplish or bluish green. Stalks should be very firm. Florets are richer in beta-carotene than the stalks.

Broccoli are vegetables which grow as florets (clusters of flower buds) on stalks (stems).

Broccoli has been around for more than 2,000 years and was first grown in Italy. The name broccoli comes from the Latin word brachium, which means "branch" or "arm." Americans have grown broccoli for over 200 years.

Broccoli is a member of the cabbage family, which may help prevent certain types of cancer. Broccoli has as much calcium per ounce as milk.

Fresh broccoli contains more nutrients than frozen broccoli.

VARIETIES

There are many varieties. In the United States the most common type of broccoli is the Italian Green Sprouting variety.

Many broccoli are grown in Nebraska.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of folate, iron, calcium and fiber

USES

Steam broccoli or eat it raw with your favorite dip. Add broccoli to salads, soups, stews, casseroles and stir-fries.



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Brussels Sprouts

Brussels sprouts look like little heads of cabbage. They are similar in taste to cabbage, but are slightly milder in flavor and denser in texture.

Brussels sprouts are vegetables which grow as small leafy heads on plant stems.

Brussels sprouts were named after the capital of Belgium where it is thought they were first grown. They are one of the few vegetables that originated in northern Europe. French settlers in Louisiana introduced Brussels sprouts to America.

Most Brussels sprouts are grown in California. They are available all year long, but their peak growing season is fall to early spring.

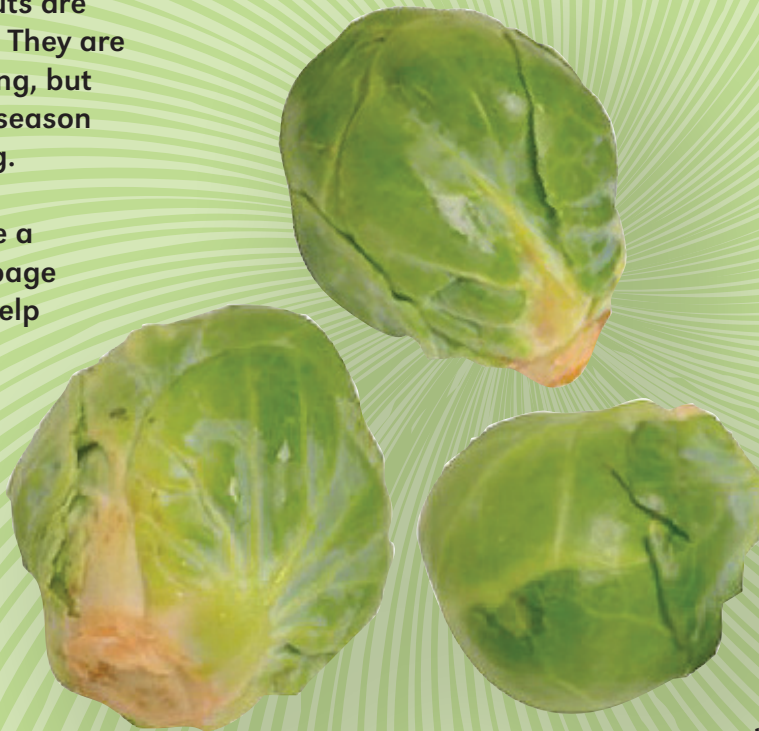
Brussels sprouts are a member of the cabbage family, which may help prevent certain types of cancer.

NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- High in potassium
- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of vegetable protein

VARIETIES

Most Brussels sprouts are alike.



USES

Brussels sprouts can be steamed, boiled, or microwaved. They make a tasty addition to soups, stews and casseroles.

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Cabbage

Cabbage heads are solid, glossy and light green in color. The stem end should look healthy, trimmed and not dry or split.

Cabbage are vegetables which grow as leafy heads.

Cabbage originated nearly 2,000 years ago in the Mediterranean region. Cabbage was introduced to America in 1541-42 by French explorer Jacques Cartier, who planted it in Canada.

Cabbage is a cheap and widely used food. It may help reduce the risk of certain cancers. Cabbage needs to be kept cold so it retains its vitamin C.

VARIETIES

There are at least 100 types of cabbage grown in the world. The most common varieties in the United States are Green, Red and Savoy. Chinese varieties are also available. The two most common Chinese varieties are Bok Choy and Napa.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Rich in vitamin C

USES

Cabbage is delicious in salads or as coleslaw. It can be steamed, boiled, microwaved or stir-fried. It can also be added to pasta, soups or stews. Sauerkraut is made from cabbage.

Many cabbage are grown in Nebraska.



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Cantaloupe

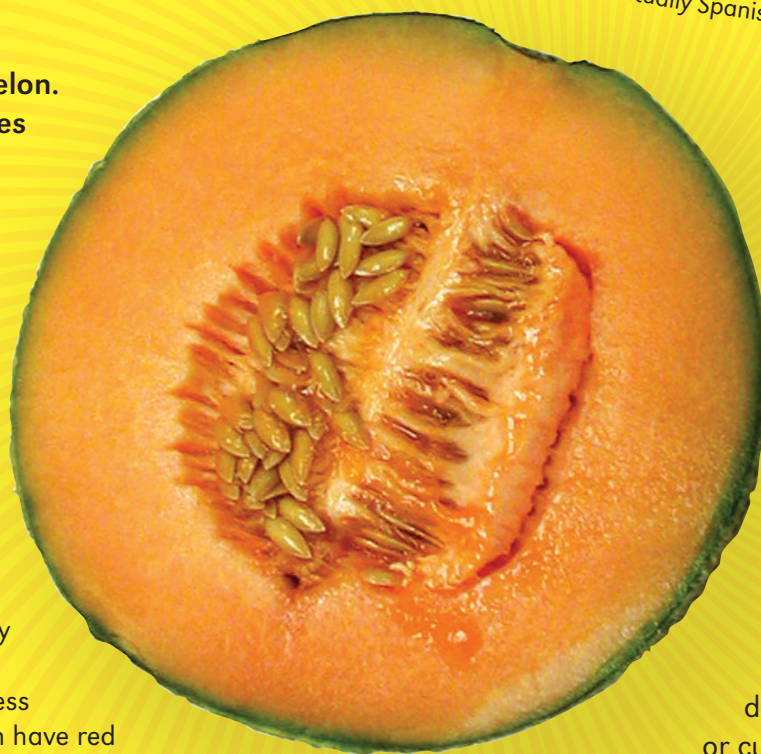
In the United States, cantaloupe are commonly called muskmelon.

Muskmelon are round with a light-brown rind (thick skin) and orange flesh. The rind is not eaten. The center has seeds which need to be scooped out before eating.

Cantaloupe are fruit which grow on vines.

Many melons originated in the Middle East. Ancient Egyptians and Romans enjoyed cantaloupe. Melon seeds were transported to North America by Christopher Columbus and eventually Spanish explorers grew them in California.

Cantaloupe are a melon. Other melons includes honeydew and watermelon. Melons are in the same gourd family as squash and cucumbers.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of potassium
- High in vitamin A

VARIETIES

In the United States, the most popular variety is the North American cantaloupe. There are less common varieties which have red or yellow flesh. European cantaloupe have pale green skin.

USES

Cantaloupe is delicious raw. It is usually sliced or cut into chunks. Add cantaloupe to fruit salads, fruit soups or salsa. Serve as a dessert with some ice cream and chocolate sauce.

Many cantaloupe are grown in Nebraska.



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Carrots

Pick carrots which are a dark orange in color.
More beta-carotene is present in carrots which have a dark orange color.

Carrots are vegetables which grow in the ground as taproots (main roots of a plant).

The carrot originated about 5,000 years ago in Middle Asia around Afghanistan.
In Roman times, carrots were purple or white.
In the 16th century, Dutch growers bred the vegetable to grow in the colors of the House of Orange.

Over half of the carrots grown in the United States are grown in California. Carrots are available all year long.

VARIETIES

The variety of carrots usually found in supermarkets is 7 to 9 inches long and $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. Baby carrots were once longer carrots that have been peeled, trimmed and packaged. There are many other varieties of carrots with colors including white, yellow, red and purple.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Good source of fiber
- High in beta-carotene
- High in vitamin A

USES

Raw carrots make a perfect snack. They can also be cooked (steamed or microwaved). Add carrots to salads, soups and stews, or shred and bake them into cakes or breads.

Many carrots are grown in Nebraska.



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Cauliflower

In its early stages, cauliflower looks like broccoli, which is its closest relative. While broccoli opens outward to sprout bunches of green florets, cauliflower forms a compact head of undeveloped white flower buds.

Cauliflower are vegetables which grow as flowers on plants.

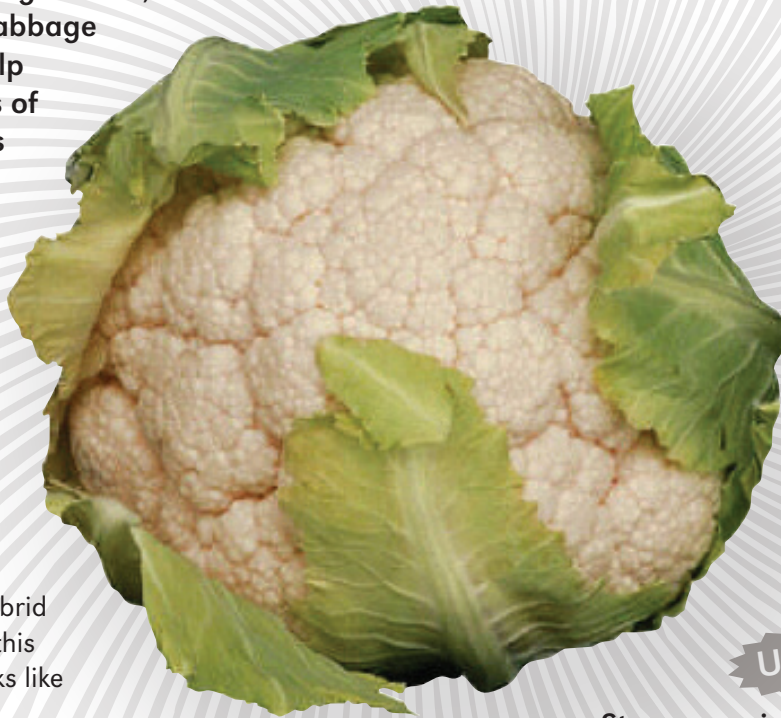
The cauliflower originated over 2,000 years ago in the Mediterranean and Asia Minor region. Almost all cauliflower grown in the United States comes from California.

Cauliflower, or “cabbage flower,” is a member of the cabbage family, which may help prevent certain types of cancer. Cauliflower is available year round but is more plentiful in the fall.

VARIETIES

There are two types of cauliflower:

- creamy white – more popular in the United States
- cauliflower-broccoli hybrid – recently developed, this type of cauliflower looks like broccoli.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- High in vitamin C
- High in folate
- High in fiber
- Good source of complex carbohydrates

USES

Cauliflower can be eaten raw or cooked.

Steam or microwave, instead of boiling, to better preserve its vitamin content.

Many cauliflower are grown in Nebraska.



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Grapes

Grapes come in many colors; black, blue, blue-black, golden, red, green, and purple. When buying grapes look for firm, plump, well colored clusters that are securely attached to their green stems.

Grapes are fruit which grow in clusters on vines.

Grapes are one of the oldest fruits to be grown. Grapes can be traced back as far as biblical times. Spanish explorers introduced grapes to America about 300 years ago. Most grapes eaten in the United States are grown in California.

Grapes are about 80% water, making them a delicious low-calorie snack or dessert.

Raisins are dried grapes and contain only about 15% water. For this reason nutrients and calories are more concentrated in raisins.

VARIETIES

Grapes come in more than 50 varieties. The two main types are American and European, which are available as seeded or seedless. Common varieties include Thompson, Flame, Ruby, Perlette and Tokay.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Good source of fiber
- Sodium free
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- High in vitamin C
- High in potassium

USES

Some of the most popular ways in which grapes are used are eaten fresh, dried into raisins, or made into jam, jelly or 100% juice.

Many grapes are grown in Nebraska.



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Grapefruit

The outer peel is usually glossy yellow — sometimes blushed with pink. The fruit within is segmented, ranging in color from white to ruby red (usually 11–14 segments). Do not eat the peel or seeds.

Grapefruits are fruit which grow in clusters (like grapes) on trees.

A relatively new fruit, grapefruit originated in the West Indies in the early 1700's. Grapefruit was first introduced to Florida in the 1820's.

Grapefruits are a member of the citrus family. In the United States, about 80% of grapefruits are grown in Florida. Texas, California and Arizona also grow grapefruit.

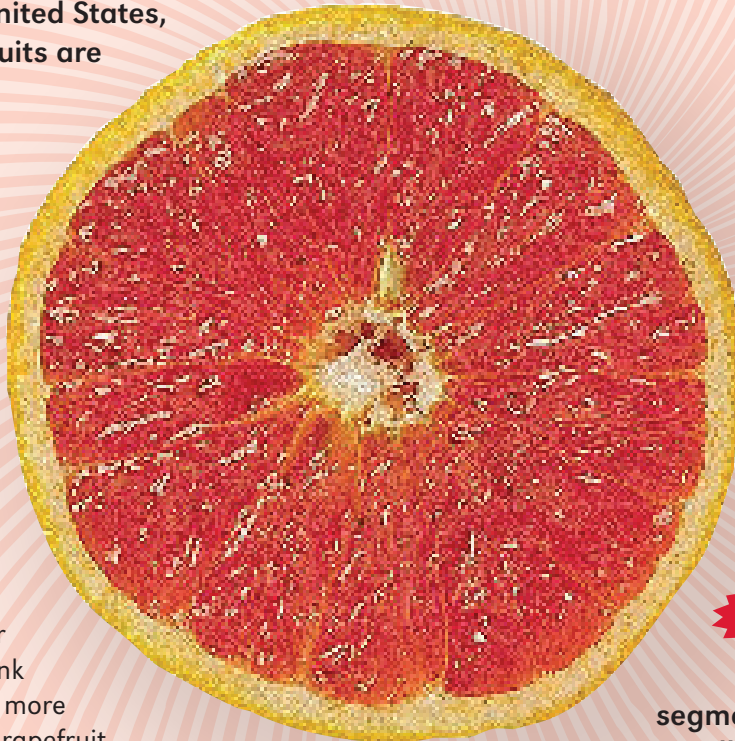
VARIETIES

There are three major varieties of grapefruit:

- white
- pink/red
- star ruby/rio red

All grapefruits have a similar tangy-sweet flavor and are very juicy. The pink and red varieties contain more vitamins than the white grapefruit varieties. Some grapefruits have seeds and some are seedless.

Grapefruits are not grown in Nebraska.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin C
- High in potassium

USES

Grapefruit can be eaten raw or cooked. Eat raw for breakfast or add segments to a salad. It can also be grilled or baked. Drink grapefruit juice plain or enjoy in a slushie.



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Greens

Greens should have fresh, green leaves. Before cleaning, remove any wilted or yellow leaves. Wash under clean, running water.

Greens are vegetables which grow as plant leaves.

Greens date back to ancient times.
Many greens descended from wild cabbage which originated in the Mediterranean region and Asia Minor.

Greens are vegetables that include any type of cabbage where the green leaves do not form a compact head. In the United States, cooking greens are a southern tradition. Most greens are available all year long.

VARIETIES

There are many varieties of greens. The ones most often found in the supermarkets are: collard, mustard, kale, swiss chard and broccoli rabe. Some greens come in bunches (such as collards and kale) and some have stems or stalks (such as mustard, swiss chard and broccoli rabe).



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of vitamin C

USES

Greens can be served raw in salads. They are often cooked (boiled, steamed or microwaved). Add to stir-fries, soups or stews.

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Kiwifruit

Kiwifruits are small and round shaped. They are fuzzy brown on the outside and bright green with tiny black seeds on the inside. The skin can be eaten or it can be peeled.

Kiwifruits are fruit which grow on vines (similar to grapes).

The kiwifruit originated in China over 700 years ago where it was called "Yangtao."

In 1906, seeds were sent to New Zealand and renamed the "Chinese Gooseberry."
In 1962, it was first shipped to the United States and renamed "Kiwifruit" after New Zealand's national bird, the "kiwi."
In North America, South America and Europe, the "fruit" part of the name is usually dropped, and simply called "kiwi."

California produces around 98% of the kiwifruits grown in the United States. Other countries which grow kiwifruits are Italy, New Zealand and Chile.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Good source of fiber
- Good source of vitamin C
- Rich in vitamin E
- High in potassium

VARIETIES

There are over 400 varieties of kiwifruits. The Hayward is the most popular in the United States. Kiwifruits are available year round.

USES

Kiwifruits are usually eaten raw. They can be eaten whole like an apple or cut into quarters like an orange. Another way to eat them is to cut them in half and scoop out the flesh with a spoon. Add slices to fruit salads, salsa or cereal.

Some kiwifruits are grown in Nebraska.



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Lettuce

The general rule of thumb is, the darker the leaves, the more nutritious it is. Lettuce should have fresh, green leaves which are not wilted, brown or slimy. Wash under clean, running water.

Lettuce is a vegetable which grows as plant leaves.

Lettuce actually started out as a weed around the Mediterranean Sea. This vegetable has been eaten for over 4,500 years, and was known to the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. Christopher Columbus introduced lettuce to North America and it has been grown here since.

California raises more lettuce than any other state; followed by Arizona, Florida and Texas.

VARIETIES

There are four main types of lettuce and each type has different varieties:

- Butterhead – forms a loose head and has a buttery texture.
- Crisphead – pale green with leaves packed in a tight head.
- Looseleaf – doesn't form a head, but instead the leaves are joined at the stem.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of beta-carotene
- Good source of iron
- Good source of folate
- Good source of fiber

USES

Lettuce is usually eaten raw. Lettuce is often used in salads – a mixture of lettuces can be used. Add lettuce to all types of sandwiches (including hamburgers) and tacos.

Some lettuce is grown in Nebraska.



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Orange

The outer peel is usually a yellow orange color. Oranges range in size from small to large. The fruit inside is orange and made of several easily separated segments (usually about 10 segments). Do not eat the peel or seeds.

Oranges are fruit which grow on trees.

It is believed oranges originated in Southeast Asia.

Christopher Columbus and other explorers brought orange seeds and seedlings with them to North America. By the 1820's, there were orange groves growing in St. Augustine, Florida.

Oranges are a member of the citrus family. Florida is the number one producer of oranges in the United States. However, California, Texas and Arizona also grow and sell oranges. 90% of Florida's oranges go into juice.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin
- High in folate, calcium, potassium, thiamin, niacin and magnesium

VARIETIES

Varieties include the sweet orange, the sour orange and the mandarin orange (or tangerine). The United States mostly produces sweet orange varieties, including: Hamlin, Parson Brown, Valencia and Navel. Some oranges have seeds and some are seedless.

USES

Peel and eat as a whole fruit or add to fruit salads. Drink 100% juice or use the juice in dips, sauces, smoothies and baked goods.

Oranges are not grown in Nebraska.



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Papaya

Papayas are similar to melons, but they are not in the melon family. The thin skin varies from green to orange to rose. The skin is not eaten. The flesh inside is yellow-orange. The center has seeds which are scooped out before eating.

Papayas are fruit which grow on plants which look like — but are not — trees.

It is believed papayas originated in southern Mexico and Central America.

Most of the papayas grown in the United States are grown in Hawaii. Some are also grown in Florida and California. Papayas are available year round.

VARIETIES

There are two types of papayas:

- Hawaiian — the Hawaiian varieties are found most often in grocery stores. They are pear shaped, weigh about 1 pound and have a yellow skin when ripe. The flesh is bright orange or pink depending on the variety.
- Mexican — the Mexican varieties are much larger. They can be more than 15 inches long and weigh up to 20 pounds.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin A
- Very high in vitamin C
- Good source of folate, potassium and fiber

USES

Papayas are usually eaten raw. They can be eaten plain or added to smoothies, salsa and fruit salads.

Papayas are not grown in Nebraska.



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Peach

Peaches are about the size of a baseball. Their skin color is yellow or cream, sometimes blushed with red depending on the variety. The skin is slightly fuzzy. The flesh inside is usually yellow, but depending on the variety may also be white. An oval pit in the center needs to be removed before eating.

Peaches are fruit which grow on trees.

Peaches originally came from China and have been grown for thousands of years.
In the early 1600's, Spanish explorers brought the peach to the new world.

In the United States, most peaches are grown in California and the southern states. Georgia is known as the "Peach State." Peaches are available almost all year.

VARIETIES

There are two main types of varieties:

- Freestone – the flesh does not stick to the pit, so it is easy to remove the pit by hand. These varieties are usually sold fresh.
- Clingstone – the flesh "clings" or sticks to the pit. These varieties are usually used for canning.

Nectarines are a type of peach which have smooth skin without fuzz.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of vitamin C

USES You can buy peaches fresh, canned or frozen. Peaches are usually enjoyed raw. Fresh peaches are a great snack. Add peaches to cereal, smoothies and fruit salads. Peaches can also be baked or grilled.

Some peaches are grown in Nebraska.



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Pear

Pears come in a variety of shapes, sizes and colors. Skin colors include green, golden yellow and red. The peel is good to eat and has many nutrients. Do not eat the seeds.

Pears are fruit
which grow on trees.

One of the world's oldest fruits, pears were known to both the Greeks and the Romans.
Early colonists brought pears to the United States in the 1700's.

Pears are a relative of the apple. Pears rank second to the apple as the most popular fruit eaten in the United States. Washington, Oregon and California produce 97 percent of the pears in the United States.

VARIETIES

There are several varieties of pears including, Anjoe, Bartlett, Bosc, Comice, Forelly and Seckel. Among these varieties there are only small differences in flavor and texture. Pears are available most of the year.

Choose pears with no bruises or dark brown spots. Wash under clean, running water before eating.

Many pears are
grown in Nebraska.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- High in fiber
- High in potassium
- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of fiber

USES

Pears can be eaten raw or cooked. They are great to eat as a quick snack. Chop and add to fruit salads. They can also be baked, broiled or grilled. Use pears where you would use apples.

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Pineapple

Pineapples are oval shaped and up to 12 inches long. They weigh 1 to 10 pounds or more.

The tough rind (thick skin) may be dark green, yellow, orange-yellow or red. The flesh ranges from nearly white to yellow. The leafy top, rind – and usually the core – are cut off before eating.

The pineapple originated in southern Brazil and Paraguay. Christopher Columbus may have carried it back to Spain.

Pineapples are fruit which grow on short-stemmed plants.

The name pineapple in English (or piña in Spanish) comes from the similarity of the fruit to a pine cone. In the United States, most pineapples are grown in Hawaii.

VARIETIES

There are four varieties of pineapple found in grocery stores today. These include, the Gold, Smooth Cayenne, Red Spanish and Sugar-loaf. They are sold fresh or canned and all have a sweet flavor.

Pineapples are not grown in Nebraska.

NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin C

USES

Pineapple can be eaten raw or cooked. Add pineapple to fruit salad, salsa, pizza or stir-fries. It can also be grilled or broiled with meat.



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Potato

Most potatoes have a light brown or red skin with white flesh. Some of the new varieties have purple/blue skin with yellow flesh. The peel is good to eat and has many nutrients. Cut off any green spots or sprouts.

Potatoes are vegetables which grow in the ground as tubers (fleshy, underground stems).

Potatoes were first grown in the Andes Mountain of South America over 7,000 years ago. Spaniards brought potatoes to Spain in the 1500's, which then gradually spread to the rest of Europe. Irish immigrants introduced potatoes to North America in the 18th century.

Potatoes are the second most popular vegetable in the world (after corn). They are inexpensive and available year round. Idaho grows 30% of the potatoes grown in the United States.

The potato has only a very distant relationship with the sweet potato, but because both vegetables grow in the ground, they have been often confused.

VARIETIES

There are thousands of varieties of potatoes. Common North American potato varieties include:

- Russet Burbank
- Yellow Finn
- Red Gold
- German Butterball
- Yukon Gold

Many potatoes are grown in Nebraska.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of fiber
- High in potassium
- High in vitamin C

USES

Potatoes can be eaten raw, but are usually cooked (boiled, baked, microwaved, mashed, fried or grilled). Potatoes can be added to soups, stews or casseroles. Other popular ways to eat potatoes are: potato salad, hashbrowns, potato chips and French fries. Potatoes prepared with little or no added fat are more nutritious.



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Spinach

Spinach should have fresh, green leaves that are not limp, damaged or spotted. Leaves should be dull green on top and bright green on the underside. Wash under clean, running water.

Spinach is a vegetable which grows as plant leaves.

Spinach is believed to be of Persian origin and was introduced into Europe in the 15th century. Spinach was not commonly eaten in the United States until the early 19th century.

Most spinach is grown in Texas and California. Fresh spinach is available year round.

VARIETIES

There are three basic types of spinach:

- Flat or smooth leaf — has unwrinkled, spade-shaped leaves (usually used for canned and frozen spinach or in other processed foods)
- Savoy — has crinkly, dark green curly leaves (usually sold fresh)
- Semi-Savoy — has slightly curly leaves (usually sold fresh)



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Low sodium
- High in potassium
- High in vitamin C
- * Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of iron, fiber and vegetable protein

USES

Spinach tastes good raw or cooked. Serve raw in salads or on sandwiches. It can be steamed, boiled, microwaved, sautéed or stir-fried. It can also be added to soups, lasagna or other vegetable dishes.

Many spinach are grown in Nebraska.



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Squash

Squash come in many different colors, sizes and shapes. They have a rind (thick skin) which protects the fleshy part of the vegetable. The center has seeds which are usually scooped out before eating.

Squash are vegetables. Depending on the variety, they either grow on vines or bushes.

Squash originated in North America over 5,000 years ago.

It was one of the "three sisters" planted by Native Americans, along with maize (corn) and beans. Squash was grown and eaten by early Europeans that settled in America.

Squash are in the same gourd family as melons and cucumbers.

VARIETIES

Squash are commonly divided into two groups:

- Summer squash — the rinds are rich in beta-carotene and can be eaten. Zucchini is the most popular variety in the United States.
- Winter squash — usually have a hard rind which is not eaten. Some popular varieties are pumpkin, butternut, acorn and spaghetti squash.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- High in vitamin C

USES

Squash is often cooked, but some summer squash may be eaten raw (try with vegetable dip or add to salads). You may steam, sauté, grill or bake squash. Add to stir-fries, soups and casseroles. Bake in breads, cakes and pies. Sometimes the seeds are eaten.

Many squash are grown in Nebraska.



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Strawberry

Strawberries should be bright red. The average strawberry has 200 tiny seeds on the outside. The leaf “cap” is removed before eating.

Strawberries are fruit which grow on plants.

Wild strawberries have been known since the times of the Greeks and Romans. The strawberries native to the Americas were bigger than European strawberries.

Strawberries are the most popular of all berries. However, strawberries are not a “true” berry.

California grows 83% of the strawberries grown in the United States.

VARIETIES

There are more than 70 varieties of strawberries. Strawberries are usually available almost year round, with peak season from April to July.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of potassium and fiber

USES

Strawberries are usually eaten raw. Eat whole as a great snack. Add to fruit salads, smoothies and cereal. Use as a topping for ice cream, pancakes or waffles. Strawberry shortcake is very popular.

Many strawberries are grown in Nebraska.



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Sweet Potato

Sweet potatoes are usually the size of regular white potatoes. They are long and tapered. Sweet potatoes have smooth, thin skins which can be eaten.

Sweet potatoes are vegetables which grow in the ground as tuberous roots (fleshy, side roots).

Sweet potatoes originated in the tropical Americas at least 5,000 years ago. Christopher Columbus introduced sweet potatoes to Europe, and later explorers introduced them to Asia. China is now the world's largest grower of sweet potatoes.

In the United States, sweet potatoes are commonly called yams. True yams are usually grown in Africa and Asia – they have a pinkish white center and can grow up to 6 feet long and 100 pounds!

The sweet potato has only a very distant relationship with the potato, but because both vegetables grow in the ground, they have been often confused.

VARIETIES

There are two varieties of sweet potatoes

- Pale yellow – with a dry, yellow flesh
- Dark orange – with a moist flesh. The dark orange is plumper in shape and somewhat sweeter than the pale yellow variety.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- High in vitamin C
- High in vitamin A
- Good source of calcium and potassium
- Excellent source of fiber

USES

Sweet potatoes can be eaten raw, but are usually cooked (boiled, baked microwaved, mashed or fried). Add to stir-fries, soups and casseroles. Sweet potatoes are popular at Thanksgiving and Christmas meals.

Some sweet potatoes are grown in Nebraska.



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Tomato

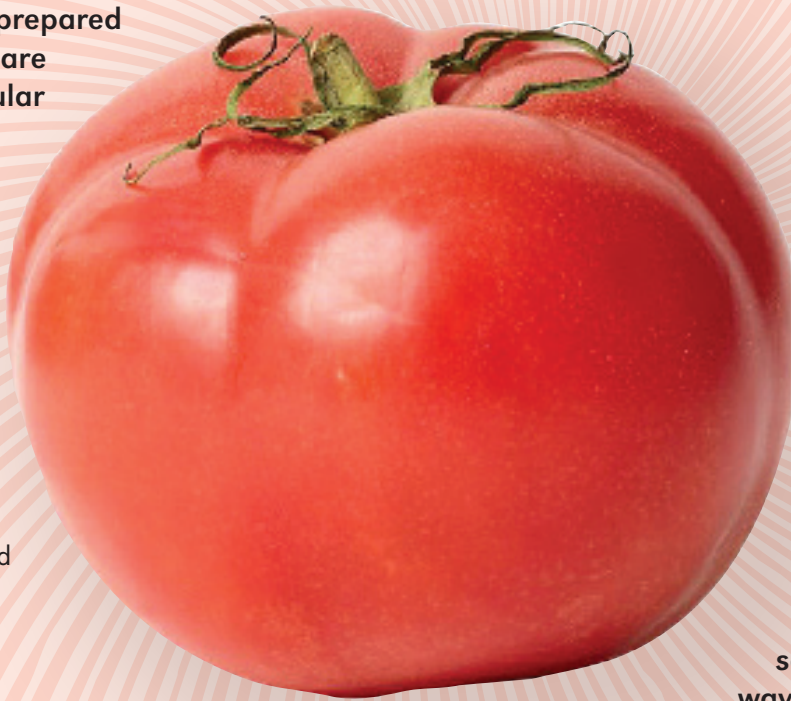
When ripe, the skin and flesh of most tomatoes are red or reddish-orange. They are usually round or oval shaped. Tomatoes range in size from 1 to 6 inches. Small seeds on the inside can be eaten.

Tomatoes are vegetables which grow on plants.

The tomato originated in the Andes Mountains in South America.

Maya and Aztec people grew tomatoes. Its name is derived from the Aztec word "tomatl". Spanish explorers introduced the tomato to Europe in the 1600's where it was embraced by Spaniards and Italians.

Tomatoes are in the fruit family, but they are served and prepared as a vegetable. They are one of the most popular vegetables eaten by Americans.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Very low Sodium
- Good source of vitamin A
- High in vitamin C

VARIETIES

There are thousands of tomato varieties. The most widely available varieties are classified into three groups: cherry, plum and slicing tomatoes.

USES

Tomatoes can be eaten raw or cooked (baked, stewed, grilled or stir-fried). They are wonderful to eat alone. Add to salads and sandwiches. Other popular ways to enjoy tomatoes are in soups, salsas and sauces. Tomato sauce is used in many pasta dishes such as spaghetti and on pizza. Ketchup is made from tomatoes.

Many tomatoes are grown in Nebraska.



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Watermelon

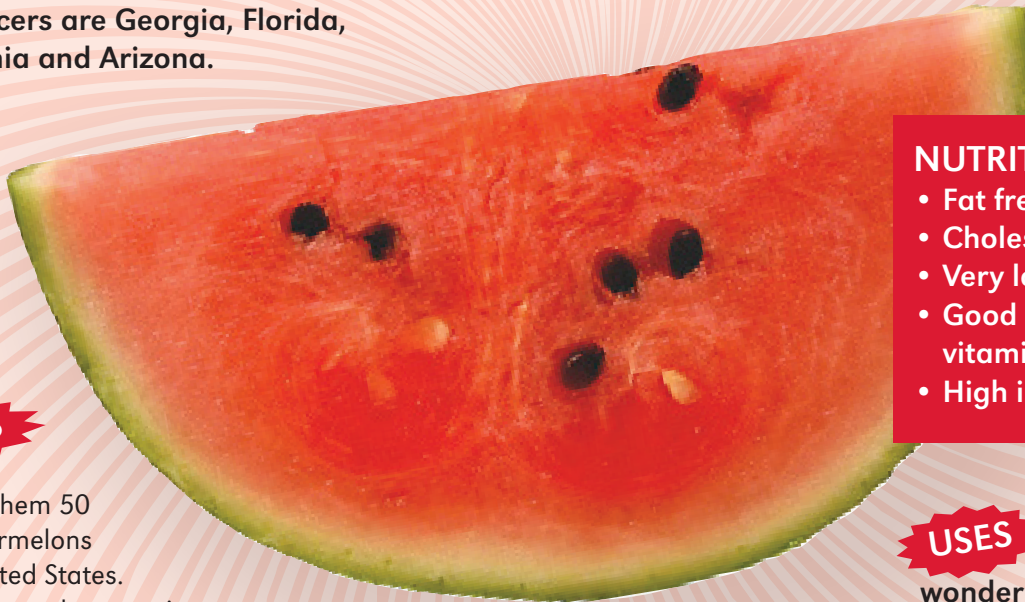
Watermelons are usually round or oblong and weigh 5 to 30 pounds. They have a smooth, green rind (thick skin) which is not eaten. Most watermelons have red flesh but there are orange and yellow-fleshed varieties. Some have seeds and some are seedless.

Watermelons are fruit which grow on vines.

Watermelon originated in Africa over 5,000 years ago.
By the 10th century, watermelons were being grown in China, which is today the world's largest watermelon producer. Americans eat about 17 pounds of watermelon a year.

44 states grow watermelons commercially.
The top producers are Georgia, Florida, Texas, California and Arizona.

Watermelons are a melon. Melons are in the same gourd family as squash and cucumbers.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Very low sodium
- Good source of vitamin A
- High in vitamin C

VARIETIES

There are more than 50 varieties of watermelons grown in the United States. There are four general categories: Allsweet, Ice-Box, Seedless and Yellow Flesh.

USES Watermelon is wonderful eaten alone. Add to fruit salads, salsa, cool drinks or desserts.

Many watermelons are grown in Nebraska.



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Zucchini

Zucchini are normally green, cylindrical vegetables with thick rinds that can be eaten.

Zucchini are vegetables which grow on vines.

The eating of zucchini dates back to 5,500 BC
Where it was an essential component of the diets of people in Central and South America

The name zucchini comes from the Italian word zucca, which means squash.

Zucchini are a type of summer squash. They belong in the gourd family with melons and cucumbers.

VARIETIES

Zucchini squash includes varieties such as scallopini, chayote, cucuzza, yellow crookneck, yellow straightneck, and sunburst.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Very low sodium
- Good source of vitamin B-6 and potassium
- Great source of vitamin C

USES

Raw zucchini is wonderful eaten alone. Try dipping it in dressing or adding it to salads and sandwiches.

Many zucchini are grown in Nebraska.



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Green Beans

Green beans are also called “snap beans” and “string beans”.

Green Beans are fresh beans in edible pods.

Green Beans are native to the Americas but are now grown worldwide.
They are the seventh most consumed vegetable in the United States.

It's best to choose loose beans so you can sort through them, looking for a smooth feel and vibrant green color with no brown spots or bruises with sturdy, crisp pods.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Very low sodium
- Good source of fiber and folate
- Great source of vitamin K

VARIETIES

Included in the family “green beans” are yellow wax beans, purple bush beans, and purple/beige heirloom varieties.

USES

To prepare, steam them briefly to get the best flavor, preserve the texture, and prevent nutrient loss. Store beans unwashed in a crisper for up to 7 days..

Many green beans are grown in Nebraska.



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