

APRICOT



APRICOT, a relative of the peach and nectarine, has a smooth, oval pit that falls out when the fruit is halved. Apricots are highly perishable and seasonal, which is why most are marketed only in June and July. Dried apricots are pitted, unpeeled apricot halves from which a large amount of the moisture is removed. Apricots are great in recipes, but they are also delicious eaten as is!

SELECTION

- ◆ Choose apricots that are **plump, firm** and have a **uniform color**.
- ◆ Avoid those that have blemishes.

STORAGE

- ◆ Allow apricots to **ripen at room temperature for 2 to 5 days**; when the fruit is soft, it is ready to eat.
- ◆ After apricots are ripe, **pack loosely in a perforated plastic or paper bag or damp paper towels**, and they will keep for up to **5 days in the refrigerator**.

Nutritional Information

Three apricots have 45% of the vitamin A and 20% of the vitamin C recommended daily to keep our bodies healthy. Vitamin A is important in vision, growth and development, skin health, immune function and reproduction. Vitamin C is important in immune response, wound healing, and allergic reactions. Vitamin C also helps with iron absorption.

Apricot Recipes

Sweet Spiced Apricot Chutney (Makes 3 cups)

2 pounds fresh apricots, (about 16) pitted and chopped
1/3 cup raisins
1 1/4 cup white distilled vinegar
2/3 cup light brown sugar
1/2 Tablespoon ground ginger
2 small cloves garlic, crushed
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
pinch teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt



Put all ingredients into a large saucepan; bring to a boil. Simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally for 1 1/2 hours; mixture should be thick. Sterilize jars by boiling them in water for at least 15 minutes. Spoon mixture into warmed, sterilized jars and cover immediately with airtight, vinegar-proof tops. To ensure freshness of seal, place into a hot water bath for at least 5 minutes. Remove, let cool and store in a cool, dry place. (See canning tip sheet for instructions on canning and preserving food).

Recipe adapted from The Complete Vegetarian Cuisine, by Rose Elliot. Random House publishing 1988.

Apricot and Peach Cobbler

6-8 fresh apricots, sliced and pitted
4 peaches, sliced and pitted
3 Tablespoons flour or 6 Tablespoons instant tapioca
3 tablespoons lemon juice
1/4 cup light brown sugar

5 Tablespoons cold, unsalted butter
2 cups rolled oats
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
zest of 1 lemon
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup cream or milk
1 teaspoon vanilla



Preheat oven to 350. Grease a 9x13 inch baking dish. In a bowl, mix the peaches, apricots, flour (or tapioca), brown sugar and lemon juice. Let sit for 10 minutes. While it is marinating, mix the butter, oats, sugar baking powder, cinnamon and nutmeg in a large bowl. Add the lemon zest and salt and mix until it becomes a crumbly mixture. Add the milk and vanilla and combine until dough is formed. Place the fruit mixture in the baking dish. Sprinkle the dough evenly over the top and press down lightly. Bake 30 minutes until the pastry is golden and juices are bubbling.

Recipe adapted Cooking Time is Family Time: Cooking Together, Eating Together and Spending Time Together by Lynn Fredricks. Copyright by Lynn Fredricks 1999.

Apricot Pasta Salad

1/2 pound pasta
6 fresh apricots (3/4 lb), cut into quarters
1 whole chicken breast (optional), cooked and sliced into bite-sized pieces
1 zucchini (1/2 lb), cut into bite-sized pieces
1 red bell pepper, diced
1 Tablespoon chopped fresh basil
1 Tablespoon sesame seeds
3 Tablespoons olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste



Cook pasta as the package directs; drain, and rinse with cold water to prevent sticking. Combine pasta, apricots, chicken, zucchini, red pepper, and basil in bowl. Toss with olive oil, sesame seeds, salt and pepper.

Recipe adapted from the California Apricot Advisory Board Recipe Booklet found at www.pages.prodigy.net