

FOOD \$ENSE



extension.usu.edu

March 2011

Apricots

Food \$ense Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Ellen Serfustini, Extension Associate Professor

Utah Local Fresh Season: Harvest by July 10 - 24

Availability: Apricots are available throughout the year from different regions, but are most common in the summer months.

Eating: Apricots are similar to peaches—both have a hard stone with a fuzzy skin. Unlike a peach the apricot contains little juice. After an apricot has been picked the flavor does not change; the fruit will only soften. So if you pick an apricot early the flavor will stay the same.

Selecting: An apricot should be well-formed and fairly firm. Pick apricots that are dark yellow or yellow-orange in color. Apricots should not be handled roughly or stored at high room temperatures. To ripen apricots, place them in a sealed plastic or paper bag and keep them at room temperature. Adding an apple to the paper bag will also speed up ripening. Apricots are ready to eat when they yield to gentle pressure. Avoid apricots that are dull looking, soft, mushy or extremely firm. Avoid apricots with bruised areas. Stay clear of fruit that is pale yellow, greenish-yellow, very firm or shriveled. Apricots that are soft-ripe have the best flavor, but they must be eaten immediately.

Cleaning and Preparing: Rinse apricots under running water when ready to eat. The skin is edible although should be removed for many different deserts because it will change the texture and appearance. Apricots can be eaten raw, cooked or preserved. To cut fruit, slice around its seam, twist it in half, and lift out the pit.

Storing: Refrigerate ripe apricots, unwashed, in a paper or plastic bag for up to 2 days. Wash them before eating.

Cooking: Apricots are great to eat raw, but they are also terrific cooked. These are some common cooking methods: baking, glazes, canning, dried, preserves and jams and desserts.

Grilling: Try threading the apricots (whole or halved) on skewers. Brush them with a little honey, and grill until semi-soft.

Broiling: is easy. Simply preheat the oven on the “broil” setting, halve the apricots, place them on a cookie sheet with the skin down and the cut side up, and heat for 7 to 10 minutes.

Poaching: It’s a great method for making a delicious sauce. Simply place the apricots with their skins intact into simmering water or fruit juice, and cook until tender. Adding spices such as cinnamon or cloves enhances the apricot taste. When the apricots are tender, the poaching liquid can be used as a sauce. Poaching takes about 6 to 8 minutes.

Nutrition Highlights: Apricots contain a good amount of vitamin A, potassium, iron, calcium, silicon, phosphorus, and Vitamin C.

Growing: Apricots grow in the early spring, although because of this, in Utah if there is a frost there might be some fruit that will be lost. Not only is the cold harmful to the trees but also the heat; this stresses the tree. Apricot trees are self-pollinating meaning they don’t need another tree for pollination.

Preserving: Apricots can be sliced or whole and put into syrup and frozen. Apricots can also be made into preserves and jam.

References:

1. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov>
2. <http://inep.ucdenver.edu/parents/fruitsVegetables/dictionary/apricot.aspx>
3. <http://www.allrecipes.com>
4. <http://www.nancyskitchen.com/apricot-recipes.htm>
5. <http://www.cooks.com>

Guide Editors: Heidi LeBlanc and Debra Christofferson

Additional Editors: Marie Stosich, Gayla Johnson, Eileen Milligan

Utah State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 and older), disability, and veteran's status. USU's policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and academic related practices and decisions.

Utah State University employees and students cannot, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status, refuse to hire; discharge; promote; demote; terminate; discriminate in compensation; or discriminate regarding terms, privileges, or conditions of employment, against any person otherwise qualified. Employees and students also cannot discriminate in the classroom, residence halls, or in on/off campus, USU-sponsored events and activities.

This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Noelle E. Cockett, Vice President for Extension and Agriculture, Utah State University.
(FN/FoodSense/2011-01pr)

Apricot Glazed Chicken

6 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
1 (10.75 ounce) can low-sodium chicken broth
3/4 cup apricot preserves
1 tablespoon light soy sauce
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 tablespoon water

Spray a large skillet with nonstick cooking spray.
Brown chicken in heated skillet.

Add chicken broth, jam and soy sauce. Simmer for 20 minutes or until chicken is done (165°F and no longer pink in the center). Remove chicken from skillet. Add cornstarch and water to sauce to thicken (equal amounts; more of each if you like it thicker). Return chicken to skillet and turn to coat thoroughly with sauce.

Apricot Glazed Carrots

5 cups julienne-cut carrots
3/4 cup water
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup apricot preserves

In a medium saucepan, combine carrots and water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and cook over medium heat 8-12 minutes or until carrots are tender; drain. Stir in salt and apricot preserves. Makes 8 (1/2 cup) servings.