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14 Things You Didn't Know About Strawberries



There's nothing like spotting the first sweet ripe strawberries of the season at your local farmer's market. This year, the warm weather is slow coming in some parts of the country, and that means the strawberries might be still green. But the color shouldn't stop you from buying them: tart green strawberries are all the rage. Chefs are using immature strawberries both fresh and pickled, in everything from salads to cakes. If you prefer your berries red and juicy, you're probably in the majority. However you like them, we're betting your strawberry knowledge didn't run this deep — until now:

Strawberries are the only fruit that wear their seeds on the outside. The average berry is adorned with some 200 of them. No wonder it only takes one bite to get seeds stuck in your teeth.

Strawberries aren't true berries, like blueberries or even grapes. Technically, a berry has its seeds on the inside. And, to be über technical, each seed on a strawberry is considered by botanists to be its

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[NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with PROJECT: PFC's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.]

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Strawberries are members of the rose family. Should you come upon a bush of them growing, you'll see: they smell as sweet as they taste.

The strawberry plant is a perennial. This means if you plant one now, it will come back next year and the following and the year after that. It may not bear fruit immediately, but once it does, it will remain productive for about five years.

Americans eat an average of three-and-a-half pounds of fresh strawberries each per year. It's closer to five pounds if you count frozen ones. In a study, more than half of nine-year-olds picked strawberries as their favorite fruit. They're nature's candy!

Belgium has a museum dedicated to strawberries. In the gift shop at Le Musée de la Fraise (The Strawberry Museum), you can buy everything from strawberry jam to strawberry beer.

Native Americans ate strawberries long before European settlers arrived. As spring's first fruit, they were a treat, eaten freshly picked or baked into cornbread.

The ancient Romans thought strawberries had medicinal powers. They used them to treat everything from depression to fainting to fever, kidney stones, bad breath and sore throats.

Sex & Strawberries? In France, where they're believed to be an aphrodisiac, strawberries are served to newlyweds at traditional wedding breakfasts in the form of a creamy sweet soup.

Strawberries are believed to help reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers. They are low in calories and high in vitamins C, B6, K, fiber, folic acid, potassium and amino acids.

Strawberries contain high levels of nitrate. This has been shown to increase blood and oxygen flow to the muscles. Research suggests that people who load up on strawberries before exercising have greater endurance and burn more calories.

California produces some 80% of the strawberries in the U.S. They grow about 2 billion pounds of the heart-shaped fruits per year. Every state in the U.S. and every province in Canada grows their own.

To store fresh strawberries, wash them and cut the stem away. However, if you plan to keep them in the fridge for a few days, wait until before you eat them to clean them. Rinsing them speeds up spoiling.

Strawberries can also be pickled. Especially when picked green or unripe. If your berries are overripe, make jam!

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