

ENTERTAINING IDEAS

Avocado 101: How to Pick, Store and Handle the Perfect Fruit

(NAPSA)—Avocados. They're not just for guacamole anymore. Delicious Hass avocados add great taste, lively color and a creamy texture to ordinary dishes, making them extraordinary. From pizza to salads to sandwiches, avocados add that little something special to your recipes. Knowing how to properly select, handle and store your avocados will ensure that they add the perfect pizzazz to your meal every time.

Selecting your avocados

- When choosing your avocados, look for delicious Hass avocados. They are known for their creamy texture, have a distinctive bumpy skin and are available year-round.
- To determine the ripeness of a Hass avocado, gently squeeze the fruit—a ripe fruit will yield to gentle pressure. Hass avocados will also turn dark green to black as they ripen.
- If you are buying avocados for future use, purchase firm fruit.
- Avoid fruit with external blemishes.

Ripening

To ripen a Hass avocado, place the fruit in a paper bag with an apple for two to three days at room temperature (apples accelerate the process by giving off ethylene gas, a ripening agent).

Storing

- Ripe avocados can be stored in a refrigerator or freezer for later use.
- Mash the avocado, adding $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. of lemon juice per $\frac{1}{2}$ mashed avocado to prevent discoloration.



ANY WAY YOU SLICE IT, this turkey and avocado sandwich is creamy and delicious.

- Lay plastic wrap directly on the surface of the mixture before covering.
- You can refrigerate the mixture for up to two days or store in the freezer for up to two months.

Handling

- Like all fruit, wash the avocado before cutting.
- Cut the avocado lengthwise around the seed.
- Twist the halves in opposite directions to separate.
- Slip a spoon between the seed and the fruit and work the seed out.
- Slip a spoon between the skin and the fruit and scoop away from the peel.

Once you've selected and prepared your Hass avocados, try them in this quick, easy recipe.

TURKEY AND AVOCADO SANDWICH WEDGES

- 1 round flat sourdough bread loaf
- 2 large Hass avocados, peeled and seeded, divided
- 3 Tbsp. salsa
- 3 (6 by 1½-inch) strips roasted red pepper
- 1 pound thinly sliced smoked turkey
- 3 thin red onion slices, separated into rings
- 3 pepper jack cheese slices
- 2 romaine lettuce leaves

Instructions:

Cut a circle out of the top of the bread; tear out the inside of the bread in the bottom section to make a shell. Mash one avocado and mix with salsa; spread over the bottom of the bread. Layer pepper strips, onions, cheese and half the turkey inside the bread. Slice the remaining avocado and place on top of the cheese. Top with lettuce and remaining turkey. Replace the bread top and press down firmly to compress ingredients. Wrap tightly and refrigerate until ready to serve. Cut into wedges just before serving.

For more delectable recipes featuring creamy Hass avocados, visit the Hass Avocado Board Web site at www.avocadocentral.com.