



GUIDE
OF THE BEST
FRUITS
VEGETABLES



Subject Index

Fruits

ALMOND



The almond is the edible seed of the fruit of the sweet almond tree (*Prunus amygdalus* Batsch). In the ripening process, the pulp of the fruit loses juice and hardens until it finally becomes detached; it is the stone of this fruit that is properly called the almond. On removal of its reddish-brown skin, the almond displays a shiny white hue.

The almond originated in the East and North Africa, where it is still found growing wild.

The almond is rich in calories and nutrients, providing 576 to 626 kcal per

100 g. It contains fibre and protein, and is a good source of minerals such as potassium, phosphorus, calcium, magnesium and iron, and vitamins such as folic acid. The almond provides unsaturated plant esters that aid cholesterol breakdown.

Almonds are highly versatile. Delicious eaten as a snack – fresh, or pan-roasted and salted – almonds are also used to make wonderful sweets such as turrón nougat and marzipan and a vast range of patisserie products.

Spanish and American-grown almonds are available the year round.

APPLE



The apple is the fruit of the apple tree, *Malus domestica*, which originated in the temperate zones of Europe, west of Turkistan and southwest and central Asia. The peel can green, yellow or red, and the taste of the pulp ranges from sour to sweet.

The numerous apple varieties differ in shape, size, colour, texture and flavour; ripening season and shelf life also vary widely.





Apple can be eaten fresh, peeled or whole, as a dessert or as a snack between meals. It can be combined with cinnamon and raisins to make delicious apple tarts, or used to make jam, compote, purées and juices.

Apple can be used to make vinegar or fermented for the manufacture of Asturian cider or French calvados.

Apple is rich in fibre and pectin, and acts as a mild laxative that balances gastrointestinal function. It is high in antioxidants like quercetin and elagic and caffeic acids, which help prevent cardiovascular disease and certain cancers. The fruit provides potassium, phosphorus, calcium and iron, and vitamins A, B, C and E. It is low-calorie and low in protein, fat and sodium, and contains glucose and fructose.

Apple has long enjoyed a reputation for being healthy, especially for aiding dental health.

Apple is one of the most widely cultivated fruits in the world. Harvested in the summer and autumn, its long shelf life and wide range of sources - in the southern hemisphere especially - mean it is available all year.

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APRICOT

The apricot is a velvety, yellow to orange-coloured fruit with a delicious flavour. It originated in northeast China, although its botanical name, *Prunus armeniaca*, mistakenly ascribes its origin to Armenia. It resembles a peach, though smaller and paler. Its pubescent skin is sometimes tinged red on the side most exposed to sunlight. The pulp has a pleasant, firm and somewhat fibrous texture when at its optimal point of ripeness, evolving towards a floury consistency when very ripe.



Apricot is used to make by-products such as jams, preserves, juices and orejones, sun-dried apricots. When eaten dry, the apricot has a laxative effect, while when fresh it is anti-diarrhoeic.

The apricot is rich in vitamin C and in carotenoids, which are vitamin A precursors. It provides minerals such as sodium, potassium, calcium and magnesium. It stimulates the immune system by enhancing the body's defences; apricot is recommended to help correct states of depression, loss of appetite and retarded growth.

Apricot is grown in a wide range of countries and is therefore available in the main Spanish markets all year.

AVOCADO

The avocado (*Persea americana*) is a fleshy fruit with a smooth or rough skin; most varieties are green in colour. The area of origin of this tropical species is not known precisely, but is thought to lie somewhere between southern Mexico and Colombia.

An avocado fruit is typically 7 to 20 cm long and weighs 200 to 400 g. The skin

is thick and hard. The oily pulp is creamy to yellowish-green, with a nutty flavour.

The fruit is high in fat (14%); most of its fat content is unsaturated and beneficial for the cardiovascular system. Avocado provides 160 kcal of energy per 100 g. It contains 2% protein and close to 7% fibre. It is rich in minerals, particularly potassium, and contains phosphorus, magnesium and calcium and vitamins A, C and E. Avocado is the fruit with the highest content of vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol). Vitamin E is a fat-soluble antioxidant that protects cell membranes, combats oxidative damage by carcinogenic and toxic agents, and helps prevent cardiovascular disease.



Avocado can be taken raw or cooked. It is neither sweet nor sour, and thus blends well into a wide range of dishes. It is best eaten when the pulp is spreadable like butter. Avocados ripen at ambient temperature; the ripening process is halted by refrigeration. Avocado is available the year round.

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BANANA

The banana is the fruit of an herbaceous plant resembling a tree, comprising several species and cultivars within the genus *Musa*, which originated in Southeast Asia. It is an elongated yellow fruit with a mildly sweet taste. Different banana varieties can be of varying size, green or yellow in colour, and of different degrees of sweetness.



Banana can be eaten fresh on its own, creamed into baby food, used to make purée or cakes, and even fried. In the northern hemisphere banana is appreciated as a dessert only, but it is an essential dietary component in tropical and sub-tropical regions.

Banana is the fourth most widely produced fruit in the world, with Latin American and Caribbean countries accounting for over 80% of output. Banana varieties are grown in the Canary Islands including Gran Enana and, in recent years, two local cultivars called Brier and Gruesa Palmera.

Banana is 23% carbohydrate, making it a good source of energy. It contains 1% protein and 0.5% cholesterol-free fat. It is a fibre-rich fruit that aids digestion when eaten ripe but can be somewhat indigestible if eaten when still green. Banana is a great source of potassium, an essential nutrient - potassium deficiency causes muscle weakness, mental confusion and heart trouble. Banana is rich in vitamin B6, folic acid and riboflavin and contains considerable amounts of vitamins A and C.

Bananas grown in the Canary Islands and elsewhere are available all year.

BLACKBERRY

Blackberry is rich in vitamins A and C and high in potassium, which lends it diuretic properties. It also contains tannins, glucose and levulose, calcium, iron, and citric, lactic, succinic, oxalic



and salicylic acids. It is low-calorie, low in protein and fat, and high in fibre.

There are hundreds of sub-species and varieties across Europe. Blackberries are small edible red fruits that turn black on ripening. They are aromatic and have a sweet, slightly acidic taste. They are formed from many small drupes bound together in a cluster.

Blackberries are eaten raw, on their own or with ice cream, yoghurt or cream. They are also used to make juices, jams, preserves and fruit must. Blackberry is a very popular ingredient in desserts, jams and jellies, and sometimes wines and liqueurs.



It helps prevent a range of disorders such as diabetes, angina and ulcers. Blackberry contains a number of substances that protect against cancer. It is a very delicate fruit and thus only available in Spain in the summer, at highly specialised greengrocer's. However, at other times of year it is available as an import from other parts of the world.

BLUEBERRY

The blueberry is a small blue fruit with a distinctive flavour. Almost perfectly round, it is 7 to 15 mm in diameter and its flesh is aromatic, juicy and slightly tart. It is full of tiny brown seeds that are barely noticeable in the mouth. The growing trend towards healthy food has made the blueberry popular for its high nutritional value.



It is rich in vitamins A and C and is high in fibre. It is free of cholesterol, sodium and fat. Its key property, however, is its high concentration of a broad range of antioxidants – specifically, phenols – that help prevent cardiovascular disease and some kinds of cancer. Blueberries are low-calorie, and thus a good diet food, and rich in anthocyanins, which benefit the digestive tract.

Blueberries are most popular eaten fresh – on their own or in a fruit salad, with pancakes, with cream or syrup, or any number of other variants.

Blueberries are widely processed to produce jams, ice creams, jellies and preserves that make ideal cake fillings. They are also an ingredient of sauces and garnishes for meat dishes. Blueberries are available frozen, tinned and dried.

Many berries of the *Vaccinium* shrub genus originated in the acid soils of the cold regions of North America.

Blueberry has spread from the northern hemisphere to the southern and is harvested from spring to autumn. Fresh blueberries are thus available almost the year round. During the European winter, most blueberries are imported from Chile and Argentina.

CHERRY

The term “cherry” covers both sweet cherries (*Prunus avium*) and morello or ‘sour’ cherries (*Prunus cerasus*). The exact place of origin of the cherry tree is



unknown, but there is evidence that the sweet cherry comes from the region between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea and the morello cherry comes from the lands between the Swiss Alps and the Adriatic.



Morello cherries are dark, small and round and have a tart taste. The acidity depends on the specific variety.

The sweet cherry is greatly prized for its colour and flavour. A rounded fruit of about 2 cm in diameter, its colour ranges from is purple to red and light red, depending on the variety. Cherries are eaten fresh or in cakes and preserves. They can be frozen fresh or in syrup – especially the darker varieties.

When buying cherries, bear in mind that the sugar content does not rise after picking. Choose fleshy, firm cherries with unbroken skin. The stems should be fresh and firmly attached to the fruit.

Cherries provide vitamins A and C, fibre, potassium and flavonoids, which act as effective antioxidants. Cherries are low in fat and free of cholesterol and sodium, thus offering a healthy snack; the few calories it does contain are chiefly carbohydrate.

The cherry is a summer fruit, but the wide spectrum of varieties and growing regions around the world means that they are available fresh all year.

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CHESTNUT



The chestnut is rounded, with one flat side, shiny reddish-brown in colour, with a white to yellow pulp and sweet flavour. It originated in the Mediterranean regions of Europe, and its botanical name is *Castanea sativa*.

Chestnuts are edible raw, but are generally roasted. In Galicia, they are typically boiled in milk. Chestnuts are also frosted in crystallised sugar to make marrons glacés. They allow a wide range of uses and market formats. Available peeled, frozen, puréed and as a preserve, they are also used to make wines and spirits. Chestnut flour is appreciated for its low gluten content and used to make pastries, cakes and ice cream.

Chestnut contains 36 to 40 g of sugars per 100 g, and provides energy of 170 to 182 kcal.

It is rich in starch and very low in fat. It contains a considerable proportion of gamma-aminobutyric acid, a chemical mediator that regulates nervous system function. Its high phosphorus and B-group vitamin content is also supportive of nervous function, making chestnut advisable for states of stress.

Chestnuts are harvested and marketed from September onwards. Peak consumption is attained in December, reflecting tradition in certain Mediterranean regions.



CITRUS FRUITS

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COCONUT



The coconut, *Cocos nucifera*, is a rounded, elongated fruit protected by a hard brown shell with a fibrous appearance; it contains an inner layer of an oily and flavoursome white pulp called 'copra'. When a coconut is young, its inner cavity contains a milky liquid known as 'coconut milk', highly prized in tropical countries, where it is drunk straight from the coconut.

The origin of the coconut is not accurately known, but it is thought to have come from Southeast Asia and to have spread across Indonesia and the islands of the West Pacific.

The coconut has a very wide range of uses. It makes for a refreshing drink or milkshake, and goes into pudding recipes and various cuisine dishes. It is a basic ingredient of Malay, Indian and Indonesian cooking, in which the freshly grated pulp is added to rice, meat or fish.



In Europe and other areas that do not produce the fruit, grated coconut lends an exotic touch to all sorts of dishes, from salads and compotes to cakes and ice creams.

Coconut is low in protein and carbohydrate, but high in fats, mostly saturated. It is a high-energy food: 100 g of fresh coconut provides 360 to 670 kcal. It contains fibre and minerals such as potassium. Potassium plays a key role in the human body by aiding intracellular balance. Potassium deficiency causes muscle weakness, mental confusion and heart trouble. Coconut milk is a good source of fibre and potassium.

On buying a coconut, shake it to make sure it contains liquid. The milk is extracted by making holes in the coconut's 'eyes'. The coconut is then cracked open and the pulp is detached from the shell, to be eaten whole or grated. Coconut is available in Spain the whole year round.

CURRENTS



Currents are small berry species within the *Ribes* genus. They are native to various regions of Europe and Asia.

Red currants, *Ribes rubrum*, grow in bunches and are round in shape; they have fine, red skins and are sweet and sour in taste. They can be eaten fresh, but their acidity makes them more suitable for making compotes, jams, cakes, ice cream, juices and



liqueurs, among other uses. White currant is a variety of the *Ribes rubrum* species.

Blackcurrant, *Ribes nigrum*, grows in bunches of black-hued fruits. The pulp takes on an intense sweet and sour taste when ripe, and contains a mass of tiny seeds that are imperceptible in the mouth. Blackcurrant contains a large amount of vitamin C, which reinforces the immune system.

The gooseberry, *Ribes grossularia*, does not form bunches. Gooseberries can be yellow, white, green or red and have a prickly or downy skin, depending on the variety; the yellow downy kind are predominant. Gooseberries are now sweet enough to be eaten fresh and are used chiefly to make by-products. It has the highest vitamin A content of all currant species.

Currants are a healthy, low-calorie food, with high vitamin A and C content and rich in minerals like potassium, iron and calcium. They are a good source of organic acids and fibre, which supports bowel function. Currants are rich in natural pigments, like anthocyanins and carotenoids, which with their antioxidant effect protect against arteriosclerosis and other disorders. Currants are also diuretic, and thus recommended for people with high blood pressure.

Currants are in season over a brief period in the summer. When buying currants, choose brightly coloured ones, which will be freshest. Frozen currants are available all year.

CUSTARD APPLE

Custard apple (chirimoya or anon, in Spanish) whose origin is located in tropical America, is the fruit of the custard apple tree (*Annona cherimola* Mill.). The fruit can have several forms including oval, conical, spherical or heart. Measured between 7.5 and 12.5 cm long and weighs from 150 g to 1 kg. It has a characteristic skin reticulate green. Its white flesh is juicy, very aromatic and it has a delicate flavor a little acidic. It contains many seeds dark flat about 1 cm long.

Mainly consumed as fresh fruit, the custard apple is very common added to



fruit salads and sorbets. Can also be used to produce jams and ice cream.

Custard apple is a food rich in vitamins A and C. It contains minerals such as Calcium and Phosphorus, which is useful to avoid the osteoporosis. For its low calorie content is adequate in thinning diets. It is also low in fat and contains no cholesterol. Its composition makes it a special food for people with heart problems, liver or kidney.

Flowering of the custard apple occurs in summer and the fruit ripens in winter. In Spain, the production runs from September to January and the production peaks occur in October and November. Custard apple can be acquired more easily during that period due to the short conservation period; it is a fruit hard to find during the rest of the year.

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DATE

The date is the fruit of the date palm, *Phoenix dactylifera*. It originated in Mesopotamia, the region that lies between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Dates are oblong in shape, and their colour ripens from golden yellow to brownish red. A date is 4 to 8 cm long, and its tender flesh has a delicious sweet taste reminiscent of honey. It contains an elongated stone with a lengthwise furrow.

Dates are most popular in dry form, but are also eaten fresh. They are used to make syrups, cakes and pastries





The sugar content in dates provides 124 kcal per 100 g. Dates contain protein and minerals – particularly iron – B-group vitamins and vitamin A. Their high folate concentration is good for the nervous system.

Dates stimulate the appetite, and are useful for intestine and stomach problems brought on by lack of appetite. Dates are recommended for anaemia and liver disorders, and for constipation, as they are a gentle laxative. They should be eaten in moderation, because they tend to be somewhat indigestible. Given their high sugar content, dates are not a good choice for diabetics or people on weight-loss diets.

Choose fleshy, tender dates with an attractive colouring. They are available with and without the stone. Both fresh and dried dates are available all year.

FIG

The fig tree, *Ficus carica*, is native to southwest Asia. Figs grow with a fine green, purple or black skin and in various sizes, depending on the variety. The fleshy, intensely sweet pulp is packed with energy. It is full of tiny, densely packed seeds - the true fruit, in fact, of which the fig is really the container.

Figs can be enjoyed fresh, dried, puréed, tinned or candied. Fresh fig does not keep very long, so most commercially available figs are dried or tinned. In dried



figs, the loss of moisture means that there is a raised concentration of nutrients, which keep well. The dried fruit is flexible, violet or brown in colour and with a yellow, somewhat viscous pulp. Along with raisins, dried figs are among the most popular dried fruits.

A highly prized treat are the small and particularly sweet figs of autumn, commonly tinned in a syrup of sugar and rum, cognac or sherry.

Figs are low in fats and high in carbohydrates, chiefly sucrose, glucose and fructose. It is fairly rich in proteins and flavonoids. Fig is a good source of minerals like potassium, magnesium, iron and zinc, and vitamins like riboflavin and vitamin B6. It is recommended for states of tiredness and vigorous physical activity.



Its high fibre content lends it a laxative effect that aids bowel function, and it contains enzymes that support digestion.

The high potassium content of figs make them diuretic and an alkalinizing food that neutralises acid foods. A couple of figs a day help maintain a healthy intestinal flora.

Fresh figs are available only in late summer, but dried, tinned and candied figs are on the market all year.



GRAPE



The grape is a fruit that grows in tight clusters. Its pulp is white or purple and it has sweet taste. It is consumed as fresh fruit or juice, although the main use is to produce wine. It is also can be canned. The grape contains various minerals and vitamins, and is thought to have antioxidant and anticancer properties.

The grape is a fleshy fruit of round form that grows in clusters composed by many fruits. The skin may be green, yellow or purple, the pulp is juicy and sweet, and it containing several seeds. It is a fruit known by the humanity for a long time. The fresh grape is an excellent table fruit, and as well can be combined with other fruits in a fruit salad. Most of the production is for wine and must, while from its seed is extracted oil. After a drying process are obtained the raisin grapes are obtained after a drying process, and several types of canned grapes are known, like grape

seeds with caramel, grape syrup, grapes with alcohol and grape jelly.

The grapes are a food that provides vitamins and minerals to the body. It is one of the fruits that contains more carbohydrates, but the caloric content is not too high. Contain resveratrol, a compound with antioxidant and anticancer properties, and since the antiquity various healthy properties are attributed to the grapes

There are many varieties of grapes, which can be classified as table grapes, grapes for drying, grapes for must, grapes for canning, and wine grapes. This latter group includes the largest number of varieties, since the wine is the main use of the vine. In turn there are white and red grapes, depending on the type of wine to obtain. The different wine grape varieties can be classified according to the purpose for which it is intended, this means, table grapes, grapes for juices, grapes for canning, and wine grapes.

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GRAPEFRUIT



Grapefruit, *Citrus paradisi*, is a slightly flattened spherical fruit with a smooth or rough rind and pale yellow or reddish in colour. The pulp is divided into ten to twelve segments separated by membranes of a characteristic bitter taste owing to a compound called naringin. Grapefruit is generally yellow, but reddish varieties also exist.

It is a citrus fruit of unclear origin. Grapefruit is thought to be a spontaneous



hybrid of sweet orange and pomelo that emerged in Barbados in the late seventeenth century.

It is generally eaten as fresh fruit, with grapefruit juice being the only industrialised by-product. As a culinary ingredient, it is used to make duck, chicken and pork recipes or even as a complement for shrimp.

Fresh grapefruit is low-calorie and high in fibre. It contains folic acid, potassium and flavonoids, thus aiding a balanced diet. Like all citrus fruits, it is very rich in vitamin C, which lowers the risk of some cancers and cardiovascular diseases and powerfully strengthens the immune system. Grapefruit has digestive, antiseptic, tonic and diuretic properties. It also stabilises intestinal flora and stimulates weight loss.

Red and pink grapefruit also contain carotenoids and lycopene, with their antioxidant properties.

Grapefruit is available from early winter through to May or June thanks to storage in refrigerated facilities.

HAZELNUT



The common hazelnut, *Corylus avellana*, is native to Europe and Asia, and its botanical name is linked to the Italian city of Avella.

A small, round, sweet-tasting nut, it has a cinnamon-coloured shell, and a white to yellow oily flesh encased by a reddish husk. Hazelnut is eaten raw, roast or in processed form, notably

as an ingredient in turrón nougat or in chocolate.

Hazel is a highly nutritious, healthy nut, rich in unsaturated fats (54%), oleic acid especially, in protein (15%), fibre (10%) and antioxidant phenols. It contains significant amounts of thiamine and vitamin B6 and traces of other vitamins and minerals. Its low carbohydrate content (17%) makes it eligible for low-carb diets. Hazelnut provides 630 kcal energy per 100 g.

It is an exceptionally healthy food that helps prevent cardiovascular disease and other disorders associated with oxidative processes.

In Reus, the area of Spain with the longest tradition of hazelnut cultivation, family gatherings over winter evenings to peel and enjoy hazelnuts remain a living tradition. A handful of hazelnuts at mid-morning or mid-afternoon is the healthiest snack you could imagine.

Hazelnut is sold shelled and unshelled, peeled and unpeeled. It is available whole, chopped, ground, raw, roast or salted. Hazelnut comes onto the market in the autumn and reaches peak demand in December, in the run-up to Christmas.

KAKI



The kaki is a sub-tropical fruit of which there are three distinct species on the market: the Chinese kaki, or *Diospyros kaki*, the Japanese kaki, *Diospyros lotus*, and the Virginian kaki, *Diospyros virginiana*.



The most widely cultivated is the Chinese kaki. The round fruit ranges in weight from 80 to 250 g and is orange-red to yellow in hue, depending on its carotene content. Its orange flesh is sweet and juicy, with a light tartness.

It is generally eaten fresh, using a small spoon to scoop out the fruit is tender and the skin translucent. It can also be enjoyed as dried fruit, or in puddings, cakes and jams.

The wide range of kaki cultivars are classified into astringent and non-astringent depending in whether they contain tannins, that give the fruit a touch of bitterness. The most widely available varieties are non-astringent. Astringent kakis require suitable maturation to be usable. The main kaki variety in Andalusia is non-astringent, the apple-kaki. Spain is home to the protected designation of origin PDO Ribera del Xúquer, an accolade granted to a Valencian kaki variety with improved astringency.

Kaki is a plentiful source of vitamins A and C and is recommended for depression and weakness owing to its high B-group vitamin content.

Kaki is a sensitive fruit that is easily damaged in transit. It is usually distributed in areas close to production sources for a few months in the year only.

KIWI

The kiwi, *Actinidia chinensis*, is a climbing plant that originated in southern China. The fruit is oval, with a thin, brownish-green, downy peel. It varies in size, and its tender green pulp is bittersweet, containing a mass of tiny dark seeds.

It is consumed fresh "as is", or sliced into a fruit salad or cold starter or as an ingredient in culinary recipes. As a dessert, it can be peeled whole or sliced in half and eaten using a small spoon.

It is low in cholesterol and exceptionally rich in vitamin C. An average-sized kiwi provides about 90 mg of vitamin C, exceeding the recommended daily intake of 60 mg. Kiwi is thus powerfully antioxidant, helping to prevent cancer



and strengthening the body's immune system. It provides essential nutrients like phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, iron and calcium. It is high in fibre, and thus has a laxative effect.

The kiwi ripens slowly and keeps for a long time. It deserves a key role in a balanced diet.

In Spain, kiwi is harvested in October and November, but is sourced from around the world to ensure all-year availability.

LEMON



The lemon, *Citrus limon*, is a very juicy fruit with an acid taste and brilliant yellow when ripe. It originated in southeast Asia. The zest is thick and tough, while the pale yellow pulp is



divided into segments, and gives off a distinctive pleasant fragrance when freshly sliced.

Lemon is taken fresh as a juice, and has a wealth of uses in cookery, drinks, soups, salads, fish dishes and hundreds of pudding recipes, which also use the grated zest. In culinary terms it plays a similar role to the Mexican lime, a smaller fruit that is used when still green.

Fresh lemon is very low in calories and is a good source of vitamin C, containing 500 mg per litre (ascorbic acid) and 50 mg per litre of citric acid, both being natural antioxidants. Lemon provides vitamin E and B-complex vitamins, and minerals like potassium, magnesium, calcium and phosphorus. Thanks to its high vitamin C concentration, it strengthens the immune system, activates calcium metabolism to support bone and teeth growth, and stimulates the pancreas and liver. Some studies also show that vitamin-C rich diets reduce the frequency of stomach cancer.

This high vitamin C content also makes it the raw material for the manufacture of a wide range of medicines. It is useful for preparing many homemade cures, especially for cures.

In the northern hemisphere, lemon is harvested from April to July, but lemon is available all year in a range of different varieties and from different countries of origin.

LYCHEE



The lychee is the fruit of the tropical tree *Litchi chinensis*, which originated in Canton province in southern China. A small fruit of 2.5 to 4 cm in length and 3 cm in diameter, it weighs an average of 20 g. The easily removed peel is red or pink and is covered with small bumps that give it an unusual appearance. The pulp is white, firm and translucent, with a sweet, slightly acidic taste and wrapped around a hard stone.

Lychee is usually eaten raw as whole fresh fruit or chopped in a salad, and is used to make ice cream and milkshakes. It can be dried or tinned in syrup. It is used in meat and fish recipes in Chinese cooking.

Lychee contains minerals such as potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron, copper and phosphorus, provides some of the B-complex vitamins, and vitamin C. It lowers the risk of certain cancers and helps prevent arteriosclerosis and heart disease.

According to Chinese popular wisdom, lychee is anti-inflammatory and balances body fluids, chiefly the blood.

Lychee is little-known in Europe, and is frequently available only through specialist Asian sellers. It is on the market fresh from November to January and dried or tinned in syrup all year round.

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MANDARIN

The mandarin is the fruit of the *Citrus reticulata* tree, and thus belongs to the botanical genus *Citrus*, together with orange and lemon. It is a globe with a flattened base measuring 4 to 7 cm in length and with a diameter of 5 to 8 cm.



It originated in the tropical areas of Asia, specifically in China and Vietnam, and its common name may refer to the colour of the clothing of the Mandarins, the former rulers of China.

The mandarin is popular for the ease of peeling it. The peel is smooth and brightly coloured, ranging from greenish yellow to orange red, and contains numerous oil glands that impregnate one's hands with the characteristic scent of the fruit. The pulp is sweet or very sweet, comprising a variable number of juice-packed segments containing a large amount of vitamin C, flavonoids and essential oils. Some mandarin varieties are seedless.



Mandarin is mostly eaten fresh, as a dessert or snack, and is increasingly present in European markets. It can also be used to make a wealth of recipes and puddings.

Mandarin is used to make by-products such as juice, jams and preserves, and is a source of essential oils. It is not commonly used for industrial processing, being less suitable than the orange.

Fresh mandarin is a source of fibre and potassium and is low-calorie. It contains less vitamin C than orange.

Mandarin is available all year thanks to its varietal diversity and different points of origin.

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MANGO



Mango is one of the most sought-after tropical fruits. The mango tree, *Mangifera indica*, originated in India, the main growing region, where even today it is also found wild.

Oval or spherical in shape, its edible skin varies from pale yellow to bright red. The sticky pulp, wrapped around a stone, likewise ranges from yellow to orange, and is juicy and fibrous. The fruit is 5 to 20 cm long, and weighs 300 to 400 g, with some pieces weighing over a kilogram.

A ripe mango is sweet, fragrant and gives way easily to the pressure of a finger. Its pleasant taste, smell, colour and texture make it ideal on its own, in fruit salad, or in sorbet, cakes and jams. It is also used in meat and fish recipes. The green mango, with its tarter taste, is the main ingredient for Indian mango chutney.

Mango is rich in vitamins A and C and contains phytochemicals such as lutein, an antioxidant present in the ocular macula which supports healthy eyesight. Being low in fat, sodium and calories, it is suitable for weight-loss dieting and for people with high blood pressure. This easily digested fruit is a good source of iron, and hence used in treating anaemia and other haematological disorders.

The mango is a delicate fruit that is easily damaged in transport; even so, thanks to air transport and the wide range of producer countries, mango is available all year.

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MELON

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NECTARINE

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**NUTS: ALMOND, HAZELNUT,
PEANUT, CHESTNUT, WALNUT,
PECAN, PISTACHIO, CASHEW,
PINENUT**


Any fruit containing less than 50% water is classed as a nut. Nuts all have similar proportions of protein (10-25% of their weight), sugars (5-20%) and lipids (50-60%).

Nuts are high-energy foods, rich in fats, proteins and minerals. Some nuts may

also contain significant amounts of vitamins – especially B-group vitamins – and omega 3 polyunsaturated fatty acids.

Their fat content is chiefly composed of unsaturated fatty acids – which vary with each specific nut – that play a major role in lowering blood cholesterol. Hazelnuts and almonds, for instance, contain a high percentage of oleic acid, a monounsaturated fatty acid that is also present in olive oil and is credited with benefits for heart function.

Nuts are high in fibre and micro-nutrients, such as copper, magnesium, vitamin E and folic acid. These elements can help reduce cholesterol and thus protect against cardiovascular disease.

Nuts are valuable foods for keeping a nutritional balance over the various stages of life. They are a key ingredient of the Mediterranean diet, and their flavour is widely present in salads, sauces and puddings. Vegetarians use nuts as a major source of their diet protein and fat.

Nuts are great for breakfast, as a snack, after meals and as a healthy pick-me-up. They are readily transported and stored, suitable for eating at any time of day and provide many of the nutrients our body needs.

ORANGE

The orange, *Citrus x sinensis*, is an ancient Asian hybrid and a major member of the Citrus genus and



Rutaceae family. It is a spherical, orange-coloured fruit with a fairly thick peel and a usually orange pulp comprising segments full of juice, and rich in vitamin C, flavonoids and essential oils.

Smaller and sweeter than grapefruit or toronja, but larger and less aromatic than mandarin, orange takes a wide range of forms, which differ in shape, size, the orange or red colour of the pulp, sweetness and acidity, maturation season, and presence or absence of pips.

With banana and apple, orange is one of the world's most widely consumed fruits. It is taken fresh or in juice, particularly in the winter, when the harvest reaches its peak. It is also used in compotes, marmalades, dried and in preserves, and is a source of essential oils for perfumery and cosmetics.

Fresh orange is a source of fibre and is low-calorie. It contains minerals such as potassium, calcium and phosphorus, and is very rich in vitamin C, also providing vitamins B and A. Orange is cholesterol-free and contains flavonoids, antioxidants that help prevent arteriosclerosis.

Orange is available the year round because it is grown in many places around the world, and is especially plentiful in the winter months, in step with local output.

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PAPAYA

The papaya, *Carica papaya*, is a tropical fruit of Central American origin. Oval to pear-shaped, it is fragrant, sweet and very juicy. Its fine skin ranges in colour from yellowish-green to orange, and its delicious, smooth-textured pulp contains an inner cavity holding a mass of black, shiny round seeds. The colour of the flesh varies from green to yellow, orange and pink.

Papaya can be eaten fresh, and are also used in cooking recipes and for making ice cream, soft drinks and jellies. The ripe fruit is eaten fresh in slices, with sugar and a twist of lime juice, or in a fruit salad. Green papaya is used for cooking, however. It is also used to make



jams, soft drinks, ice cream, jellies and preserves. The seeds have a strong, piquant taste and are dried for use as a spice.

Papaya is low-calorie, highly digestive, and low in protein and fat. It is rich in vitamins A, B1, B2, B3 and C and provides minerals such as calcium, phosphorus and iron. Papaya contains an enzyme called "papain" that speeds up the digestive process by breaking down proteins. It is also known to have anticid and laxative properties.

It is low-calorie and thus frequently a part of weight-loss diets.

Papaya is grown in a wide range of countries and in different varieties, so it is available all year. Spain is chiefly supplied by Brazil and Costa Rica.

PASSION FRUIT

Passion fruit or maracuya is the fruit of a climbing plant, *Passiflora edulis*, that originated in the Amazon region. The plant was dubbed *pasionaria* by sixteenth-century Jesuit missionaries who saw a resemblance in the flower to the marks of the Passion of Christ.

Maracuya is a tropical fruit with a delicate flavour; it is full of crispy seeds that are perfectly edible. Its vivid red pulp is gelatinous, viscous, highly aromatic and has an especially sweet flavour. It has a jam-like consistency.

Passion fruit is eaten fresh by slicing the fruit in half and scooping the pulp





with a spoon, or in a fruit salad. It is also used to lend flavour to highball drinks, juices, milkshakes, sorbets, creams and ice creams. It is greatly sought-after for making cakes and pastries.

Passion fruit is a great source of vitamins and minerals. It is high-fibre and low-calorie, and thus suitable for slimming diets.

Maracuya is known for its sedative effect. It contains passiflorine, an alkaloid with tranquillising properties that induces natural sleep; it is thus useful for insomnia and anxiety.

When shopping for passion fruit, choose the most wrinkled ones, which will be ripest and most flavoursome. Passion fruit is available all year, but the best season is May to September.

PEACH

The peach is the fruit of the peach tree, *Prunus persica*. Though introduced into Persia via the old trade routes, its botanical name is a misnomer, since the tree originated in China.

The peach is a large, spherical fruit with a fine, downy, easily peeled skin that is yellow to red in colour. The pulp varies in hue from yellow to a pale cream, and is sweet and juicy, giving off a pleasant scent. Depending on the variety, the pulp is attached to the stone to differing degrees; the stone can be open or closed in form.



Peach is a versatile fruit that can be eaten fresh or used as a garnish for meat dishes or to make compotes or jams, preserved in syrup, or used as a patisserie ingredient.

Peaches with a tender pulp that detaches readily from the stone are sold fresh, whereas those with a hard pulp and powerful adhesion to the stone may be sold fresh or tinned by the processing industry.

Peach is a good source of vitamins A and C, potassium and phosphorus. It is low-calorie and low in protein, fat and sodium, and hence suitable for people with high blood pressure. It has an antioxidant effect and acts as a mild laxative.

After picking, the peach darkens in colour and softens, but, unlike apple, its sugar content remains unchanged.

Peach is one of the world's leading fruits by output, along with citrus fruit, apple and banana. It is also a typical summer fruit, with supply peaking from May to September, but available all year thanks to the wide range of counter-seasonal sources and countries.

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PEANUT

The peanut is a much-loved, hugely popular nut. It grows underground in a woody pod containing two to five seeds. The peanut – *Arachis hypogaea* in





botanical parlance – originated in the tropical areas of South America.

Its high content of oleic and linoleic fatty acids makes it a healthy food that protects against cardiovascular disease and cancer. Peanut is eaten roast, candied, salted or plain, and as an ingredient in turrón nougat.

It is also used to make peanut butter and peanut oil.

Peanut is high in protein (17%) and in fat (51%), mostly unsaturated. 100 g of peanut provides 594 kcal. It is cholesterol-free and high-fibre (9%). Peanut is a good source of minerals like potassium, phosphorus and magnesium, needed for muscle and nerve function, and of vitamins like niacin and pantothenic acid.

Peanut is a healthy, delicious snack with drinks or aperitifs. It is used as the basis for sauces and stews in Indonesia and parts of Africa.

PEAR

..... See pages: **62, 130, 146, 150, 203**

PECAN

Pecan, *Carya illinoensis*, resembles the walnut in flavour and appearance, but is longer, has a smooth shell and has higher fat content. It originated in North America. Covered by a fine

dark-brown skin, the nut has a highly pleasant flavour. It is eaten raw as a snack, and used to make desserts such as cakes and ice creams.

Like all nuts, it is highly nutritious. It is rich in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats that help lower blood cholesterol, and it provides 700 kcal per 100 g. Pecan is a good source of protein, providing 9 g for every 100 g, and thus constitutes an excellent complement in a vegetarian diet, given the biological quality of its protein. It is rich in several vitamins, including A, K, E and folic acid. It contains fibre and provides minerals such as potassium, phosphorus, calcium and magnesium. Owing to its high potassium content, pecans are good for anyone taking strenuous physical exercise, such as sportspeople.



Pecans are grown as ornamental plants on Spain's Costa del Sol. The nuts are used in Malaga, although they are of lesser quality, being small and meagre in flesh.

Pecans are not yet widely known in Spain. They ripen in autumn and are available from November onwards.

PERSIMMON

The Japanese persimmon or loquat, *Eriobotrya japonica*, originated in southeast China, where it was used as an ornamental plant. It is a small, round, yellow or orange fruit, highly prized for





its pulp, which, depending on the cultivar, is white, yellow or orange, with an intensely sweet flavour tempered by an acidic edge.

Persimmons are commonly eaten fresh, but are also used for making compotes, jams, cakes, ice cream, juices and liqueurs, among other uses.

Their carbohydrate content is moderate, but they are low-calorie and thus eligible for weight-loss diets. The persimmon contains fibre, a large amount of potassium and smaller proportions of magnesium, calcium, phosphorus and iron. It also provides small amounts of vitamins B1, B2, B3 and C.

Like other fruits, the persimmon is antioxidant and its components help reduce blood cholesterol. It is highly digestive, diuretic, and purifying, and helps relieve high blood pressure.

Persimmon ripens in the spring months, but its short shelf life means it is available only for a short time.

..... See page: **104**

PINEAPPLE

Pineapple is the fruit of the tropical herbaceous plant *Ananas comosus*, which originated in South America in the region lying across Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina.

A pineapple is an oval cluster of fused infructescences, about 30 cm in length

and 15 cm wide.

A ripe pineapple has a wonderful fragrance and a bittersweet taste. The pulp is aromatic and juicy, yellow or white in colour, surrounding a hard fibrous core.

In the West, pineapple is generally a dessert, but it is increasingly used a sweet ingredient in Oriental pork and duck recipes.

Pineapple can be eaten fresh, on its own or in a fruit salad. It is also used to make juice, compotes, jams, liqueurs and patisserie. A large proportion of world pineapple output goes to the canning industry for tinning in syrup.

Pineapple is high in sugars and low in protein and fats. It is low-calorie – 64 to 100 kcal per 100 g fresh fruit – and is thus suitable for weight-loss dieting. It is high in fibre and vitamin C, and is a rich source of manganese. Pineapple contains phenols such as quercetin, an antioxidant that helps prevent cancer.



Pineapple consumption aids digestion by activating pancreatic function, and contains the enzyme bromelin, which helps digest protein.

It is mildly laxative and supports normal bowel function. Pineapple is recommended for stomach upsets and dyspepsia.

Pineapple is available in Spain, both tinned and fresh, the year round.



PISTACHIO



The pistachio, *Pistacia vera*, is a nut that originated in Syria and also grows wild elsewhere. It is picked from a tree, and is small and elongated, with a hard, thin, light-brown shell that contains the edible yellow-green seed, with its distinctive flavour.

As a highly nutritious nut, it is much prized both for consumption on its own and as an ingredient for the food industry. Pistachio comprises almost 50% fat (mostly unsaturated), 20% protein and 28% complex carbohydrates, and contains no cholesterol. It is the nut providing the most potassium, 1093 mg per 100 g, and is high in fibre. It is also an excellent source of phosphorus, magnesium and vitamin A.

Its high energy content makes it an ideal food for people undertaking great intellectual or physical effort and in cases of intellectual fatigue. Pistachio makes a wonderful energy-packed snack between meals. The raw seed is used as an

ingredient in a wide range of recipes, in charcuterie and patisserie, in ice cream, and for its oil. Pistachio roast and salted in its shell is an increasingly widespread hors d'oeuvre taken with drinks and aperitifs.

Pistachio is also an ingredient in digestive medicines and in some cosmetics. Commercial pistachios used to be dyed red to mask the stains caused by hand-picking. Today, most pistachios are collected mechanically, which means dyeing is unnecessary.

On the Mediterranean coast, pistachio ripens in September. But, being mostly an import, it is available all year.

PLUM



The European common plum, *Prunus domestica*, is a round or elongated fruit; it is yellow, violet or green in colour. The plum is highly nutritious, juicy and with a touch of acidity - the intensity depends on the specific variety. It is thought to have originated near the Caspian Sea.

Plums are eaten fresh or used to make pastry fillings, jams, jellies, juices and spirits, among other products.

Some plum varieties are suitable for drying, and the resulting prunes have a very pleasant sweet taste. Plums provide a lot of energy - 36 to 52 kcal per 100 g. They are very high in fibre, which explains their laxative properties.

The high vitamin C content of plums helps protect against various kinds of cancer. Plum is also a good source of



carotenoids and flavonoids, and of minerals like potassium, phosphorus, magnesium, iron and calcium.

Plum is a summer fruit, but is available practically the year round thanks to the wide range of varieties grown in different parts of the world.

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POMEGRANATE



The pomegranate, *Punica granatum*, is a globe-like fruit with a hard shell; it is bright red, yellowish green, off-white and sometimes violet when ripe. The flesh of the pomegranate is divided into several lobes containing a mass of seeds coated in a red, juicy pulp. The fruit cracks spontaneously when it reaches its full ripeness, thus revealing the content of each lobe. The pomegranate originally grew in the broad region that lies between the Balkans and the Himalayas.

It is a tasty, healthy fruit with a unique flavour, richly nutritious and exotic. It is low in calories and high in protein, vitamins A, B and C and minerals. Its high antioxidant content has raised its popularity, since these elements support cardiovascular health and help prevent some kinds of cancer. Pomegranate encourages growth and prevents respiratory diseases. It has dietary and curative properties, and its pulp is astringent and purifying.

It can be eaten fresh, grain by grain, or as an ingredient for delicious recipes, puddings, ice creams and salads, or as a

garnish for fish and meat dishes. Pomegranate is the fruit used to make grenadine, a deliciously refreshing drink. It is also used to make jams and preserves. Pomegranate grains are also available as part-prepared IV Gamma products.

In Spain, pomegranate is produced in Alicante and Murcia, using varieties that mature from August to October.

RASPBERRY



The raspberry is the fruit of the raspberry bush, *Rubus idaeus*. It grows wild in several regions of Europe, and probably originated in Greece. The berry is composed of numerous small, juicy fruits with a velvety red or yellowish skin. The pulp has a sweet and sour flavour. The red raspberry is the most widely known variety in Europe. Yellow varieties have gained great popularity in the United States.

Raspberries are eaten fresh, and are also a typical ingredient of delicious cakes and pastries. Raspberries are used to make juices, jams and syrups, and as a flavouring for liqueurs. Raspberry pairs well with various kinds of meat.

The fruit is very delicate and easily damaged by being stored at unsuitable temperatures, incorrect post-harvest handling or even mere contact between fruits.

Raspberry is low-fat and low-calorie. It is high in fibre and contains iron, vitamin C, folate and flavonoids.



A 125 g portion provides 40% of the daily recommended intake of vitamin C. The antioxidant properties of vitamin C protect against several kinds of cancer and stimulate the immune system. Folate acts on the nervous system, while flavonoids have antioxidant properties that help prevent heart disease and lower the risk of cancer.

Depending on the variety, raspberries ripen by batches over the summer months and into autumn and are thus available fresh from July to October. Frozen raspberries are available the year round.

STAR FRUIT



Star fruit or carambola, *Averrhoa carambola*, is a tropical fruit originating in Indonesia.

It is highly distinctive for its cross-section, which forms a five-point star. Its yellow pulp is translucent, crunchy, juicy and slightly sharp in taste. Star fruit is excellent eaten fresh in a salad or juiced, and great for making jellies, jams and concentrates. Fresh star fruit is high in vitamin C and minerals like calcium, magnesium and phosphorus.

Its shape makes star fruit an attractive decoration for sweet recipes and salads. It lends a special visual touch to meat dishes, desserts, cakes, fizzy drinks, highballs and punches.

The medicinal uses of star fruit include the treatment of haemorrhoids and properties as a diuretic, anthelmintic and

antidote against poison. Star fruit should be avoided by people with kidney failure.

Star fruit has been marketed in Europe for only a short time, but is already available the year round.

STRAWBERRY



Strawberry is an irresistible fruit for many, and wonderfully attractive for its colour, aroma and flavour. It is fleshy and juicy and strikes a balance between sweetness and acidity. Several low-lying *Fragaria* species are known as "strawberry", but the varieties cultivated nowadays are usually hybrids of *Fragaria x ananassa*, yielding large, high-quality fruits.

Wild strawberries are of diverse origin; the commercial strawberry we know today is the outcome of crossing two New World varieties on their arrival in Europe.

Their major component is carbohydrate. Strawberries are low-calorie, low in sodium and very high in fibre. They are a great source of vitamin C, and have become a part of the Mediterranean diet. They are rich in ellagic acid and flavonoids, and thus help protect against cardiovascular disease and some cancers. High potassium content and low sodium content makes strawberries suitable for people with high blood pressure.

There are many varieties on the market that differ widely in size, colour, aroma and taste. Choose vividly coloured fruit



with a fresh appearance and their stems intact.

Huelva strawberries – predominantly Californian varieties – start to be harvested in winter, and herald the spring in European shops. Strawberries are available in Spain almost all year.

..... See pages: **20, 40, 45, 52**

WALNUT



The walnut is the fruit of the common walnut tree, *Juglans regia*, which originated in the Middle East. It is round or oval in shape, with a hard, rough brown shell that contains the edible seed, with its distinctive and delicious flavour.

Walnut is one of the most sought-after nuts. Normally eaten raw as a snack or dessert, either on its own or in combination with another ingredient. It is a common ingredient in many recipes, sauces and ice creams.

Ripe walnut is high in fat and protein but low in carbohydrates. It is a highly nutritious, calorie-rich food that provides 660 kcal per 100 g. 90% of its fat content comprises unsaturated fatty acids such as omega 3 and omega 6, which are essential for body function, and linoleic and linolenic acids. These compounds carry a wide variety of health benefits; they reduce the risk of arteriosclerosis and heart attack, lower blood cholesterol and improve circulation and the immune system. Walnut is recommended for people with high blood pressure and diabetics.

The main vitamins are B-group vitamins, which support the nervous system, especially folic acid. It also contains vitamin E, which acts as an antioxidant, eliminating free radicals and thus protecting the body against some forms of cancer.

Walnuts are available shelled and unshelled, whole, chopped or ground. They keep for several months; in Spain, walnut is harvested mostly in September and October, but it is available all year.

WATERMELON



..... See pages: **20, 30, 34, 40, 44, 53, 102**

