

# Health Benefits of Avocados



Avocados are a wholesome way to consume healthy fats along with vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and fiber. Like most fruit, an avocado is a good source of antioxidants and healthy phytonutrients. But unlike most fruit, the avocado is low in sugar and high in fat.

The unique composition of fat and water content help the body to absorb both water soluble and fat soluble vitamins. The avocado has been shown to help lower blood pressure, improve glucose control and reduce risk of heart disease and stroke.

The texture and flavor of the avocado make it a healthy, whole food substitute for butter, mayonnaise or oil in cooking, baking and food preparation.

## WHAT MAKES AVACODOS GREAT?

### *Nutrition*

1/2 large avocado provides 166 Calories, 2 gm protein, 6 gm fiber, 15 gm fat, no cholesterol.

### *Vitamins*

Avocados are a rich source of antioxidants including vitamins C and E that protect against cellular damage caused by free radicals. These vitamins help with wound-healing and boost immunity. Other antioxidants like the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin contribute to eye health, reducing risk of cataracts and macular degeneration.

Avocados also contain several B vitamins important for energy production and a significant amount of folate, a B vitamin essential for DNA formation, cell division and prevention of anemia. Vitamin K is a fat-soluble vitamin responsible for blood clotting and bone health.

### *Minerals*

Avocados contain more potassium than a banana. This mineral is responsible for the regulation of blood pressure and heart health. Copper is an essential mineral involved in energy production, iron metabolism, brain development and immune function. Avocados also contain magnesium important for muscle and nerve function, blood glucose control, energy production, bone and DNA synthesis,

muscle contraction and maintaining heart rhythm. They also contain small amounts of iron and calcium.

### *Fat*

The monounsaturated fat in avocados helps lower LDL cholesterol, suppress inflammation and reduce risk of heart disease and stroke. The fat content assists the body in absorbing fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K, two of which are found in the avocado flesh. Fat also contributes to a feeling of fullness which can aid in appetite control and weight management.

### *Fiber*

Avocados are a good source of both soluble and insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber is effective in lowering cholesterol and blood sugars. Insoluble fiber helps keep you regular, and assists with feeling full and satisfied after a meal.

## BUYING & USING AVOCADOS

Avocados do not ripen on the tree and are picked early. Color is not an indicator of ripeness. When selecting avocados at the grocers, they will likely be unripe and hard. Bring them home and place in a paper bag, allowing 3-4 days to ripen. Adding a banana or apple may speed the process.

A ripe avocado will yield to a gentle squeeze. It should feel slightly soft but not mushy. Store ripe or soft avocados in the refrigerator and use in 1-2 days.

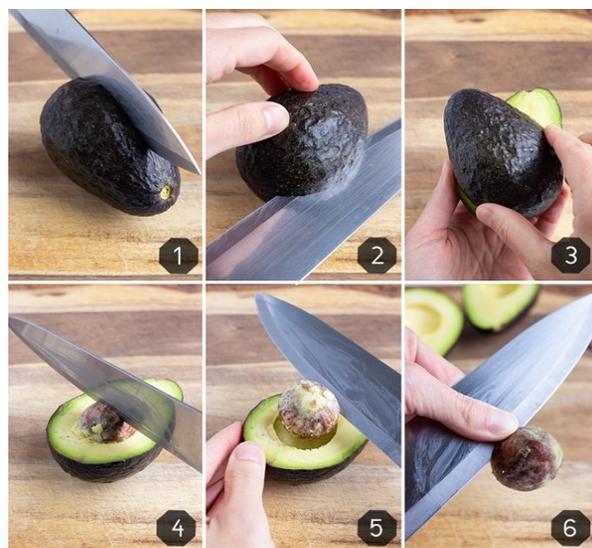


**Oregon State  
University**

stephanie.polizzi@oregonstate.edu  
631 Alder Street, Myrtle Point, OR 97458  
541-572-5263 ext 25291  
<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/coos/healthy-families-communities>

Once ripe, slice the skin lengthwise, rotating so the slice goes all the way around. Twist the two halves to open. Pry the seed out with spoon or hit the seed with a sharp knife and twist the seed out. To slice, hold avocado half in your hand and gently slice down to the skin, being careful not to cut so deep as to break the skin or cut your hand. Fold avocado skin inside out to remove slices. If mashing, scoop out avocado halves with a spoon.

Toss chopped or sliced avocado in salads, sandwiches, vegetables or smoothies. Mash with potatoes or spread on toast. Use instead of oil or mayo in salad dressings or as a butter substitute in baked goods. Make avocado pudding (*recipe below*) or just sprinkle with salt and pepper for a quick snack.



### Avocado Chocolate Mousse

Chocolatecoveredkatie.com

#### Ingredients:

2 ripe avocados, halved, seeded	1/4 c maple syrup
1/4 c cocoa powder	1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1/4 c melted chocolate chips	1/8 tsp salt
3 Tbsp milk of choice (almond, soy)	

Optional: Mix in cooked quinoa for added protein

#### Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend. Add milk as needed to reach desired consistency.
2. Serve in pudding dishes or spread into graham cracker crust to make pie (*doubled recipe*).

### Chunky Guacamole

Californiaavocado.com

#### Ingredients:

2 ripe avocados, halved  
 1 tsp serrano chili, minced  
 1/2 medium tomato, diced  
 1 1/2 Tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped  
 1 1/2 tsp red onion, diced  
 Juice of 1/2 fresh lime  
 1/2 tsp dried oregano  
 Salt and pepper to taste

#### Directions:

1. Scoop avocado into a bowl and coarsely mash to desired consistency.
2. Add remaining ingredients and stir.
3. Serve with warm tortilla chips, raw veggies or as topping for tacos, baked potatoes or sandwiches.

#### Running short on time?

Mix fresh salsa into mashed avocado for instant guacamole.

### Stuffed Avocado Boats

Simple-veganista.com

#### Ingredients:

3 ripe avocados	1/3 cucumber, diced
Juice of one lemon	1 bell pepper, diced
1 jalapeno, seeded, diced	1/2 red onion, diced
1 garlic clove, diced or 1/4 tsp dried	1 med tomato, diced
Salt and pepper to taste	
2-4 Tbsp hummus, vegan mayo or garlic aioli	

Optional: Mix in cooked quinoa for added protein

#### Directions:

1. Rub lemon juice on halves to prevent browning.
2. In a small bowl, mix ingredients adding only enough hummus, mayo or aioli to bind together.
3. Scoop into avocado half and top with squeeze of lemon juice. Garnish with fresh cilantro or parsley sprig if desired.

## REFERENCES

Californiaavocado.com  
 Nutritiondata.self.com  
 Nutritionvalue.org  
<https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets>