

Fruit of the Month

Peaches



The peach is a member of the rose family. It was first cultivated in China and revered as a symbol of longevity. The image was placed on pottery and received as a gift with great esteem. Travelers along caravan routes carried the peach seed to Persia before it was cultivated in Europe. In the early 1600s Spanish explorers brought it to the New World and by the 1700s missionaries had established peaches in California.

Varieties

Peaches are available almost all year. The season dictates the variety. Semi-freestones (Queencrest) are early season late April to June. In mid-June the market shifts to freestone (Elegant Lady) or clingstone. On the off seasons peaches are imported into the U.S. from Chile and Mexico. Fresh varieties are sold as freestone while clingstone is usually used for canning. The fruit inside these peaches is either yellow or white. The white flesh is a "sub-acid" fruit its flavor is more sugary sweet. The more traditional color is yellow. It's more acidic, which does give it a bit more flavor. Half of the United States crop comes from the South and the other half from California. The United States also produces 25% of the total world market (THE PACKER 1999).

Selecting

When selecting fresh peaches, look for ones that are soft to the touch, blemish free, and have a fragrant smell. Peaches that are mildly fragrant ripen into sweet and delicious flavors. Choose fruit that has a background color of yellow or cream and has a fresh looking appearance. Peaches may have some red "blush" depending on the variety, but this isn't a sign of how the fruit will taste after it's ripened. At home peaches can be ripened at room temperature in a brown paper bag in 2 to 3 days. Peaches are highly perishable, so don't buy more than you plan to use. When selecting can peaches, choose those labeled "packed in its own juice" and "no added sugar"; these are the healthier choices.

Storing

The best way to ripen stone fruit is to place the fruit in a paper bag, fold the top of the bag over loosely, and place the bag on the counter for one to three days. Never store hard fruit in the refrigerator, in plastic bags, or in direct sunlight.

Check the fruit daily. When it is ripe, it will be aromatic and will give slightly to gentle pressure. Once ripened, it can be stored in the refrigerator for about a week.

Use

Wash peaches carefully in cool soapy water, then rinse well before eating or using. Unless a recipe calls for it, you never need to peel the fruits; in fact, many of the nutrients found in stone fruits are contained in the peel, and it's highly recommended that the peel be consumed along with the flesh. If used in cooking they peel really fast if blanched in boiling water for a minute then

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 2 medium peaches (174g)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 70 Calories from Fat 0

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g **0%**

Saturated Fat 0g **0%**

Cholesterol 0mg **0%**

Sodium 0mg **0%**

Total Carbohydrate 19g **6%**

Dietary Fiber 1g **4%**

Sugars 16g

Protein 1g

Vitamin A 20% • Vitamin C 20%

Calcium 0% • Iron 0%

plunged into ice water to cool. In fruit salads or platters, sprinkle cut peaches with lemon juice to help them keep their great color.

Make Peaches Part of Your 5 A Day Plan



Whether fresh, canned or frozen, peaches are nutritious: fat free, cholesterol free, sodium free, and high in vitamins A and C. One serving in your 5 a day plan is equal to one medium size fruit, 1/2 cup of cut up, canned, frozen or fresh fruit, or 6 oz of 100% peach juice. Peaches can be enjoyed in a variety of ways.

- Slice peaches and add to your favorite cereal or as a topper to pancakes or waffles.
- Take a peach or a cup of canned peaches to work or school for a lite snack.
- Include peaches in low fat yogurt or cottage cheese and put on toast.
- Combine peaches and other fresh fruits into a fruit salad and use as a dessert or appetizer before dinner. Keep it tasty and brightly colored by adding a bit of concentrated orange juice.
- Make a peach smoothie with yogurt and peaches in a blender for breakfast or a snack.
- Bake, grill, or broil and serve along with your favorite meat or fish dinners.
- As a dessert cut it fresh and add to angel food cake or over low fat frozen yogurt
- Freeze a can of peaches in the freezer then open and blend in the blender for a great summer dessert sorbet.

Recipes

Peachy Crisp

Makes 6 (1 cup) servings

Each serving equals two 5 A Day servings

- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 3 Tbsp chilled stick margarine or butter, cut into small pieces
- 6 cups sliced peeled peaches (about 3 pounds)
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 1 cup raspberries
- 1 Tbsp granulated sugar
- 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- Cooking spray
- 1 Tbsp seedless raspberry jam, melted



Preheat oven to 375°

Lightly spoon flour into a dry measuring cup, and level with a knife. Combine flour, 1/4 cup granulated sugar, and brown sugar in a bowl; cut in margarine with a pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse meal.

Combine sliced peaches and lemon juice in a large bowl, and toss gently to coat. Add raspberries, 1 tablespoon granulated sugar, and cornstarch, and toss gently. Spoon fruit mixture into an 8-inch square baking dish coated with cooking spray, and drizzle raspberry jam evenly over fruit mixture. Sprinkle with flour mixture. Bake at 375° for 45 minutes or until brown.

Nutrition analysis per serving: calories 243, protein 2g, fat 4g, percent calories from fat 16%, cholesterol 10mg, carbohydrates 52g, fiber 5g, sodium 4mg

Pan-seared Chilean Sea Bass with Summerwhite Peach Salsa

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

2 cups (1 lb) fresh, ripe Summerwhite California peaches, pitted and sliced

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup minced scallions

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cilantro, chopped

jalapeno chilis, seeded, deveined and minced (to taste)

superfine sugar (to taste)

salt and pepper (to taste)

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh lime juice

$\frac{1}{2}$ t five-spice powder

2 Tbsp safflower oil

4 (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs) Chilean sea bass steaks, 6 oz each, skinned and boned

cilantro sprigs (for garnish)

lime wedges (for garnish)

Salsa: Combine diced peaches, scallions, cilantro, chilis, sugar, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Mix well. Set aside for at least one hour at room temperature or overnight in the refrigerator. Mix in lime juice before serving.

Fish: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix five-spice powder with oil and brush onto both sides of steaks. Heat large sauté pan over high heat until it begins to smoke. Sear sea bass until golden brown on both sides. Finish cooking to desired doneness in the oven.

To serve, place one steak on each of the four plates. Divide salsa evenly and spoon over and along side. Garnish with cilantro sprigs and lime wedges.

Nutrition analysis per serving: calories 299, protein 41g, fat 10g, percent calories from fat 29%, cholesterol 90mg, carbohydrates 11g, fiber 2g, sodium 266mg



Mock Frozen Peach "Daiquiri"

Makes 2 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

1 cup juice packed canned peaches

1 Tbsp Fresh lemon juice

2 Tbsp Frozen pink lemonade concentrate

Chill peaches in freezer until very cold. Add to blender container with pink lemonade concentrate, lemon juice, and crushed ice. Puree until smooth. Pour into glasses.

Nutrition analysis per serving: calories 89, protein 1g, fat 0g, percent calories from fat 1%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 24g, fiber 2g, sodium 6mg