

Tuck Tasty Florida Avocados Into Tacos

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Introduced to Florida in 1833, the avocado is native to the lands of Central America, Mexico and northern lands of South America and Peru. Most of the avocados grown in Florida are produced in Miami-Dade County, which has the ideal tropical climate for the fruit.

Avocados are a fruit, not a vegetable, and Florida produces more than 56 different varieties. They come in a wide variety of shapes, ranging from a round cannon ball to a teardrop to a football shape. The interior can range from bright yellow to yellow-green to a pale yellow. All avocados have a smooth, creamy texture and a delicate nutty flavor.

Generally available from late June to February, avocados are most plentiful from August to December. Store avocados at room temperature. When ripe, avocados will yield to gentle pressure. Need to speed the ripening process? Placing the avocado in a brown paper bag will cause it to ripen quicker. The peel of most Florida avocados stays green when ripe, but may be red or purple. Avocados can be stored in the bottom of the refrigerator for several days.

Some believe avocados are unhealthy because they are high in fat. However, a one ounce serving contains about 5 grams of fat, the majority of which is monounsaturated fat. Studies have shown that small amounts of monounsaturated fats in the diet can decrease the risk of heart disease and certain types of cancer. Keep in mind that sources of monounsaturated fats are still high in calories and should be consumed in moderation.

One quarter cup of a Florida avocado (approximately 1/4 lb, pureed) contains 69 Calories, 6g Fat, 1.3g Protein, 5g Carbohydrate, 200mg Potassium and 3g Fiber.

Keep these preparation tips in mind when serving avocado:

- Only use fully ripened avocados.
- Avocados discolor and turn brown when cut and exposed to air. To slow this process, sprinkle immediately with lime or lemon juice.
- Avocados taste best when served at room temperature.
- Cutting an Avocado: Cut in half lengthwise around the seed, turning halves in opposite directions to separate. Gently lift the seed out with a finger or spoon. Using a knife, peel off the skin. Slice or dice with flat, cut side down.

Avocado Tacos

1 ripe avocado, peeled and seeded

1 medium onion, thinly sliced

2 large green peppers, thinly sliced

2 large red peppers, thinly sliced

1 cup fresh cilantro, finely chopped

1 1/2 cups tomato salsa

12 flour tortillas

Non-stick cooking spray

Spray skillet with cooking spray. Lightly sauté onion and green and red peppers. Cut avocado into 12 slices. Warm tortillas in oven and fill with peppers, onions, avocado slices and salsa. Fold tortilla and serve.