



Onions



Fun Facts: Onions can be yellow, red or white, but the most common type is yellow. Green onions, also called scallions and spring or summer onions, are called ‘green’ because they are immature. If they are left in the ground to grow for a longer time, they mature into bulb or storage onions. Garlic, asparagus, leeks, chives, shallots and onions are in the same family of plants. Onions are the fourth most-frequently eaten vegetable in the U.S. On average, each American ate 18 pounds in 2002, up from the 12 pounds eaten in 1982. Residents of Libya eat the most onions, almost 4 times as many as people in the U.S.

Selecting Fresh Onions: Green onions have a sweeter, milder taste than mature onions. Look for green onions or scallions with several inches of white, crisp flesh at the root end and fresh tender green tops. Avoid those that are wilted, discolored, or decayed. If selecting mature bulb onions, look for ones that are firm, dry and small at the top and with layers of papery outer skins. Avoid those that are split or wet, are sprouting, or that have decay, soft spots, or green areas which indicates sunburn.



Measuring Fresh Onions:

1 pound green onions = about 2 1/2 cups ready to eat, sliced, with tops = about 1 cup ready to eat, sliced, without tops. 1 pound mature onions = about 3 large or 4 or 5 medium onions = about 2 1/2 cups ready to eat, raw = about 2 cups cooked onion
1/2 cup steamed onions = about 3 3/4 ounces by weight = 105 grams

Handling and Preserving: Refrigerate unwashed green onions for up to 4 weeks in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable drawer. Store mature onions for up to 4 months on a counter in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place, but not in a plastic container. **To freeze onions,** peel, rinse and chop spring or bulb onions. Pack into freezer bags, leaving 3 inches of air space. Or place onion pieces in a single layer on a tray, freeze, and then pack into freezer bags. Squeeze out the air, seal, date and freeze. Use in cooked products.

Preparation and Serving: Peel off the dry and colored outer layers. Rinse under cool running water and drain. The sulfur-containing compound in onions can bring tears to your eyes. To limit your tears, chill the onion before cutting it, and cut into the root end of the onion last. Use onions raw, or boil, steam, microwave, grill, stir-fry or bake them.

Nutrition Facts One serving = 1/2 cup. 1/2 cup steamed onions has: Calories 40; Protein 1 gram; Carbohydrates 9 grams; Fat 0 grams. Onions contain the antioxidant quercetin, and organosulfur compounds, which help protect against chronic diseases.

References: www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/veggies; www.onions-usa.org; www.fda.gov/fdac/special/foodlabel/raw.html; www.aboutproduce.com; ESHA Food Processor; Food for Fifty, 11th edition, 2001, by M. Molt, Prentice Hall; www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/fntr2/C648.pdf

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