

A photograph showcasing various types of onions. In the foreground, a plate holds several whole onions: a large red onion, a yellow onion, and a white onion. A sprig of fresh green parsley is tucked in the bottom left. In the background, a glass bowl is filled with sliced onion rings, including both red and white varieties. The scene is set against a warm, light-colored background with a red surface visible at the bottom.

FOODSERVICE GUIDE TO **ONIONS**

## Onions for Your Health

Onions not only provide flavor – they also provide health-promoting phytochemicals as well as nutrients.

Research shows that onions may help guard against many chronic diseases. That's probably because onions contain generous amounts of a flavonoid called quercetin. Studies have shown that quercetin protects against cataracts, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

In addition, onions contain a variety of naturally occurring chemicals known as organosulfur compounds that have been linked to lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

## Nutrition Per Serving of Onions

With only 30 calories per serving, onions are sodium, fat, and cholesterol free. They provide dietary fiber, Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, potassium and other key nutrients.



Onion Nutrition Facts	1/2 cup (80 g) chopped raw onion	Percent Daily Values*
Calories	30	
Total Fat	0	0%
Cholesterol	0	0%
Sodium	0	0%
Total Carbohydrate	7 g	2%
Dietary Fiber	1 g	6%
Sugars	5 g	
Protein	1 g	
Vitamin C	5 mg	9%
Vitamin B6	0.1 mg	5%
Calcium	16 mg	2%
Iron	0.2 mg	1%
Folic Acid	15.2 mcg	4%
Potassium	126 mg	4%
Selenium	0.5 mcg	1%
Zinc	0.2 mg	1%

\*Percent of U.S. Daily Values or U.S. Recommended Dietary Intakes for Food Labels  
(Adults and Children 4+ years)

# Health

## Onions for All Seasons and Tastes

Onions can be divided into two categories: spring/summer fresh onions and fall/winter storage onions.

### Spring/summer Fresh Onions

Spring/summer fresh onions are available in yellow, red and white throughout their season, March through August. Fresh onions can be identified by their thin, light-colored skins. Because they have a higher water content, they are typically sweeter and milder than storage onions. This higher water content also makes them more susceptible to bruising.

With their delicate taste, fresh onions are an ideal choice for salads and other fresh and lightly-cooked dishes.

### Fall/winter Storage Onions

Fall/winter storage onions are available August through April. Also available in yellow, red and white, storage onions have multiple layers of thick, dark, papery skins. Storage onions have an intense flavor and a higher percentage of solids.

Storage onions are the best choice for savory dishes that require longer cooking times or more flavor.

## Domestic Onion Production

### Spring/summer Fresh Onion Availability

Area	Trade Name	Production	Features
<b>Texas</b> Rio Grande Valley & Winter Garden	SuperSweet® Texas Spring Sweet® & Texas 1015 SuperSweet®	March-July	
West & High Plains		June-August	
<b>Georgia</b> Vidalia	Vidalia Sweets®	April-June	CA Storage July-November
<b>Arizona</b>	Grand Canyon Sweets™	May-June	
<b>Hawaii</b> Maui	Maui Sweets	Year Round	Limited Mainland Availability
Oahu	Hawaiian Hula Sweets™	March-October	
<b>Washington</b> Walla Walla	Walla Walla Sweets®	June-August	
<b>New Mexico</b>	Nu-Mex Sweets	June-August	
<b>California</b> Desert Valleys	Sweet Imperials™	April-June	
San Joaquin Valley		May-August	
Coastal Valleys		June-September	
<b>Colorado</b>		July-September	

**Note:**

Various limited production spring/summer fresh onions are available on a seasonal basis from other locations including, but not limited to, California, Colorado, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Oregon and Washington.

### The Color of Onions

Onions come in three colors – yellow, red and white. Approximately 88 percent of the onions produced in the United States are yellow, with about 7 percent red onions and 5 percent white onions.

### Fall/winter Storage Onion Availability

Area	Trade Name	Production	Features
<b>California</b> Southern High Desert Valleys		September-March	
<b>Nevada</b>		September-March	Mostly Whites
<b>New York</b>		August-May	Mostly Mediums
<b>Michigan</b>		September-March	Mostly Mediums
<b>Ohio</b>		August-April	
<b>Minnesota, North Dakota, Wisconsin</b>		September-March	
<b>Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, South Dakota</b>		September-March	Limited Production
<b>Idaho-Eastern Oregon</b>	Idaho-Eastern Oregon Spanish Onions™	August-April	Large Size
<b>West/Central Oregon</b>		August-April	
<b>Washington</b>		July-May	
<b>Colorado</b>		August-April	
<b>Utah</b>		August-March	
<b>New Mexico</b>		September-December	Limited Production

## Onion Tips

Onions have long been a staple for foodservice operators. They are used in a wide range of ethnic cuisines as well as traditional American fare. From soups and sandwiches to appetizers and salads, onions add color, texture and flavor to menus.



### Onion Preparation Tips

Prepare onions as close to cooking or serving time as possible. An onion's flavor deteriorates and its aroma intensifies over time.

Refrigerate onions 30 minutes before preparation to prevent tearing.

To remove the smell of onions, rub hands and equipment with lemon juice or salt.

Store your onions in a cool, dry ventilated place – not in the refrigerator. Lack of air movement reduces storage life.

Chopped or sliced onions can be stored in a sealed container in your refrigerator for up to 7 days.

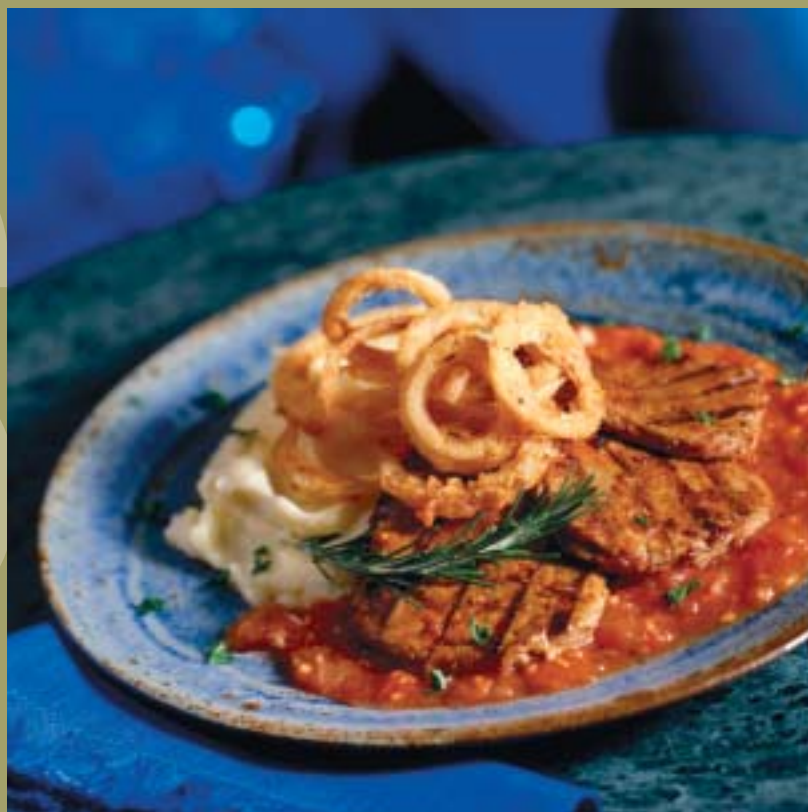
High heat makes onions bitter. When sautéing onions, always use low or medium heat.

### Cooking With Onions

The taste and texture of onions varies greatly depending on their preparation. Onions can be braised, boiled, steamed, baked, sautéed, fried or grilled.

Sautéing onions softens their texture and enriches their taste. Onions can be heated in broth or wine instead of butter or oil to lower the fat content.

Yellow onions turn a rich, dark brown when cooked and give French Onion Soup its tangy sweet flavor. White onions are traditionally used in Mexican cuisine. They have a golden color and sweet flavor when sautéed. The red onion is a good choice for fresh uses, grilling and charbroiling.



# Storage

## Onion Receiving Tips

Make sure the number of bags or cartons delivered matches the delivery invoice and that the onions are the correct color and size ordered.

Onions should feel firm and dry, but may have some loose outer skins.

Onions should be free of gray or black mold and should not have any visible sprouting.

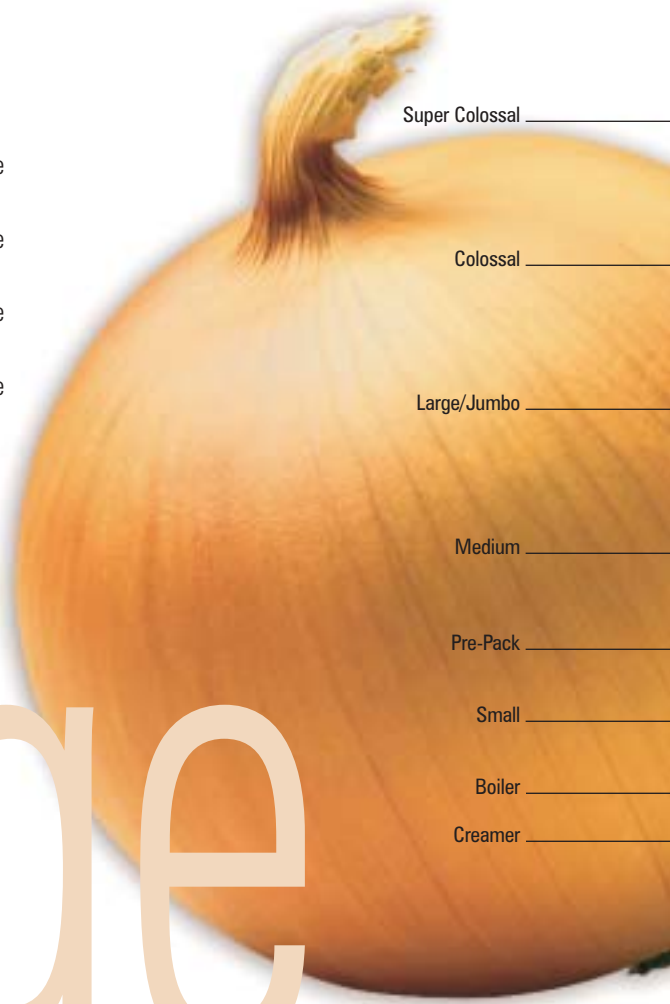
Always handle onions with care. Do not drop onions as this often causes bruising and decay.

Store onions in a cool, dry, well ventilated area. Do not store onions in coolers.

Do not wrap onions in plastic or store in plastic bags. A lack of air circulation will reduce storage life.

## Sizing Chart

- Super Colossal**  
4-1/2" and Up .....Yellow, Red & White
- Colossal**  
3-3/4" and Up .....Yellow, Red & White
- Large/Jumbo**  
3" and Up.....Yellow, Red & White
- Medium**  
2" to 3-1/4" .....Yellow, Red & White
- Pre-Pack**  
1-3/4" to 3" .....Yellow & White
- Small**  
1" to 2-1/4" .....Yellow, Red & White
- Boiler**  
1" to 1-7/8" .....Yellow & White
- Creamer**  
Under 1" .....Yellow & White



## Packaging

### Dry Bulb Onions:

#### Bags

2, 3, 5, 10, 25 and 50 lb.

#### Cartons

40 and 50 lb.

### Processed Fresh Onions

Whole Peeled, Diced, Rings, Whole Sliced, Stir-fry, Slivered and Ready-to-Bloom

Various packaging sizes available depending on purchasing specifications

### Processed Frozen Onions (IQF)

Diced, Strips and Rings

Various packaging sizes available depending on purchasing specifications

## Onion Handling and Storage Attributes

Attributes	Spring/summer Fresh Onions	Fall/winter Storage Onions
Storing Ability	Typically not stored, unless under controlled atmosphere or refrigeration	Designed specifically to withstand long periods of storage
Storage Shelf-life	30 - 60 days	30 -180 days
Retail Shelf-life	30 days or less	
Temperature	Room temperature - Dry storage	
Humidity	Keep in a dry, well ventilated place	
Freezing Injury	Moderately sensitive. Highest freezing point = 30.6° F or 0.8°C	Hardier than other varieties. Highest freezing point = 30.6° F or 0.8°C
Odor Sensitivity	Odors will be absorbed by apples, celery and pears. Will absorb odors produced by apples and pears.	
Sweetness	Sweet/mild to slightly pungent flavors	Varies from mild to very pungent
Aroma	Mild to slightly pungent	Mildly pungent to strong
Colors	Yellow, red and white	
Exterior Shell	Thin, light-colored skin	Multiple layers of thick, dark skin
Interior Onion Texture	Soft to medium	Medium to firm



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