



Information

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STRAWBERRY SEASON

These first weeks of June put on your hat and take a trip to your local Frederick County farm market to pick your own strawberries. Peak season is May 15-June 20. The further North you drive, the later the season starts and ends. To find a local market to “Buy Local, Buy Fresh,” see the website <http://www.discoverfrederickmd.com/farmersmarket/index.htm>.

While you can purchase them in the supermarket year round, they are a poor substitute for fresh picked strawberries in season. Fresh berries are simply delicious! One wonders how such a scrumptious food could be so good for you. They make any meal, drink, or snack a special treat. Nutrient dense, while low in calories, use them to add flavor and nutrition to your diet.

One cup of strawberries contains 50 calories and 3 grams of fiber. They supply 90 mg of Vitamin C, which is 150% of the daily value recommended for the typical consumer. This water soluble vitamin helps heal cuts and wounds, keeps teeth and gums healthy, and aids in iron absorption. Strawberries also are a source of several different phytochemicals which have potential to prevent disease.

Once you get your berries home from the market leave them at room temperature only for a few hours. This quickly perishable food keeps only two to three days at most. To store, cover unwashed berries loosely with plastic wrap in the coldest part of your refrigerator. Do not wash them until ready to use them as they lose their color and flavor when they set in water. Before eating, place in a colander and rinse under cold running water and remove the green tops with a paring knife.

To enjoy fresh picked strawberries year round, freeze and preserve them on the day they are harvested for best quality. To freeze, wash berries and remove caps. Add one cup of sugar or syrup to 1 quart of berries. To make a syrup pack, mix and dissolve 3 cups of sugar in 4 cups of water. To make a dry pack, mix 2/3 cup dry sugar per quart of prepared fruit. To package, fill pint or quart freezer bags to a level of 3 to 4 inches from the top and squeeze out the air leaving 1 inch of head space. Seal package, label, and freeze.

STRAWBERRY LEMONADE

2 cups water
3/4 cup sugar
1 tablespoon grated lemon peel
1 cup fresh lemon juice
1 pint fresh strawberries, hulled and halved
2 cups cold sparkling water or club soda
Ice
Mint sprigs, garnish
Whole strawberries, garnish

In a medium saucepan, bring the water and sugar to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the sugar dissolves. Add the lemon peel and lemon juice, stir, and remove from the heat. Let cool completely, then strain into a clean pitcher.

In a blender, puree the pint of strawberries and add to the pitcher with the lemon juice. Stir well to combine and refrigerate until well chilled.

Add the sparkling water and stir well. Pour over glasses filled with ice and serve, garnished with mint and strawberries. Makes 4-6 servings.

STRAWBERRY FREEZER JAM

4 cups prepared fruit (buy about 4 pts. fully ripe strawberries)
3 cups sugar, measured into separate bowl
1 box SURE-JELL For Less or No Sugar Needed Recipes Premium Fruit Pectin
1 cup water

RINSE clean plastic containers and lids with boiling water. Dry thoroughly.

CRUSH strawberries thoroughly, one layer at a time. Measure exactly 4 cups crushed strawberries into large bowl.

MIX sugar and pectin in large saucepan. Stir in water. Bring to boil on medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Boil and stir 1 minute. Remove from heat. Add strawberries; stir 1 minute or until well blended.

FILL all containers immediately to within 1/2 inch of tops. Wipe off top edges of containers; immediately cover with lids. Let stand at room temperature 24 hours. Jam is now ready to use. Store in refrigerator up to 3 weeks or freeze extra containers up to 1 year. Thaw in refrigerator before using.

LITE STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

1 quart strawberries
1/3 cup sugar or Splenda sweetener
Angel food cake
Lite whipped topping

Wash berries. Remove tops and slice. Add sugar or Splenda and stir gently. Cover and let the berries soak in the sweetener for one hour at room temperature. To serve, place slices of angel food cake on serving plates. Top with berries and lite whipped topping. Decorate with whole berries and enjoy.

Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, LDN, is a licensed Registered Dietitian and Extension Educator in Family and Consumer Sciences. For more information about the Frederick County Extension Office check out our website <http://Frederick.umd.edu>

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