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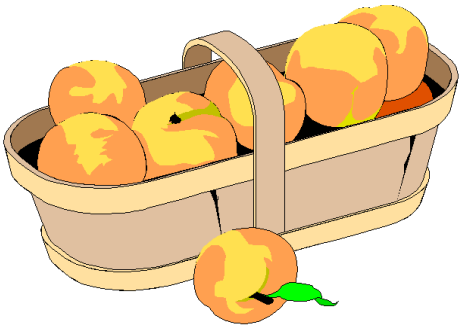

Utah Peaches

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FN 221

What is special about a peach? The distinct, unique flavor and fragrance. Peaches are the perfect start for the day, a superb finale and fit in-between.

Origin

Peaches were probably first grown in ancient China. Early records of Persia mentioned peaches, and Roman feasts included peaches. Later, peach growing was started in France and then spread to other European countries. The Spaniards introduced peaches into Mexico and Florida in the sixteenth century. Captain John Smith reported “peaches in abundance” in the Jamestown colony in 1629.

Consumption

Peaches are one of the most popular fruits. Their consumption is exceeded only by oranges, apples and bananas. A U.S. food consumption survey showed almost one-third of the households used canned peaches.

Selection

Don’t look for a bright rosy blush when selecting peaches. It is nice to look at, but doesn't necessarily indicate ripeness. Instead, look for a creamy yellow or golden under color. To avoid bruising, buy firm, yellow-colored fruit which ripens rapidly at room temperature. Peaches are ready to eat when they're barely soft. Refrigeration will keep ripe peaches fresh for several days. Fresh peaches served at room temperature have a greater aroma and fuller taste.

Varieties

There are many varieties of peaches. In Utah, the Redhaven is the most common early season peach, which is harvested in mid-August, and it is good for freezing and fresh. Johnson Elberta and Gleason Elberta are two local peach varieties that are excellent fresh and for canning in early and mid-September. Other varieties may be available in late September.

How Much to Buy

A handy rule of thumb for peaches is to remember—3 medium peaches make 1 pound or 2 cups of sliced peaches, or 1 cup puree. A bushel of peaches will yield 18 to 24 quarts of peaches for canning.

Anti-darkening Treatment

To retain the fresh and bright appearance of peaches, dip in an ascorbic acid solution (1 teaspoon per quart of water or follow label instructions).

Nutritive Value

Peaches are low in calories and sodium and contain no fat or cholesterol. One medium peach provides about 10% of the USRDA for vitamin A and vitamin C, and smaller amounts of the B vitamins and minerals. Peaches with the skin provide dietary fiber.

Calories	7
Protein	0.6 gram
Fat	0.1 gram
Carbohydrates	9.7 grams
Fiber	0.6 gram
Calcium	5.0 milligrams
Phosphorus	11.0 milligrams
Iron	0.1 milligram
Sodium	0.0 milligram
Potassium	171 milligrams
Vitamin A	465 IU
Thiamine	.02 milligram
Riboflavin	.04 milligram
Niacin	1.0 milligram
Ascorbic Acid	5.7 milligrams

Freezing

Select firm, ripe fruit. Sort, wash, pit and peel. Cut in halves, quarters or slices into anti-darkening solution (3 tablespoons lemon juice/quart water) or into syrup. Syrup pack: Pack in 40% syrup, adding ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid per quart syrup. Dry pack: Sprinkle each quart of fruit with solution of ¼ teaspoon ascorbic acid dissolved in ¼ cup cold water, add up to ⅔ cup sugar, mix well and pack in containers. May also be packed in cold water containing 1 teaspoon ascorbic acid per quart of water.

Canning

Raw Pack: Prepare the syrup (light syrup—4 cups water to 2 cups sugar); keep hot, but not boiling. Wash, halve and pit and peel enough fruit to fill one jar at a time. To loosen skins on peaches, dip into boiling water for about ½ minute; then dip quickly into cold water. Pack into hot jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Cover fruit with hot syrup, leaving ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids. Process.

Processing time in minutes:		
	3,000-6,000 ft	
	Pint	Quart
Raw Pack	35	40
Hot Pack	30	35

Hot Pack: Prepare as above but heat fruit thoroughly in syrup. Pack hot fruit into hot jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Cover with boiling syrup, leaving ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids, process in boiling water bath.

Drying

Select ripe, firm fruit. Wash, peel, pit and slice to uniform thickness. Steam peach halves or slices 5 minutes, cool to room temperature, then soak in sodium bisulfate solution (1½ to 2 tablespoons per gallon of water) for 15–20 minutes. Ascorbic acid solution (1 teaspoon per cup of water) might also be used to prevent discoloration. Dry until leathery but still pliable.

Utah Peaches Serving Suggestions

Peach Coolers

Blend fresh peach slices with a half cup of skim milk, sprinkle with nutmeg. Add a couple of ice cubes for a slushy consistency (80 calories). Substitute the milk with ½ cup ice cream. Garnish with a mint leaf.

Breakfast

Peach slices over pancakes, waffles or French toast
Peach slices over cereal
Peach slices on an omelet

Peach Salad

Peach and cottage cheese, chopped peanuts on top
Peach slices or halves with yogurt and a sprinkle of brown sugar.
Peach halves filled with tuna, shrimp, crab or chicken salad.
Peach slices mixed with other fresh fruits with sour cream, sprinkle of nutmeg
Peach Waldorf salad

Desserts

Peach shortcake made with poundcake, ginger bread, topped with whipped cream or ice cream
Peach ice cream or sundae
Peach cobbles or dumplings
Peach pie, fresh or baked
Peach/apple betty
Peach topping for cheesecake

Meat Accompaniment

Grilled peach half filled with sweet pickle relish or cranberry relish.

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