

Title:

A Quick Guide To Citrus Fruits

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Summary:

The Orange Family

The familiar oranges are the most popular of our citrus fruits. They are nutritional, versatile, and keep well. Popular varieties include Valencia, navel, temple, and blood oranges.

The navel orange is best as an eating orange since its sweet pulp tends to turn a little bitter when the juice is exposed to air. Valencia oranges are enjoyed for both eating and juicing. The blood orange is a hybrid with an orange and red rind and reddish flesh and some pe...

Keywords:

Article Body:

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The navel orange is best as an eating orange since its sweet pulp tends to turn a little bitter when the juice is exposed to air. Valencia oranges are enjoyed for both eating and juicing. The blood orange is a hybrid with an orange and red rind and reddish flesh and some people think, a touch of raspberry-like flavor. The temple orange is a flavorful orange-tangerine hybrid.

As with most citrus fruits, choose oranges that are heavy for their size indicating juiciness and those without soft spots or defects in the skin.

- Orange tip: If you are squeezing oranges for morning juice, stop and grate the zest from several first. The zest can be frozen for months to be used in a variety of recipes from cookies to casseroles.

- Orange tip: When grating the zest from oranges or lemons, remove only the

outer, colored portion of the rind. The white pithy layer is bitter.

Oranges have been crossed with other citrus fruits to create a wonderful array of related fruits. Citrus fruits related to or crossed with oranges include:

Mandarin oranges are small sweet oranges with a loose skin. They have a light orange color and a complex, sweet flavor. The Satsuma, Honey and Royal are the three major mandarin varieties.

Mandarins are often imported. In the United States, mandarins are grown in Florida and California but are sold mostly to canneries and unavailable to consumers. If you can find fresh U.S. fruit, buy it.

Tangerines are a type of mandarin orange. They are red-orange and have a distinctive flavor. They are usually available as early as Thanksgiving and include Fairchild and Dancy varieties.

- Tangerine tip: Add tangerine segments to coleslaw or tuna salad for a bright, unexpected treat!

Tangelos are a cross between a tangerine, a grapefruit and an orange. They are noted for their juiciness and mild, sweet flavor. Orlandos are a popular variety of tangelos.

- Tangelo tip: Freshly grated tangelo peel lends an exotic flavor to other foods.

Ugli fruits are a specific type of tangelo. They have a loose skin which is often discolored and pock-marked and is often odd-shaped. Don't let that fool you; it has a very sweet, citrus taste. It is seedless and is great for snacks or salads. They peel easily or can be cut in half and eaten like a grapefruit.

- Ugli tip: Children are fascinated with ugli fruits. Children find both the name and odd appearance intriguing and the flavor and texture of the fruit, appealing.

Clementines are a type of small, seedless mandarins with very sweet flesh. They are a cross between an orange and a Chinese mandarin. The taste is distinctive from both a mandarin and a tangerine. They are usually imported from Spain, Morocco, and other parts of North Africa.

Minneolas are a cross between a tangerine and a grapefruit. They can be recognized by their pear or bell shape. They are about three inches in diameter

and a bright reddish-orange. They are closely related to tangelos.

The Lemon and Lime Family

Lemons with their bright yellow fruit are our second most popular citrus. There are two major varieties sold in the United States, the Lisbon and Eureka, which are so similar that they are difficult to tell apart. You may find a Meyer lemon which is a cross between a lemon and an orange or mandarin. They are less acidic and will taste sweeter.

- Lemon tip: Try squeezing fresh lemon on salads and steamed vegetables in place of part or all of the salt or butter. In doing so, you will reduce your salt and fat intake.

Rough lemons are, as the name suggests, lemons with a rough skin. Cultivated in the tropics, they are round and larger than domestic lemons but used the same way.

Limes are shaped like lemons but are green, smaller, and have both more sugar and more acid. There are two main varieties of limes: Mexican or Key limes and Persian limes. Key limes are famous for Key lime pie. Most limes in the grocery store are Persians.

- Lime tip: Use the rind of juiced limes to clean your copper-bottomed pans. Leech Limes are larger than limes with a wart-like skin.

The Grapefruit Family

Good quality grapefruit have a smooth, firm, and shiny skin. Pick grapefruit that are medium to large and that feel heavy for their size.

- Grapefruit tip: When shopping, avoid fruit with a dull or wrinkled skin. Pick fruits that are heavy for their size. It's not necessary to avoid fruits with green on the skin as the color does not indicate ripeness.

White grapefruit have a smooth yellow skin and a flesh that is pale yellow and tart.

Red grapefruit are sweet, tart, and juicy with a pink to red flesh. Ruby, Star Ruby, and Rio Red are popular varieties.

- Grapefruit tip: Researchers have found that red grapefruits have more antioxidants than white grapefruits. These antioxidants are thought to lower cholesterol and reduce heart disease.

Pummelos, also called Chinese grapefruit, are the largest citrus fruit! The peel is thick and green on the outside, while the interior is either white or pink. Pummelos are slightly milder tasting than regular grapefruit and are very aromatic.

Sweeties are a cross between a pummelo and a white grapefruit. It is shaped like a grapefruit and juicy. Because it has less acid than a grapefruit, the sugar is more dominant and the taste is sweeter.