



Harvest of the Month | Family Newsletter

Strawberries



The United States is the world's largest producer of strawberries. They are grown in every state in the United States and almost every country in the world. Americans consume about eight pounds of strawberries per person per year, with about 75% being fresh strawberries and the remainder being frozen.

Did you know?

-  On average, there are 200 seeds in a strawberry, which is the only fruit with seeds on the outside.
-  In medieval times, strawberries were served at important functions as they were thought to bring peace and prosperity.
-  Strawberries are the first fruit to ripen in the spring in Pennsylvania. They do not continue to ripen after they are harvested.

Selection

Strawberries should have a bright red color, natural shine and fresh-looking cap (Calyx). They should be evenly shaped and firm, but not rock-hard. Avoid strawberries that are wrinkled, soft, spotted with mold, or have more than just a touch of green or white around the caps.



Storage

Ideal storage temperature for strawberries is 32°F with a relative humidity of 95%. Under those conditions, strawberries are acceptable for up to 2 weeks. Strawberries stored at general refrigeration temperatures below 41°F will have a shelf life of approximately 3 days. Strawberries may be held in dry storage for up to 24 hours. Strawberries may be stored with any refrigerated produce since they are not ethylene producers or ethylene-sensitive.

Harvest Season

According to the PA Preferred Seasonal Calendar, strawberries are in season in Pennsylvania in May and June.

Handling

Check strawberries for any sign of mold growth. Discard berries with mold and any adjacent berries to prevent further mold contamination.

Do not wash strawberries until they are ready for use or they will become mushy and develop mold quickly. Wash berries under cold, running water. Do not remove the caps prior to washing as doing so can result in a loss of juice and increase the amount of water absorbed, which may dilute the flavor of the strawberries.

Seal, date, and refrigerate cut berries immediately and use by the next day.

Nutrition

Strawberries are an excellent source of vitamin C. Vitamin C is important in the body's healing process and may play a role in guarding against heart disease and cancer. Vitamin C also helps the body absorb iron.



Serving Suggestions



While strawberries are delicious on their own, they can be enjoyed in many different ways:

- Add sliced strawberries to salads.
- Use strawberries as a topping on desserts such as angel food cake.
- Make a parfait with yogurt, strawberries, and granola.
- Use strawberries in smoothies.
- Top pancakes or waffles with strawberries.
- Add sliced strawberries to cereal.



Recipe | Strawberry Salad with Grapes, Feta, and Walnuts

Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients	Measure	Directions
Baby lettuce or spring mix	5 ounces	1. Place all salad ingredients into a large bowl. 2. Toss gently with the desired amount of balsamic vinaigrette dressing and serve immediately.
Sliced strawberries	1 cup	
Red grapes	1 cup	
Crumbled feta cheese	½ cup	
Toasted walnut pieces*	½ cup	
Balsamic vinaigrette dressing		

*To toast walnuts, place them on a rimmed baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 8–10 minutes or until fragrant.

Source: [Flavor the Moments](#)



Check out the PA Harvest of the Month website (www.paharvestofthemonth.org) for sources, additional resources, and recipes.

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