



Peaches



Where did peaches come from?

Peaches are the most widely-grown stone fruit in the world. They are native to China near the Pakistani border where they still grow wild. In China, peaches were considered a symbol of longevity, immortality, and good luck.

Peaches have been grown in Canada since the 1780s. Of the varieties grown in Canada, 80% are for eating fresh while the other 20% are for canning. In North America, peaches have yellow coloured fruit, but white fruit peaches are preferred in Asia.



How do peaches grow?

Peaches grow on trees much like apples. Peaches are normally grown in areas with milder temperatures. In Canada, these areas include the Niagara region of Ontario and the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia. Peach trees are the least hearty stone fruit tree and will die in temperatures below -23C. Peach trees live 10-20 years in Canada, providing fruit after 2-3 years.

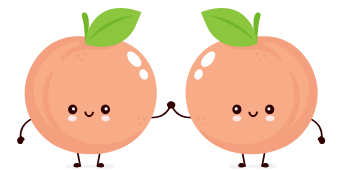
Ripe peaches are handpicked from the trees to prevent bruising and damage. Not all the peaches on a tree ripen at the same time. Workers pick the fruit over the course of a few weeks each season. Specialized machines are used to wash, peel, pit and slice peaches for canning or to make jams. Ontario grows 82% of Canada's peach and nectarine crops.

Check out these two videos from Produce Made Simple:

[A day in the life of an Ontario Peach](#) 0.34 minutes

[Why Ontario Peaches Taste So Sweet](#) 1.30 minutes

Peaches vs. Nectarines



Peaches and nectarines are closely related. Nectarines are mutations of the peach family with only one recessive gene that separates the two. This gene is the one that gives peaches their fuzz. A peach without the fuzz is called a nectarine.

Types of Peaches

Peaches can be categorized into three types based on the way their fruit clings to the pit.

- **Clingstone Peaches:** The fruit of clingstone peaches clings firmly to their pits, or stones. They have a soft texture, are juicier and sweeter than other peach types. Clingstone peaches are used for canning and jams.
- **Freestone Peaches:** Freestone peaches have fruit that easily comes away from their pits, making them most ideal for eating fresh. Though not as juicy or sweet as a clingstone peach, freestones are good for baking, canning and are perfect for eating fresh. Ontario Freestone Peaches are available from mid-August to end of September.
- **Semi-freestone Peaches:** Semi-freestone peaches are a combination of freestone and clingstone peaches. The fruit of semi-freestone peaches partially clings to the pit and is sweet making them excellent for eating fresh. They're also good for canning or baking. Ontario Semi-freestone Peaches are available from mid-July to mid-August.

You may also see **donut peaches**. This heirloom variety is short, flat and white-fleshed with a lower acidity level than traditional peaches.

Did you know?

- The peach is a member of the rose family. When ripe, it has a sweet smell.
- Peaches, like nectarines, plums, apricots and cherries are stone fruit.
- Originating in China, the peach was once known as the "Persian apple."
- Sliced peaches will turn brown when exposed to air, like sliced apples. To prevent browning, coat sliced peaches with a lemon juice solution or fruit preservative.
- The fuzzy skin of a peach has a purpose. The fine hairs on the skin are known as trichomes, which protect the fruit from pests and insects. They also help retain moisture, increasing the fruit's juiciness.

Joke Corner

- Q. Why did the peach stop rolling?
A. It ran out of juice!
- Q. Why did the peach go to the doctor?
A. It was feeling a little fuzzy!

Colour me!

