Words on Wellness

YOUR EXTENSION CONNECTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS

5 Reasons to Love Avocados

We Americans are eating more avocados than we did a generation ago. In 1985, the average American ate only 1 pound a year. Now it's more than 7.5 pounds!

Why do we love avocados? It's not because avocados are cheap. The average price of a Hass avocado reached $2.10 in 2019.

- Avocados are a luxury that is actually good for us.
- Avocados are rich, creamy, and high in fat. However, this fat is mostly monounsaturated—so, heart healthy! People who eat avocados every day can raise their HDL (good) cholesterol and lower their LDL (bad) cholesterol.
- Avocado-eaters get 20 vitamins and minerals in one fruit! They also get the nutrients that most Americans need more of—magnesium, potassium, and vitamins K and E.
- Avocados have many phytochemicals. These help protect our cells from damage. In fact, eating avocados may keep your eyes healthy and lower your cancer risk.
- Talk about versatile! You can use avocados in dips, sandwiches, and salads. They can make smoothies creamy. You can even use them instead of butter on toast.

Find out about preparing avocados from Spend Smart. Eat Smart., spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/produce-item/avocado.

Source: Hass Avocado Composition and Potential Health Effects, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3664913/

Veggie Bean Wrap

Serving Size: 1 prepared wrap | Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 2 green or red bell peppers (seeded and chopped)
- 1 onion (peeled and sliced)
- 1 can (15 ounce) black beans (no salt added) (drained and rinsed)
- 2 mangos, chopped
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 avocado (peeled and diced)
- 4 whole wheat tortillas (10 inch)

Instructions:

1. Use a nonstick pan over medium heat. Sauté bell peppers and onion for 5 minutes. Add beans and stir well. Reduce heat to low. Simmer about 5 minutes.
2. Stir mangos and lime juice in a small bowl. Add cilantro and avocado. Reserve half the mixture for topping.
3. Fill warmed tortillas. Use 1/4 bean mixture and 1/4 mango mixture.
4. Fold over ends of the tortilla. Roll up to make wraps. Top wraps with the rest of the mango mixture.

Nutrition information per serving:

464 calories, 12g total fat, 2g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 250mg sodium, 76g total carbohydrate, 19g fiber, 0g added sugar, 17g protein

Adapted from MyPlate Kitchen, www.choosemyplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/veggie-bean-wrap

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Handling Avocados Safely

Bacteria love avocados almost as much as people do. Unlike most fruits, the avocado is low in acid. That makes it good for bacterial growth. In addition, we like to eat avocados raw, which means we don't kill the bacteria by cooking.

Based on a 2014–2016 study, the FDA found that about 18% of avocados had *Listeria monocytogenes* on their skins. In small amounts, this germ isn't dangerous for healthy adults. However, it can cause serious harm to young children, older people, and pregnant women.

- To prepare an avocado safely, you first need to wash your hands carefully.
- Then rinse the avocado's skin thoroughly before you cut it open. Otherwise, the blade will carry the germs on the skin into the pulp.
- Throw away the skin and the pit promptly.
- To avoid bacterial growth, eat the avocado as soon as possible after cutting and peeling.

Source: Colorado State University: Food Source Information, fsi.colostate.edu/avocados/#food-safety

Safe Walking on Snow and Ice

Winter wind, snow, and ice can be scary to walkers. Even a short stroll is hard. Strong winds and icy sidewalks can make you fall and freeze your nose.

How to enjoy good winter walks without getting hurt:

- Check the wind chill before you go outside. It should be more than 10°F. You can get frostbite in 30 minutes when the wind chill is -18°F!
- Equip yourself for the weather. Bundle up. Bulky clothing could break a fall. Walking poles help gain traction on snowy ground. You can wear shoes with studded soles or boots with grooved soles. You could buy elastic slip-on snow cleats. They are like snow tires for your feet! (Take the cleats off when you go inside. They can make you slip on inside floors.)

Watch the video *5 Ways to Walk Safely in Icy Weather* for more tips, www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/video/icy-weather-safety-tips

Sources:
WebMD, www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/features/weatherproof-your-workout#1
National Weather Service, www.weather.gov/bou/windchill

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