1. **What is a strawberry?**
2. Strawberries belong to the family of Rose, along with plums and apples.
3. It is the *only* fruit with seeds on the outside – there can be as many as 200 seeds on the outside of a strawberry.
4. 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. After 3-5 years, you will need to replant another strawberry plant.
5. There are over 600 varieties of strawberries.
6. They are considered a super fruit by nutrition experts because of their high nutrient content.
7. Voted a top favorite fruit among most Americans.
8. Versatile and easy to use in both sweet and savory dishes.
9. Available year-round across the country.
10. Grown mainly in California with 90% of strawberry production in the U.S coming from California.
11. **Types of strawberries:**
12. June Bearing: A type of cultivated strawberry that bears fruit one time a year producing a heavy crop over an approximately a three week period. The majority of the June-bearing varieties produce the berries in June
13. Ever Bearing: A type of cultivated strawberry that bears two crops of berries, one in the spring or early summer and one in the fall. They begin to produce when the days begin to produce more than 12 hours of sunlight. The first crop generally produces the most berries and the fall crop is lighter with a few berries also produced in between. Both crops do not equal the amount produced by the June-bearing varieties.
14. Wild Strawberries: Wild strawberries are much smaller than the cultivated berries but they are more fragrant, juicier, and sweeter. There are many varieties of wild strawberries.
15. **History of the Strawberry**
16. Strawberry consumption dates back to about 234 BC – where there is evidence strawberries grew wild throughout Italy.
17. France began cultivating them in 1300 for use as a medicinal herb.
18. Monks starting using wild strawberries for their red dye in their illuminated manuscripts in 1400
19. 1588 – Strawberries were discovered in Virginia by the first Europeans
20. First strawberry garden was grown in France and America’s in 18th century (France’s king had 1,400 strawberry plants in his garden, Emperor Napoleon was popular for bathing in strawberry juice)
21. 1900’s – California began growing them – grows 90% of the strawberries in the country: 1 billion pounds per year!
22. **Nutrition and Health Benefits – “The Queen of Fruits”**
23. Strawberries are an excellent source of vitamin C and other antioxidants and flavonoids. These may be beneficial in promoting better memory, lower cardiovascular disease, ease inflammation, promote bone health and promote eye health. The Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry found that the red coloring contains anthocyanins (water-soluable plant pigments which are very strong antioxidants) – which was shown to boost short term memory by 100% in 8 weeks.
24. Strawberries also provide potassium, magnesium, vitamin K and folate.
25. Like most fruit, strawberries provide dietary fiber, both soluble (fleshy part of the fruit) and insoluble (skin of the cherry). Fiber helps with intestinal health.
26. A recent study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, found that strawberries rankedin the top 10 foods for highest antioxidant content per serving! The antioxidant capacity of strawberries has been shown to be ~10x greater than other fruits such as apples, peaches, tomatoes and oranges.
27. Strawberries are very low in calories – only 50 calories in 1 cup.
28. They are very low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium.

1. **Selection, Storing and Preparing**
2. Selecting Strawberries
3. Choose ripe strawberries – they will not ripen further after picking
4. It is recommended to purchase organic strawberries – because of their vulnerability to fungus, farmers tend to spray pesticides on them.
5. For full nutrition and flavor, buy fresh strawberries.
6. They need to be firm, plump, and have a deep red color and green caps.
7. Smaller strawberries tend to be sweeter and more flavorful.
8. Check the entire package for mold, do not buy if any mold as apparent.
9. Storing strawberries
10. Before using or storing, sort through the strawberries and separate the soft ones from the firm, fully ripe berries. Discard any mushy or spoiled berries.
11. Leave the caps (stems) on the strawberries until ready to eat or use in your recipes.
12. For best flavor, do not wash the strawberries until you are ready to eat or use them. Moisture is the enemy when it comes to storing strawberries.
13. As strawberries tastes best at room temperature, remove from the refrigerator approximately 1 hour before they are to be used.
14. Store fresh strawberries in a colander in the refrigerator. This allows the cold air to circulate around them. Do not cover them.
15. Remove caps from strawberries only after washing (the caps keep the water from breaking down the texture and flavor inside the strawberries).
16. Prepare strawberries for serving by rinsing with caps still attached under a gentle spray of cool water; pat dry with a paper towel. Wash the berries just before you plan to use them. **Tip:** To keep strawberries from absorbing large quantities of water when washing them, place in a salad spinner to remove excess water.
17. Remove the green caps (stems) with a light twisting motion or with the point of a paring knife. It’s as easy as a twist of the wrist.
18. Only refrigerate for 2-3 days for best freshness.
19. Bring out the flavor of strawberries by sprinkling with a dash of pepper, balsamic vinegar, lemon juice or orange juice.
20. Adding sugar, lemon juice or orange juice to strawberries will help preserve their bright color.
21. When cleaning strawberries, avoid soaking them in water. Because they are so porous, strawberries will absorb the water, causing them to become waterlogged and lose some of their flavor.
22. **Freezing Strawberries - How To Freeze Strawberries**
23. When you have more strawberries than you can eat or when strawberries can be obtained at a reasonable cost, freeze them to eat later. For freshly made strawberry jam at any time of the year, freeze berries and then make the jam at your convenience.
24. Strawberries are easy to freeze. You can use a dry-sugar, syrup pack, or unsweetened pack.
25. No matter which type of pack you choose to use, follow these general directions for preparing and packaging strawberries for freezing:
26. Use only firm, fully ripe berries.
27. To avoid bruising and soaking the berries, wash only a few at a time in cold water. colander or
28. Drain on absorbent paper or in a colander or sieve.
29. Remove the hulls with the tip of a floating blade peeler.
30. Chill the fruit in ice water to lower its temperature for fast freezing.
31. **Multiple Uses**
    1. Ripe strawberries are often eaten raw as whole, sliced or crushed berries. When sugar is added to strawberries, their natural juices are drawn out and crushed berries will produce a sauce that can be eaten as is or poured over shortcake or ice cream. Strawberries are used as an ingredient in many salads, pies, cakes, sorbets, and other desserts. They are used as appetizers or a garnish on appetizer and cheese platters. A popular dessert is strawberries dipped in chocolate. Strawberries mixed in a blender with ice cream, yogurt, milk or other fruits make delicious and healthy shakes. They can also be cooked and made into jellies and jams. It is also one of the most popular flavorings in candies and other sweet products. Dried strawberries, which make sweet, chewy treats, are also quite common and are often added to snack mixes.

1. **Fun Facts**

Folk lore states that if you split a double strawberry in half and shares it with the opposite sex; you’ll soon fall in love.

Strawberry designs are carved in medieval stone masons as the sign of perfection and righteousness. These designs are often carved on altars, around the top pillars in cathedral and churches.

The strawberry was a symbol for Venus, the Goddess of Love, because of its heart shapes and red color.

Emperor Napoleon was popular for bathing in the strawberry juice of 22 pounds of strawberries.

Legend has been told that strawberries were named by English children who picked, strung it on grass straws and sold them as “Straws of berries”

Strawberries were once thought to be an aphrodisiac and were served in soups to newlyweds in 13th century France.

Ancient Romans used strawberries alleviated symptoms of fainting, fevers, throat infections, kidney stones, halitosis, attacks of gout, and diseases of the blood, liver and spleen.

At Wimbledon each year, strawberries and cream are eaten between tennis matches by properly attired English.