



Guide to Onions

Onions for All Seasons and Tastes

Onions can be divided into two categories: spring/summer fresh onions and fall/winter storage onions.

Spring/Summer Fresh Onions

Spring/summer fresh onions are available in yellow, red and white throughout their season, March through August. Fresh onions can be identified by their thin, light-colored skins. Because they have a higher water content, they are typically sweeter and milder than storage onions. This higher water content also makes them more susceptible to bruising.

With their delicate taste, fresh onions are an ideal choice for salads and other fresh and lightly-cooked dishes.

Fall/Winter Storage Onions

Fall/winter storage onions are available August through April. Also available in yellow, red and white, storage onions have multiple layers of thick, dark, papery skins. Storage onions have an intense flavor and a higher percentage of solids.

Storage onions are the best choice for savory dishes that require longer cooking times or more flavor.

Domestic Onion Production

Spring/Summer Fresh Onion Availability

Area	Trade Name	Production	Features
Texas Rio Grande Valley & Winter Garden	SuperSweet® Texas Spring Sweet® & Texas 1015 SuperSweet®	March-July	
West & High Plains		June-August	
Georgia Vidalia	Vidalia® Onions	April-June	CA Storage July-November
Arizona	Grand Canyon Sweets™	May-June	
Hawaii Maui	Maui® Sweets Kula® Sweets	Year Round	Limited Mainland Availability
Oahu	Hawaiian Hula Sweets™	March-October	
Washington Walla Walla	Walla Walla Sweets®	June-August	
New Mexico South Central	Nu-Mex Sweets Carzalia Sweets	June-August	
California Desert Valleys San Joaquin Valley Coastal Valleys	Sweet Imperials™	April-June May-August June-September	
Colorado		July-September	

Note:

Limited production "sweet" onions are available on a seasonal basis from other locations including, but not limited to, California, Colorado, Michigan, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, and Washington.

The Color of Onions

Onions come in three colors – yellow, red and white. Approximately 87 percent of the onions produced in the United States are yellow, with about 8 percent red onions and 5 percent white onions.

Fall/Winter Storage Onion Availability

Area	Trade Name	Production	Features
California Southern High Desert Valleys		September-March	
Nevada		September-March	Mostly Whites
New York		August-May	Mostly Mediums
Michigan		September-March	Mostly Mediums
Ohio		August-April	All Sizes
Minnesota, North Dakota, Wisconsin		September-March	
Illinois, Indiana Iowa, South Dakota		September-March	Limited Production
Idaho- Eastern Oregon	Idaho-Eastern Oregon Spanish Sweet Onions™	August-April	Large Size
West/Central Oregon		August-April	
Washington		July-May	
Colorado		August-April	
Utah		August-March	
New Mexico		September- December	Limited Production

Onion Tips

Onions have long been a staple for foodservice operators. They are used in a wide range of ethnic cuisines as well as traditional American fare. From soups and sandwiches to appetizers and salads, onions add color, texture and flavor to menus.



Onion Preparation Tips

Prepare onions as close to cooking or serving time as possible. An onion's flavor deteriorates and its aroma intensifies over time.

Refrigerate onions 30 minutes before preparation to prevent tearing.

To remove the smell of onions, rub hands and equipment with lemon juice or salt.

Store your onions in a cool, dry ventilated place – not in the refrigerator. Lack of air movement reduces storage life.

Chopped or sliced onions can be stored in a sealed container in your refrigerator for up to 7 days.

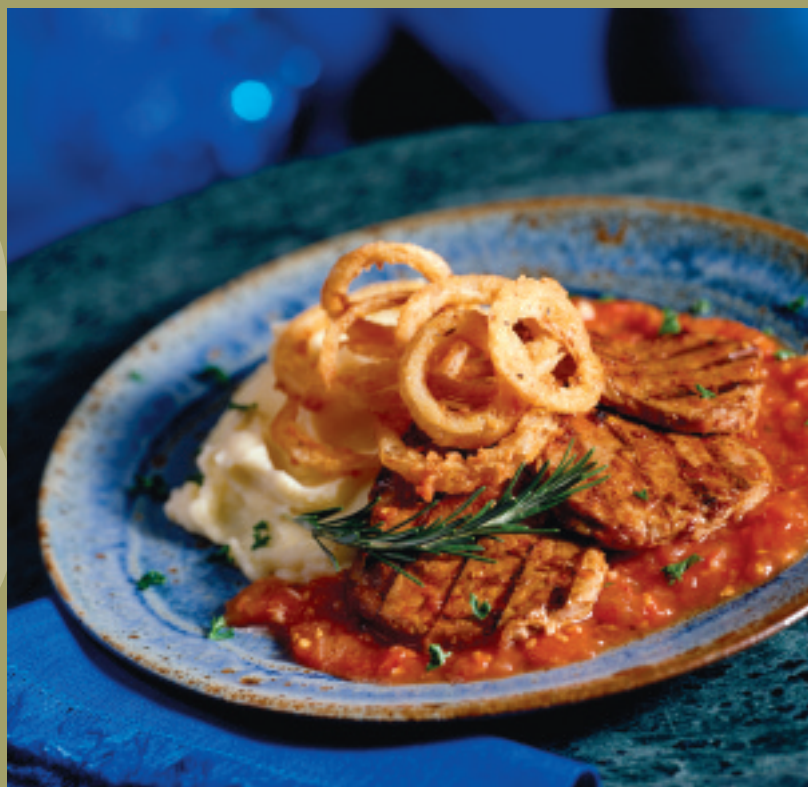
High heat makes onions bitter. When sautéing onions, always use low or medium heat.

Cooking With Onions

The taste and texture of onions varies greatly depending on their preparation. Onions can be braised, boiled, steamed, baked, sautéed, fried or grilled.

Sautéing onions softens their texture and enriches their taste. Onions can be heated in broth or wine instead of butter or oil to lower the fat content.

Yellow onions turn a rich, dark brown when cooked and give French Onion Soup its tangy sweet flavor. White onions are traditionally used in Mexican cuisine. They have a golden color and sweet flavor when sautéed. The red onion is a good choice for fresh uses, grilling and charbroiling.



Onion Receiving Tips

Make sure the number of bags or cartons delivered match the delivery invoice and the onions are the correct color and size ordered.

Onions should feel firm and dry, but may have some loose outer skins.

Onions should be free of gray or black mold and should not have any visible sprouting.

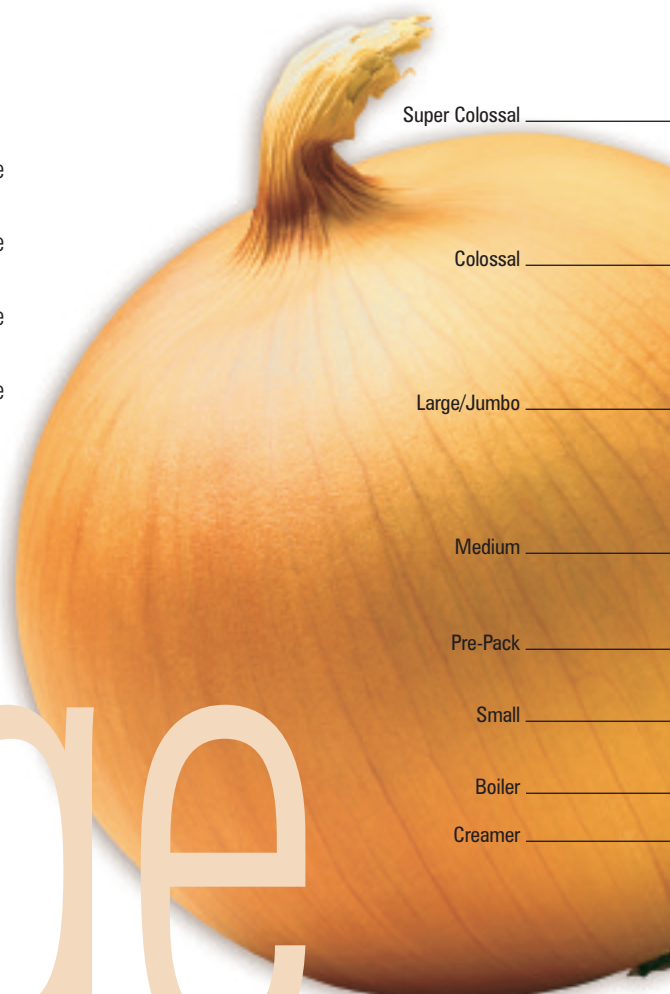
Always handle onions with care. Do not drop onions as this often causes bruising and decay.

Store onions in a cool, dry, well ventilated area. Maintain storage temperature of 45-55° F.

Do not wrap onions in plastic or store in plastic bags. A lack of air circulation will reduce storage life.

Sizing Chart

- Super Colossal**
4-1/2" and UpYellow, Red & White
- Colossal**
3-3/4" and UpYellow, Red & White
- Large/Jumbo**
3" and Up.....Yellow, Red & White
- Medium**
2" to 3-1/4"Yellow, Red & White
- Pre-Pack**
1-3/4" to 3"Yellow & White
- Small**
1" to 2-1/4"Yellow, Red & White
- Boiler**
1" to 1-7/8"Yellow & White
- Creamer**
Under 1"Yellow & White



Storage



Pack Sizes

Dry Bulb Onions:

Mesh Bags

2lb, 3lb, 5lb pre-packs, 10lb, 25lb and 50lb

Cartons

40lb or 50lb

Processed Onions:*

Fresh Processed

Whole peeled, Ready-to-bloom, Whole sliced, Diced, Rings, Stir-fry, and Slivered

IQF Processed (Individually Quick Frozen)

Diced, Strips and Rings

*Custom cuts and various packaging sizes available depending on purchasing specifications.

Onion Handling and Storage Attributes

The quality and safety of fresh produce depends on proper handling and storage. Always follow proper handling procedures and safe handling guidelines as outlined by the Food and Drug Administration Food Code. Always read and follow handling instructions on all processed products according to the manufacturers label.

Attributes	Spring/Summer Fresh Onions	Fall/Winter Storage Onions
Storing Ability	Typically not stored, unless under controlled atmosphere or refrigeration	Designed specifically to withstand long periods of storage
Storage Shelf-life	30 - 60 days	30 -180 days
Retail Shelf-life	30 days or less	
Temperature	Room temperature - Dry storage	
Humidity	Keep in a dry, well ventilated place	
Freezing Injury	Moderately sensitive. Highest freezing point = 30.6° F or 0.8°C	Hardier than other varieties. Highest freezing point = 30.6° F or 0.8°C
Odor Sensitivity	Odors will be absorbed by apples, celery and pears. Will absorb odors produced by apples and pears.	
Sweetness	Sweet/mild to slightly pungent flavors	Varies from mild to very pungent
Aroma	Mild to slightly pungent	Mildly pungent to strong
Colors	Yellow, red and white	
Exterior Shell	Thin, light-colored skin	Multiple layers of thick, dark skin
Interior Onion Texture	Soft to medium	Medium to firm

Onions for Nutrition and Health

Onions not only provide flavor – they also provide health-promoting phytochemicals as well as nutrients.

Research shows that onions may help guard against many chronic diseases. That's probably because onions contain generous amounts of a flavonoid called quercetin. Studies have shown that quercetin protects against cataracts, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

In addition, onions contain a variety of naturally occurring chemicals known as organosulfur compounds that have been linked to lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Nutrition Per Serving of Onion

With only 45 calories per serving, onions are fat and cholesterol free, very low in sodium, high in Vitamin C, and a good source of fiber and other key nutrients.



Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 Medium Onion (148 g)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 45

Calories from Fat 0

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g 0%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Trans Fat 0g 0%

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 5mg

Total Carbohydrate 11g 4%

Dietary Fiber 3g 12%

Sugars 9g

Protein 1g

Vitamin A 0% * Vitamin C 20%

Calcium 4% * Iron 4%

Potassium 190 g

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Source: Food and Drug Administration (FDA) January 1, 2008

Health