

Fruit Facts & Fancies

The Year's Best Grapes

(NAPSA)—Now is the time to grab some grapes. From May through July, green, red and black table grapes in local grocery stores are most likely to be bright, crisp and flavorful.

Why? During the long winter and early spring months, many grapes spend weeks in cold storage before they arrive in stores.

During the sunny months of late spring and summer, fresh grapes from new harvests in the Mexican state of Sonora start popping up in grocery stores everywhere. Sonora provides almost 60 percent of the fresh table grapes sold in the United States from May to early July. There are now 30,300 acres of table grape vineyards in Sonora and they export to the U.S. over 300 million pounds a year.

The quality of these fresh grapes is notably higher than that of storage grapes—they're sweet and juicy, with lots of crunch. The freshest ones have brightly colored skin, a crisp texture and a full flavor.

Eating 1½ cups of grapes provides 25 percent of the Daily Value for vitamin C and is a source of fiber, vitamin A, calcium and iron. What's more, red grapes' skin contains resveratrol, a substance that has been linked in preliminary studies to reduced rates of heart disease and some forms of cancer.

Grapes are handy as a snack, and they're an easy addition to a fruit salad or a green salad.

You can sample this year's Sonoran harvest with this refreshing recipe, Green Grape & Tequila Sorbet. It's lovely when served with a fresh wedge of watermelon or some sliced mango, which are also popular Mexican exports in the spring and summer.



For great grapes, look for bright color and crisp texture.

Green Grape & Tequila Sorbet

5 pounds green seedless grapes such as Perlette, Sugraone or Thompson, stems removed

7 tablespoons sugar

3 tablespoons tequila

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

Purée grapes in a blender or food processor, working in batches. Strain into a large bowl, pressing down to get all juice, and discard skins. Add sugar, tequila, lemon juice and lime juice and stir until sugar dissolves. Pour mixture into an ice-cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's directions. Transfer to a 2-quart plastic container and chill until hard enough to scoop, 30 minutes to 1 hour. Serve in ice cream bowls. Makes about 1½ quarts.