

Avocado



Amber Yates

Avocado – *Persea americana*

- Kingdom: Plantae
 - Phylum: Angiosperms
 - Order: Laurales
 - Family: Lauraceae
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- Other members of this family include cinnamon, camphor, and bay laurel
 - Other names: Alligator Pear, Aguacate, Abacate, Palta, Butter Fruit

Origin

- Originated in Puebla, Mexico with native undomesticated variety called *criollo*
- Oldest evidence of avocado use was found in Coxcatlán, Puebla, Mexico dating to ~10,000BC
- Earliest written account in Europe was by Martín Fernández de Enciso in 1518
- First written record of the word 'avocado' was by Hans Sloane in a 1696 index of Jamaican Plants



Criollo



Avocado Tree

- Height up to 69ft.
- Leaves are alternate and 4.7-9.8 in. long
- Flowers are greenish-yellow and 0.2-0.4 in. long
- Fruit is pear shaped being 2.8-7.9 in. long weighing between 3.5-35oz, with a large central seed.



Harvesting

- Tree produces an average of 1,200 avocados annually
- Commercial orchards produce between 7-20 tonnes per hectare
- Trees are biennial with good crop yields one year and bad yields the next year
- Grown in subtropical or tropical climates
- Leading producers are Mexico, Indonesia, and U.S.



Panoramic view of Stehly Farms Organics

Fruit

- Fruit is climacteric meaning it matures on the tree but ripens off the tree, like bananas
- Avocados must be picked mature to ripen properly
- Harvesting is done by hand
- Shipped in coolers until they reach their destination
- Fruit may be left on tree for several months, but if left too long may fall to the ground. This is an advantage for fruit growers who want to achieve the best price.



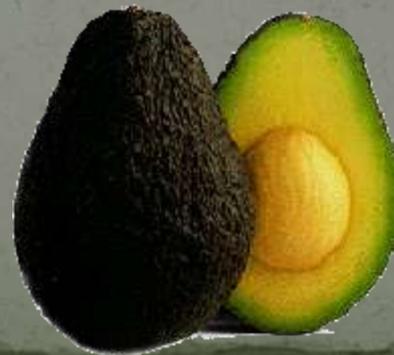
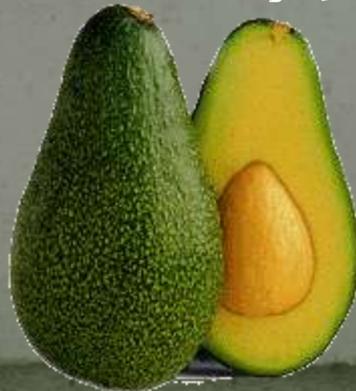
Avocado “cukes”

- Plant may develop seedless avocado called “cukes”, “cocktail”, or “finger” avocados
- Usually discarded due to their small size



Fruit Cultivars A & B

- “A” cultivar flower opens as female on morning of first day, closes, reopens as male in afternoon of second day
- “B” cultivar flower opens female on afternoon of first day, closes, reopens as male on morning of second day
- Due to this dichogamy, propagation is done mostly by grafting.
- Most common variety is Hass avocado (“A” cultivar) and accounts for nearly 95% of Californian crops



Fruit Nutrition

- 60 % more potassium than bananas
- Sodium and cholesterol free
- Dietary fiber 6.7g per 3.5oz
- Protein 2g per 3.5oz
- High fat content: 15g per 3.5oz, but is healthy fat mono-unsaturated fat
 - Diets high in this fat can reduce total cholesterol levels and increase ratio of HDL “good” to LDL “bad” cholesterol

Medicinal Facts

- Leaf and seed extracts have been used to treat diarrhea, dysentery, and osteoarthritis
- Avocado oil applied directly to the skin is used to treat thickening of the skin, gum infections and arthritis
- Avocado oil mixed with vitamin B12 is used topically to treat psoriasis



Food



Henrik Hansen

Random Facts

- Avocado leaves contain persin, a toxic fatty acid derivative that if consumed can lead to death in horses
- Most parts of plant including skin or pit are harmful to animals
- Aztecs called it “the fertility fruit”
- Word Avocado come from the Nuhuatl word for testicle



References

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