

Strawberries



Along with spring showers, April brings ripe, red strawberries to market. While fresh strawberries are available year-round, nothing beats the in-season berries that appear from April through June. Pick up a basket or two and add a rosy touch of spring to salads, snacks, drinks and desserts.

Purchasing

- Strawberries are picked ripe, so unripened fruit will not ripen further after picking. Select plump, brightly colored berries with fresh green caps. If packaged in a container, check the bottom for bruised, moldy or shriveled berries.
- Sort the berries before storing them, discarding any that are moldy or bruised. Without washing or hulling them, refrigerate in a covered container for 2 to 3 days.

Yields

1 pint strawberries = 3 1/4 cups whole berries

1 pint strawberries = 2 1/4 cups sliced berries

1 pint strawberries = 1 2/3 cup pureed berries

1 cup whole strawberries = 4 ounces

Nutrition

Cholesterol and sodium free. Excellent source of vitamin C. Good source of fiber

Preparing

- Wash strawberries before hulling them and just before using them to preserve flavor. Simply give them a quick, gentle rinse in cold water. Never soak berries in water or they can become waterlogged. Gently pat dry with paper towels.
- Hulling strawberries removes their green caps and inner white cores. Use your fingertips to pull off the leafy caps and then cut out the soft white cores with the tip of a paring knife.
- Use an egg slicer to quickly and evenly slice washed and hulled strawberries. One pint yields about 2 cups sliced strawberries.

Freezing

- Wash and hull them. Pat them dry and place in a single layer on a baking sheet. Freeze until firm, then transfer to airtight freezer containers or bags. Freeze for up to 8 months.

Recipes

Strawberry Tossed Salad

- 3 tbsp unsweetened orange juice
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 2 1/2 cups torn leaf lettuce
- 2 cups torn Bibb lettuce
- 1 cup sliced fresh strawberries
- 2 tbsp thinly sliced green onions
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted

Combine first 3 ingredients in a small bowl; stir well. Combine lettuces, strawberries, green onions and sesame seeds in a large bowl; toss well. Add orange juice mixture and toss gently. Serve immediately.

No Sugar Strawberry Pie

- 3 cups water
- 4 tbsp cornstarch
- 8 individual packets NutraSweet or Splenda
- 2 small boxes sugar free strawberry gelatin
- 1 quart fresh strawberries
- 2 (8-inch) pie shells, baked

Slice strawberries, sprinkle with NutraSweet or Splenda. Mix cornstarch and water in a saucepan. Bring to a boil and cook until thickened; add gelatin. Combine mixture with strawberries. Pour into pie crust. Chill at least three hours.

Fresh Strawberry Sauce

- 1 pint fresh strawberries, hulled
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon or lime juice
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract

In a food processor, combine strawberries, sugar, lemon or lime juice and vanilla. Puree, then chill. Serve sauce over custard, ice cream or pound cake. Makes 2 cups.

Serving Ideas

- Toss sliced strawberries in salads or over bowls of your favorite cereal.
- Stir chopped strawberries into pancake or muffin batter.
- Add strawberries to your favorite blender drinks or milk shakes.
- Sprinkle a tablespoon of sugar over a pint of sliced berries and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Serve the syrupy strawberry sauce over scoops of ice cream.
- Dip whole, unhulled strawberries in melted baking chocolate. Place on waxed paper-lined cookie sheet until chocolate sets.
- Garnish desserts, such as prepared pudding, with whole or sliced strawberries.



Forsyth County Center
1450 Fairchild Rd
Winston-Salem NC 27105

336-703-2850
336-767-3557 (fax)
<http://forsyth.ces.ncsu.edu>
www.forsyth.cc/CES

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