**Sweet as a Peach**

1. **What is a peach?**
2. Peaches are “drupe” fruits meaning it contains a stone – just like nectarines, apricots, plums and cherries.
3. They are a member of the rose family and there are over 700 different varieties of the fruit.
4. This fuzzy skinned fruit is grown on trees which generally grow to be 25 to 30 feet tall.
5. Peaches grow best are warm temperatures around 75°F. Cool, wet climates can make the peaches more susceptible to disease.
6. Generally, peaches take 3 to 5 months to reach harvest and are harvested from mid- to late summer.
7. Each year, a peach tree can bear up to 66 pounds of fruit which is about 132 peaches.
8. Peaches can be classified into three groups; freestone, clingstone, and semi-freestone. These groups are separated by the way the peach’s flesh clings to the pit.
9. They are generally sold by the flesh color- either yellow-fleshed or white-fleshed. The outside color can range from yellow to red.
10. China is the largest producer of peaches, followed by Italy.
11. In the United States, Georgia is known as the Peach State even though it is ranked third in growth. 50% of peaches are grown in California. California is the largest producer of peaches, with 713,000 tons produced in 2012. That same year South Carolina produced 95,000 tons and Georgia 36,000 tons. Georgia peaches get their notoriety because of the high quality peach they can produce.
12. Peaches are not generally recommended for growing in Wisconsin. However, in extreme southeastern Wisconsin thousands of home gardens have peach trees that will bear fruit.
13. **History of Peaches**
14. Peaches originated in China and have been grown there since 1,000 B.C.
15. They were considered the favorite fruit of the emperors and were first mentioned in Chinese writings.
16. Peach blossoms were also carried by Chinese brides.
17. Peaches then traveled west to Persia on the silk road where they got the name *Prunus persica.* In Persia, Alexander the Great then introduced them to the Greeks.
18. Many years later, Romans then began to grow and sell peaches, calling them Persian apples.
19. In the 17th century, George Minifie brought the first peaches to the colonies where he planted them first at his own Virginia estate.
20. American Indian tribes then took seeds with them planting peach trees and spreading them across the country as they traveled.
21. **Health Benefits**
22. While containing only 37 calories, one peach provide 17% of the daily recommended value of vitamin C per serving.
23. Peaches are rich in vitamins C, A, E, B and calcium and potassium.
24. The darker the color of the peach’s skin, the more vitamin A that it contains.
25. One serving also contains 2 grams of fiber, which helps digestion.
26. Like all fruits and vegetables, they are very high in antioxidants and flavonoids.
27. **Selection, Storage, and Preparation**

**Selection**

1. When looking for a ripe peach, you can select a peach by feeling it. While gently squeezing, a ripe peach will “give”.

**Storage**

1. Stone fruits are highly perishable and will only store for short periods of time, usually a few days to 2 weeks.
2. To avoid bruising, it is also best to store them in a single layer if possible.
3. If you buy a peach before it is ripe, placing the peach in a paper bag at room temperature can speed up the ripening process.
4. Once the peaches are ripe, they can be placed in the refrigerator for them to last a little longer.
5. If you are looking to freeze peaches, they should be soft and ripe before freezing. They also freeze best when peeled and sliced. When frozen, they can last up to 6 months and are great in baked goods or smoothies.

**Preparation**

1. To remove the stone from the peach, cut into the peach near the top until you feel it hit the stone. Then you can continue to cute the peach lengthwise around the stone. After splitting the peach in half, the stone will be exposed and you will be able to remove it.
2. Peeling a peach can be quick by first placing an x on the bottom of the peach with a small knife. Next, the peach should be placed in boiling water for 30 seconds followed by an ice bath and their skin should easily slip off after.
3. **Tip:** To prevent browning, coat the peach in lemon juice after slicing.
4. **Fun Facts**
5. The fresh peach market goes from May through September.
6. Since there are sufficient amounts of vitamins A and C, peaches also act as a great moisturizer and are often used in cosmetics.
7. In China, peaches are seen as a symbol of good luck, protection and longevity.
8. Every year in Georgia, the world’s “largest peach cobbler” is made measuring 11 feet by 5 feet.
9. The largest peach on record weighed 25.6 ounces which is around a pound and a half. It was picked in Coloma, Michigan in August of 2002.
10. August in National Peach Month.
11. The saying “you’re a real peach” originated from the tradition of giving a peach to a friend that you liked.
12. Peaches are the third most popular fruit grown in the United States.
13. Nectarines are just peaches without the fuzz!
14. Peach trees usually live around 12 years.
15. The United States provides about ¼ of the world’s supply of fresh peaches.

We hope you enjoyed learning more about peaches! Since it is National Peach Month, it is the perfect time to add fresh, nutritious peaches to your diet.