



Black Grapes

Serving Size per Meal Contribution: 1/4 cup whole fruit (about 7 large grapes)

Approximately 10.8 servings per pound

Peak Availability: May through January for California grown grapes;

“The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes...” —William Shakespeare (1564-1616) ‘Coriolanus’

History



One of the oldest fruits to be grown, grapes can be traced back as far as biblical times. Thought to have originated in Central Asia and the Mediterranean, they were brought to America about 300 years ago by Spanish explorers. Grapes are available in green, blue, red, black and golden varieties, the most common being the red. There are now more than 50 varieties on the market. The two most common types are American and European, which are available as seeded or seedless. Black grapes are less common than their red or green colored counterparts, but share a similar sweet juicy flavor and equal nutritional value.

Nutrition

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

Grapes are about 80% water, making them a delicious low-calorie snack or dessert. A good source of fiber and high in vitamin C and potassium, grapes are a healthy accompaniment to any meal and a good snack choice. Black grapes lend an even greater nutrition profile to your plate because of their more concentrated antioxidant level. Their darker coloring displays quercetin and resveratrol content in their skin, which have been demonstrated to help reduce both cholesterol and the risk of heart disease. Resveratrol may also help reduce the risk of prostate cancer, boost the immune system and reduce the effects of inflammation.



Prep and Storage

Since grapes tend to spoil and ferment at room temperature, they should always be stored in the refrigerator. Loosely wrap unwashed grapes in a paper towel and place them in an airtight container or plastic bag. This way, they'll keep fresh in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. Simply rinse with cool water and drain before serving.

To peel grapes, start at the stem end and separate the skin from the pulp using a knife. For easy skin removal, dip grapes in boiling water for 30 seconds, then place in cold water.

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. Consider the following ideas for incorporating fresh black grapes:

- Toss grapes into both fruit and vegetable salads
- Mix in with yogurt and cereal as part of a breakfast bar or in a parfait
- Slice in half and pile on top of waffles, French toast, or pancakes
- Freeze and rename them ‘Polar Berries.’ For grape kebobs, skewer grapes, banana slices dipped in lemon, apple chunks and pineapple cubes. Brush with a combination of melted butter, honey, lemon or lime juice and ground nutmeg. Broil until heated.
- Serve a combination of different colored grapes for visual interest

To freeze, wash and pat them dry, then arrange in a single layer on a cookie sheet and place in freezer. (Patting the grapes dry is important, because excess moisture can cause the grapes to stick together and become one large frozen fruit clump.) Once frozen, transfer grapes to a heavy plastic bag and return them to the freezer.





Did you know...?

- Approximately 500 California farmers grow nearly 100 million boxes of grapes each year.
- 99% of grapes commercially grown in the United States are grown in California.
- Grapes from California are available May-January.
- Grapes are considered berries, with an average of 100 berries on a bunch.
- If left alone, a grapevine will spread 50 feet or more.
- One of the most popular Chinese tongue twisters (chi putao bu tu putao pi) means “When you eat grapes, don’t spit out the skin.” Turns out that’s a good piece of advice! Grapes are a rich source of phytonutrients, which are found in the skin as well as the flesh and seeds of the grape. One of the most widely known phytonutrients, resveratrol, is being studied around the world for a vast array of promising potential health benefits.
- Bake, blend, broil, dip, grill, pickle...this is just the start of a long list of ways you can use grapes.
- A Spanish tradition called “the twelve grapes of luck” dates back to 1895 and consists of eating a grape with each bell strike at midnight of December 31. This leads to a year of prosperity.
- Grapes that are eaten as is or used in a recipe are called table grapes and as opposed to wine grapes (used in viticulture) or raisin grapes (used to make dried fruit).

Source: California Table Grape Commission

