

Apple

Apples come in all shades of red, green and yellow. Apple varieties range in size from a little bigger than a cherry, to as large as a grapefruit. The peel is good to eat and has many nutrients. Apples have five seed pockets. Do not eat the seeds.

Apples are fruit
which grow on trees.

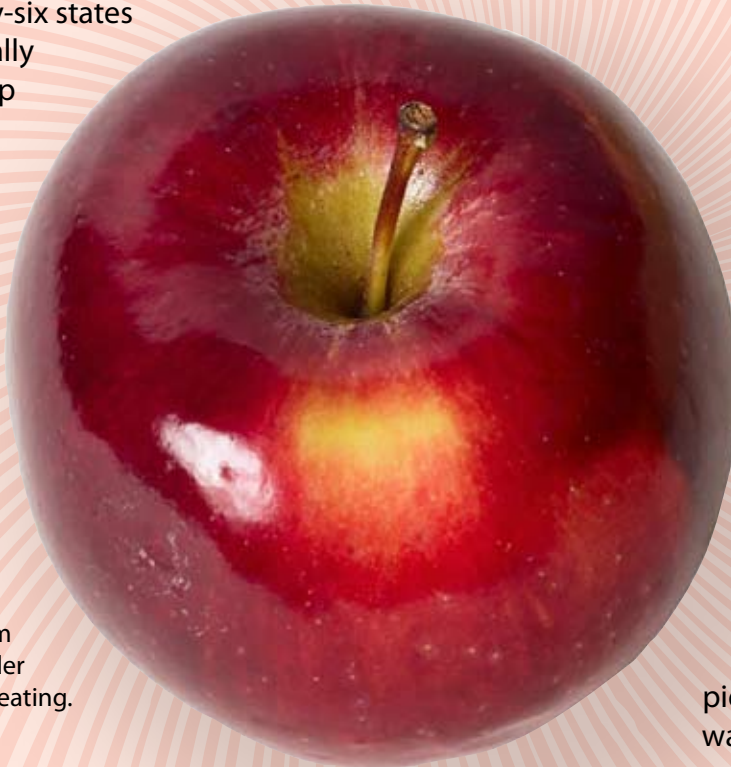
The apple can be traced back to the Romans and Egyptians who introduced them to Britain. The pilgrims planted the first apple trees in North America in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Americans eat about 120 apples apiece each year.

Apples are the most popular fruit in the United States. Thirty-six states grow apples commercially with the following as top producers: Washington, New York, Michigan, California, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

VARIETIES

There are about 2,500 varieties grown in the United States. Golden Delicious, Red Delicious, Fuji and Granny Smith are available year round.

Choose apples which are firm with no soft spots. Wash under clean, running water before eating.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of fiber
- Good source of vitamin C

USES

Apples can be eaten raw or cooked. They are great to eat as a quick snack. Chop and add to fruit salads. Bake in cakes, pies and cookies. Other popular ways to enjoy are as applesauce or 100% juice.

Many apples are grown in Iowa.



Apricot

A relative of the peach, the apricot is smaller and has a smooth, oval pit that falls out easily when the fruit is halved. The skin and flesh are a golden orange color.

Apricots are fruit which grow on trees.

Apricots originated in China over 4,000 years ago. Spanish explorers introduced apricots to the New World and they were planted at missions all over California. The first major production of apricots in America was in 1792 south of San Francisco, California.

In the United States 95% of apricots grow in the San Joaquin Valley and other parts of northern California.

VARIETIES

There are many varieties of apricots raised in the United States. Some of the most common varieties are Patterson, Blenheim, Tiltons and Castlebrites. Apricot season is from late May through June.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Sodium free
- Cholesterol free
- High in vitamin C
- High in vitamin A
- Good source of potassium

USES

Apricots are great to eat raw or dried, and are also terrific cooked. The nutrients are more concentrated in dried than fresh apricots — dried apricots also have a higher sugar content, which makes them more likely to stick to your teeth.

Some apricots are grown in Iowa.



Artichoke

Artichokes should be firm, compact, heavy for their size and have an even green color. Artichokes are actually a flower bud — if allowed to flower, blossoms measure up to seven inches in diameter and are a violet-blue color.

Artichokes are vegetables which grow as flower buds on plants.

The artichoke was known to both the Greeks and the Romans. Wealthy Romans enjoyed artichokes prepared in honey and vinegar, seasoned with cumin. It was not until the early 20th century that artichokes were grown in the United States.

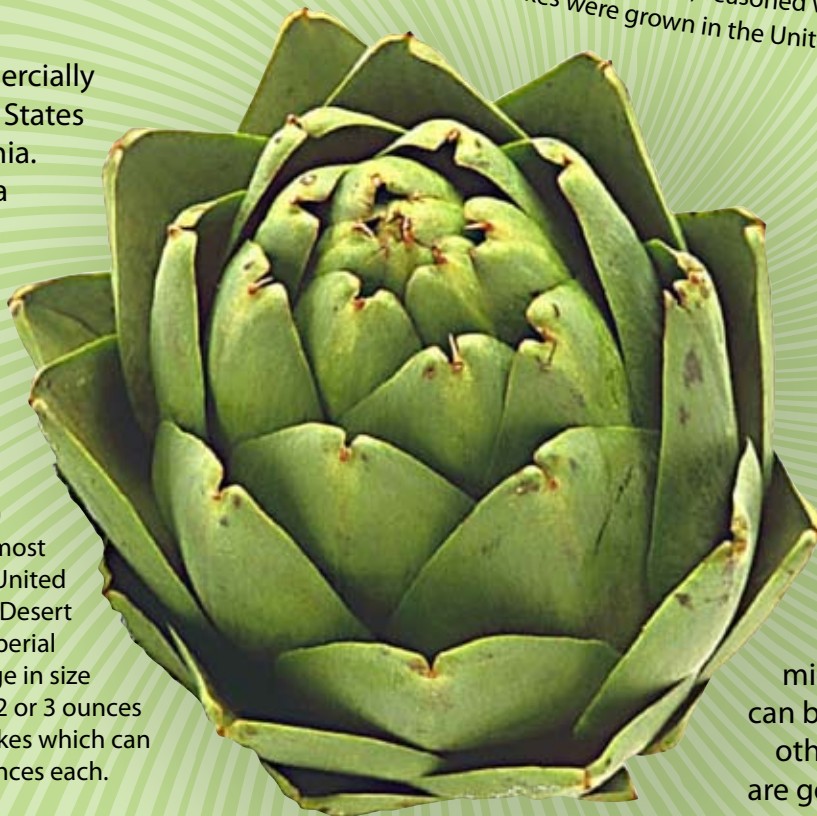
All artichokes commercially grown in the United States are grown in California. Castroville, California claims to be the "Artichoke Capital of the World."

NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- High in sodium
- High in fiber
- High in vitamin C

VARIETIES

There are more than 140 artichoke varieties. The most popular varieties in the United States are: Green Globe, Desert Globe, Big Heart and Imperial Star. Artichokes can range in size from small artichokes—2 or 3 ounces each—to jumbo artichokes which can weigh as much as 20 ounces each.



USES

Artichokes can be boiled, steamed, microwaved or sautéed. They can be eaten whole or added to other dishes. Small artichokes are good for pickling, stews and casseroles; medium size are good for salads; and large size are good for stuffing.

Some artichokes are grown in Iowa.



Asparagus

Choose green stalks with dark green to purplish tips which are closed and compact. Thinner stalks are more tender than thicker stalks.

Asparagus are vegetables which grow as plant stalks (stems).

Many Greeks and Romans not only enjoyed the taste of asparagus but also believed the myth it possessed medicinal properties (from healing toothaches to preventing bee stings). Asparagus gained popularity in France and England in the 16th Century and was then introduced to North America.

In the United States 80% of asparagus are grown in California. Asparagus season is early spring.

VARIETIES

Asparagus can be found in two varieties. Green asparagus is the most common in the United States, while white asparagus is more popular in Europe. White asparagus is grown under the soil.

Some asparagus is grown in Iowa.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of fiber
- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of iron

USES

Asparagus is good steamed, stir-fried or cooked in the microwave. It can be used in salads, pasta dishes, or eaten cold with your favorite dip.



Avocado

Avocado skin ranges in color from yellowish green to dark purplish black depending on the variety. — Most have a yellow to a pale green flesh.

The skin and large seed need to be

Avocados are fruit which grow on trees.

Avocados were first cultivated in South America with later migration to Mexico. It was believed a Mayan princess ate the first avocado and it held mystical and magical power. European sailors traveling to the New World used avocados as their form of "butter."

One tree can produce up to 400 avocados a year. California is currently the largest producer of avocados in the United States. Avocados are available year-round in stores.

VARIETIES

There are several varieties of avocados, and each have a unique flavor and texture. The most common varieties found in the United States are: Fuerte, Gwen, Hass, Pinkerton, Reed, and Zutano. Most avocados are pear shaped.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- High in vitamin B6
- A good source of vitamin C
- High in vitamin E
- A good source of potassium, magnesium, folate and fiber

USES

Avocados can be used to make guacamole, added to salads, put on sandwiches, used as butter on your toast, or in place of sour cream.

Avocados are not grown in Iowa.



Banana

Bananas are a long, thick-skinned fruit. They have a peel which comes off easily. Bananas ripen after they have been picked. They are ripe when the skin is yellow and speckled with brown spots. Avoid bananas with brown spots that seem very soft.

Bananas are fruit which grow in hanging clusters on plants which look like — but are not — trees.

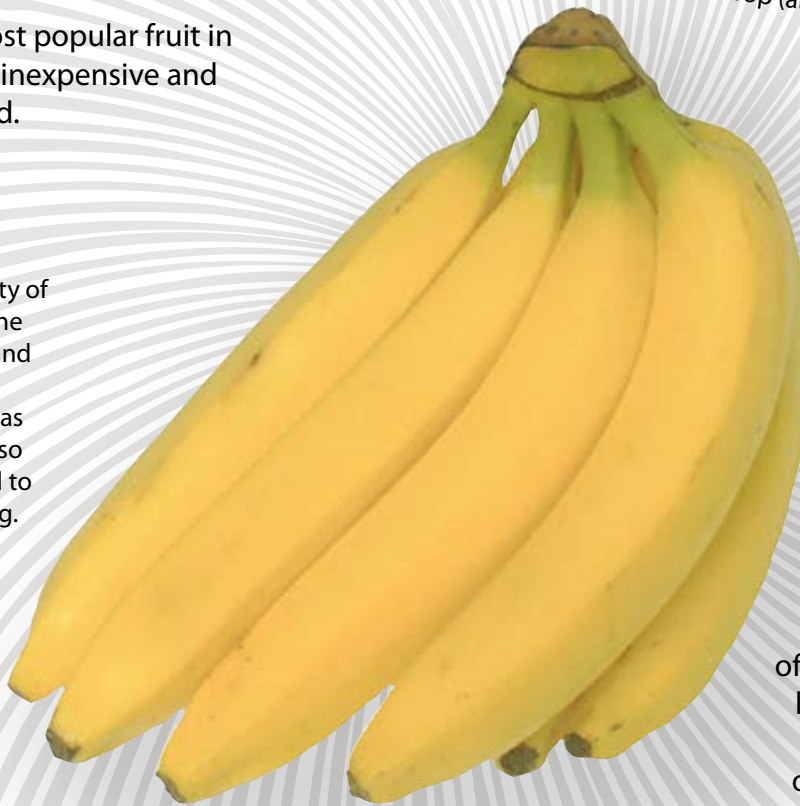
Bananas originally came from the Malaysian area in Southeast Asia. Grown in many tropical regions, bananas are the fourth most important food crop (after rice, wheat and corn).

Bananas are the most popular fruit in the world. They are inexpensive and available year-round.

VARIETIES

The most popular variety of banana, Cavendish, is the familiar yellow type found in most grocery stores. Plantains, Finger Bananas and Red Bananas are also popular. Plantains need to be cooked before eating.

Although some wild varieties have hard seeds, almost all bananas people eat are seedless.



NUTRITION FACTS

- High calories
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- High in potassium
- High in vitamin C
- High in vitamin A

USES

Bananas are delicious eaten after peeling off the skin. Enjoy a banana for lunch or as a snack. Eat sliced bananas in cereal, yogurt or on a peanut butter sandwich. Banana bread and muffins are very popular.

Bananas are not grown in Iowa.



Bell Pepper

Bell peppers come in a variety of colors, sizes and shapes. Their skin should be firm and the stem should be fresh and green. Take out the seeds on the inside before eating.

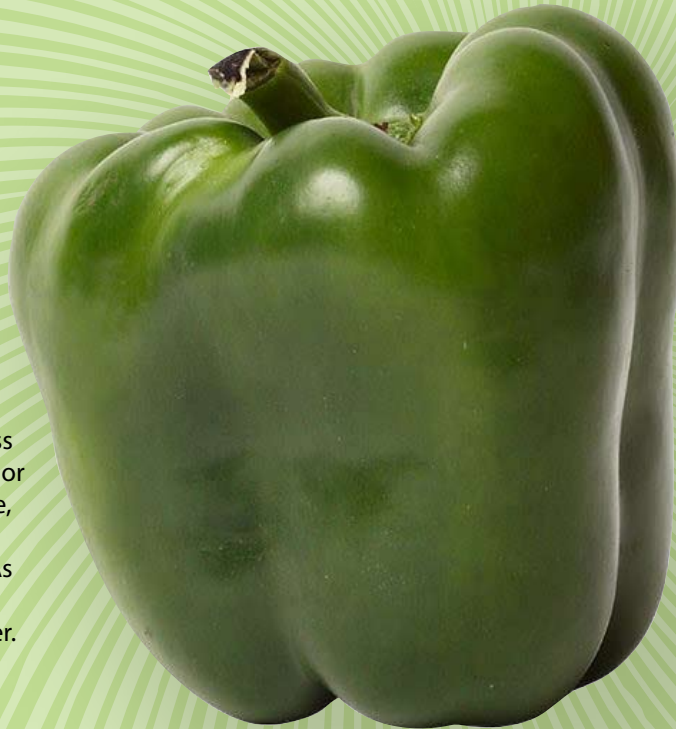
Bell peppers are vegetables which grow on plants.

Peppers were originally grown in Central and South America. Peppers can be grouped into two broad categories—sweet peppers (which are mild) and chile peppers (which are hot). Bell peppers are the most common sweet pepper.

California and Florida grow about 78% of the bell peppers grown in the United States.

VARIETIES

Bell peppers can be found in a rainbow of colors and can vary in flavor. The variety of the pepper plant and the stage of the ripeness determine the flavor and color of each pepper. For example, a red bell pepper is simply a mature green bell pepper. As a bell pepper ages, its flavor becomes sweeter and milder.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Very high in vitamin C
- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of beta-carotene

USES

Peppers are good to eat raw or with vegetable dip. Use a variety of colored peppers in your salads. Add peppers to your pasta, Chinese, or Mexican dishes.

Many bell peppers are grown in Iowa.



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Broccoli

Choose bunches with tight florets that are dark green, purplish or bluish green. Stalks should be very firm. Florets are richer in beta-carotene than the stalks.

Broccoli are vegetables which grow as florets (clusters of flower buds) on stalks (stems).

Broccoli has been around for more than 2,000 years and was first grown in Italy. The name broccoli comes from the Latin word *brachium*, which means "branch" or "arm." Americans have grown broccoli for over 200 years.

Broccoli is a member of the cabbage family, which may help prevent certain types of cancer. Broccoli has as much calcium per ounce as milk.

Fresh broccoli contains more nutrients than frozen broccoli.

NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of folate, iron, calcium and fiber

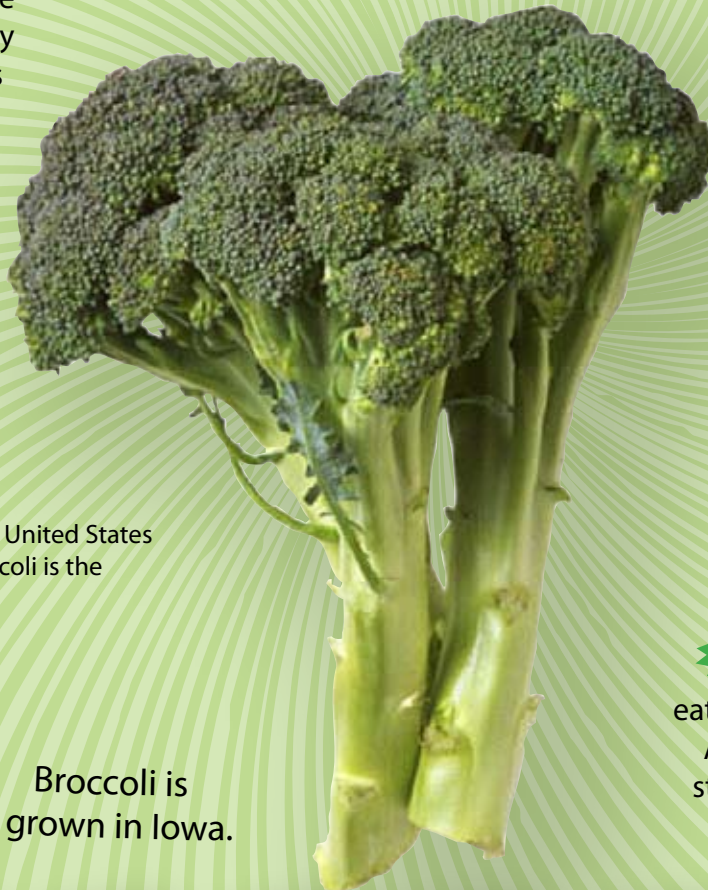
VARIETIES

There are many varieties. In the United States the most common type of broccoli is the Italian Green Sprouting variety.

Broccoli is grown in Iowa.

USES

Steam broccoli or eat it raw with your favorite dip. Add broccoli to salads, soups, stews, casseroles and stir-fries.



Brussels Sprouts

Brussels sprouts look like little heads of cabbage. They are similar in taste to cabbage, but are slightly milder in flavor and denser in texture.

Brussels sprouts are vegetables which grow as small leafy heads on plant stems.

Brussels sprouts were named after the capital of Belgium where it is thought they were first grown. They are one of the few vegetables that originated in northern Europe. French settlers in Louisiana introduced Brussels sprouts to America.

Most Brussels sprouts are grown in California. They are available all year long, but their peak growing season is fall to early spring.

Brussels sprouts are a member of the cabbage family, which may help prevent certain types of cancer.

NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- High in potassium
- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of vegetable protein

VARIETIES

Most Brussels sprouts are alike.

USES

Brussels sprouts can be steamed, boiled, or microwaved. They make a tasty addition to soups, stews and casseroles.

Many Brussels sprouts are grown in Iowa.



Cabbage

Cabbage heads are solid, glossy and light green in color. The stem end should look healthy, trimmed and not dry or split.

Cabbage are vegetables which grow as leafy heads.

Cabbage originated nearly 2,000 years ago in the Mediterranean region. Cabbage was introduced to America in 1541 by French explorer Jacques Cartier, who planted it in Canada.

Cabbage is a cheap and widely used food. It may help reduce the risk of certain cancers. Cabbage needs to be kept cold so it retains its vitamin C.

VARIETIES

There are at least 100 types of cabbage grown in the world. The most common varieties in the United States are Green, Red and Savoy. Chinese varieties are also available. The two most common Chinese varieties are Bok Choy and Napa.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Rich in vitamin C

USES

Cabbage is delicious in salads or as coleslaw. It can be steamed, boiled, microwaved or stir-fried. It can also be added to pasta, soups or stews. Sauerkraut is made from cabbage.

Cabbage is grown in Iowa.



Cantaloupe

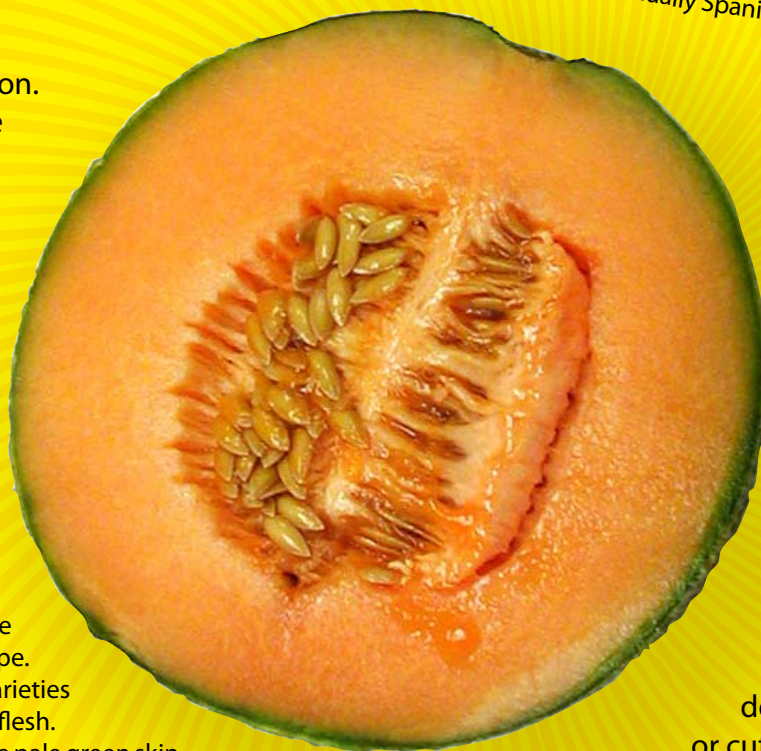
In the United States, cantaloupe are commonly called muskmelon.

Muskmelon are round with a light-brown rind (thick skin) and orange flesh. The rind is not eaten. The center has seeds which need to be scooped out before eating.

Cantaloupe are fruit which grow on vines.

Many melons originated in the Middle East. Ancient Egyptians and Romans enjoyed cantaloupe. Melon seeds were transported to North America by Christopher Columbus and eventually Spanish explorers grew them in California.

Cantaloupe are a melon. Other melons include honeydew and watermelon. Melons are in the same gourd family as squash and cucumbers.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of potassium
- High in vitamin A

VARIETIES

In the United States, the most popular variety is the North American cantaloupe. There are less common varieties which have red or yellow flesh. European cantaloupe have pale green skin.

USES

Cantaloupe is delicious raw. It is usually sliced or cut into chunks. Add cantaloupe to fruit salads, fruit soups or salsa. Serve as a dessert with some ice cream and chocolate sauce.

Cantaloupe is grown in Iowa.



Carrots

Choose carrots which are a dark orange in color. More beta-carotene is present in carrots which have a dark orange color.

Carrots are vegetables which grow in the ground as taproots (main roots of a plant).

The carrot originated about 5,000 years ago in Middle Asia around Afghanistan. In Roman times, carrots were purple or white.

Over half of the carrots grown in the United States are grown in California. Carrots are available all year long.

VARIETIES

The variety of carrots usually found in supermarkets is 7 to 9 inches long and $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. Baby carrots were once longer carrots that have been peeled, trimmed and packaged. There are many other varieties of carrots with colors including white, yellow, red and purple.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Good source of fiber
- High in beta-carotene
- High in vitamin A

USES

Raw carrots make a perfect snack. They can also be cooked (steamed or microwaved). Add carrots to salads, soups and stews, or shred and bake them into cakes or breads.

Carrots are grown in Iowa.



Cauliflower

In its early stages, cauliflower looks like broccoli, which is its closest relative. While broccoli opens outward to sprout bunches of green florets, cauliflower forms a compact head of undeveloped white flower buds.

Cauliflower are vegetables which grow as flowers on plants.

The cauliflower originated over 2,000 years ago in the Mediterranean and Asia Minor region. Almost all cauliflower grown in the United States comes from California.

Cauliflower, or "cabbage flower," is a member of the cabbage family, which may help prevent certain types of cancer. Cauliflower is available year-round but is more plentiful in the fall.



NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- High in vitamin C
- High in folate
- High in fiber
- Good source of complex carbohydrates

VARIETIES

There are two types of cauliflower:

- creamy white — more popular in the United States
- cauliflower-broccoli hybrid — recently developed, this type of cauliflower looks like broccoli.

USES

Cauliflower can be eaten raw or cooked. Steam or microwave, instead of boiling, to better preserve its vitamin content.

Cauliflower is grown in Iowa.



Cranberry

Cranberries are bright red, round and smooth. Fresh cranberries taste tart. Most cranberries sold in the U.S. are not fresh, but sold dried, as juice or sauce.

Cranberries are fruits grown on low-lying vines in beds known as bogs or marshes. They're perennial plants, surviving year after year.

Cranberries originated in North America. Native Americans used cranberries for food and medicine. Early settlers named the fruit "craneberry" because the blossom resembles the neck, head and bill of a crane.

Cranberries grow in the northern states, such as Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Oregon and New Jersey. One-fifth of the cranberries harvested in the U.S. are used to celebrate Thanksgiving day.



NUTRITIONAL FACTS

- When raw, a good source of vitamin C
- High in phytochemicals
- Good source of fiber
- Sodium free
- Fat free
- Labeled as a "super fruit"
- Cholesterol free

VARIETIES

There are over 100 different varieties of cranberries. The most common variety is the American Cranberry, *Vaccinium macrocarpon Ait.*

USES

Add dried cranberries to trail mix, salads or oatmeal. Blend frozen cranberries in a smoothie. Bake with fresh cranberries in stuffing, muffins, breads and sauces, or chop for a relish.

