**Green Onions**

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1. What are Green Onions?
   1. Green onions, also known as scallions or salad onions, are immature yellow, white, and red onions harvested before the bulb forms.
   2. Green onions have a thin, white base that has not yet developed into a bulb on one end with a long, green stalk
      1. Both of these parts are edible
   3. Green onions are in the Allium fistulosa genus, closely related to lilies.
      1. Additional plants in the Allium family include garlic, leeks, chives, ramps and shallots.
   4. Since green onions are immature versions of the onion, they are milder in flavor, which allows these to be eaten raw without overpowering the taste of the dish they are added to.
   5. As a general rule, the thinner the green onion, the milder the taste.
2. History of Green Onions
   1. The exact origin of the onion and green onion is unknown;
      1. The common onion is thought to have originated in Asia (Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan).
      2. There are some reports that the green onion was first used in China, however, this is unclear. In fact, green onions are one of the most common ingredients used in Chinese cooking.
      3. Other reports show onions were used as far back as the first dynasty in Egypt (3200 BCE). This is known since there are drawings of onions on tombs, buildings, and documents of this time. This included both mature onions and green onions.
         1. Onions were considered the “staple food” of the poor during this time and were often offered as sacrifice on Egyptian altars.
         2. Since Egyptian times, the onion has grown to be a staple in many culture’s cuisines.
   2. Naming of the Onion
      1. Onions were given their name during the classical time. *Unio* is the Latin term for onion meaning *oneness* or *unity*.
      2. The French named these *oignon.*
      3. In his book *The Secret Life of Food*, author Martin Elcortt writes “The word (onion) was created by adding the onion-shaped letter *o* to the word union, yielding a new spelling ***ounion.*** The letter u was later dropped to create the modern spelling. A union is something that is indivisible and which, if taken apart, is destroyed in the process, like an onion."
3. Nutrition & Health Benefits
   1. Green onions are nutrient dense. One cup of green onions only has about 19 calories, but high amounts of vitamins.
      1. Green onions are rich in vitamin A and vitamins C which not only have cancer-fighting properties, they also improve healing by promoting skin integrity and collagen formation.
      2. The vitamin A found in green onions also promotes eye health, which is increasingly important as we age.
      3. A single green onion stalk has about 12% of daily needs for vitamin K, which is a critical vitamin for bone health.
      4. Green onions have phytochemicals which fight cancer-causing molecules and promote the immune system.
      5. Green onions are high in folate, a vitamin necessary for cell division.
      6. Contains allicin, a natural vasodilator, which lowers blood pressure
4. Production, Storage, Preparation and Cooking
   1. Growing:
      1. Green onions are available year round, but the ideal growing time is from late March-mid April.
      2. Green onions are grown in virtually all states and countries, with each variety varying slightly to adapt to conditions of the growing environment.
      3. Green onions are easily grown from “sets”. Sets are small onion bulbs. “Larger” sets are those larger than the size of a dime. These are the sets used to grow green onions.
      4. To grow green onions, plant larger sets 1 ½ inches deep and close enough so they are touching.
      5. Pull the onions when the leaves are 8-10 inches tall. If you let them grow too long, the bulb may start to develop into a mature onion.
      6. Green onions have the ability to regenerate themselves. When a using a green onion for cooking, save the bottom inch, plant in damp soil or place in jar of water in a sunny spot, and new green onions will be ready to harvest in about a week.
   2. Buying:
      1. Be sure to buy green onions with crisp, dark green leaves. There should be no yellow coloring to the leaves.
      2. Buy green onions that are straight. You can buy slightly curved versions, but if they are too curved (as in a C-shape) this means the onion is dried out and/or going bad.
   3. Storing
      1. Remove rubber bands, wrap in plastic bag and store in crisper section of the refrigerator for up to five days.
      2. If you find you are having trouble using the whole bunch of green onions before they go bad, try freezing them
         1. Rinse, dry, and chop onions as you would for any recipe.
         2. Put chopped onions in air tight container and add to recipes as you need them.
   4. Preparation and Cooking
      1. Preparation:
         1. Rinse under cool tap water
         2. Remove any wilted or damaged tops or any slimy skins on the white base
         3. Lay several onions on a cutting surface. Using a chef's knife, trim off the stringy root ends by slicing about 1/8 to 1/4 inch above the roots. Discard the roots.
         4. Trim about 2 inches from the green tops. Discard the trimmed tops.
      2. Cooking
         1. Add extra flavor and color to dishes by serving with chopped green onion
         2. Chop and add to salads, use as a garnish, add to salsa
         3. Serve with other raw vegetables as an appetizer with dips
         4. Sauté and add to soups, meats, and sauces
         5. Add green onions to stir fry
         6. Grill whole green onions as a side dish
         7. Use the green stalk as a substitute for chives
         8. Add to baked or mashed potatoes
         9. Eat them raw!
5. Fun Facts
   1. In sixth century India, onions were used as a diuretic. They were also considered beneficial for the heart, the eyes, and the joints.
   2. In Chinese medicine, green onions are used to induce sweating. One application for the common cold is to take 20 green onions and simmer them with rice to make porridge. Add a little vinegar and eat while it is warm. Then wrap yourself up in blankets to induce sweating and rid yourself of the cold.
   3. During Colonial times in the U.S., a slice or two of green onions was thought to be a cure for the measles.