



Onions!

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Many types of onions are available to grow and use. Onions are ranked sixth among the world's leading vegetable crops. On average, people eat about 20 pounds of onions a year.

Growing

Long-day varieties work best in North Dakota. Long-day onions need 15 to 16 hours of daylight, whereas short-day onions need 12 hours of light each day. Good choices are Sweet Spanish, Early Yellow Globe and Southport White Globe. Plant onion sets or seeds as soon as the soil is workable. Maintain good weed control and provide adequate water. Onions are ready to harvest when half of the tops start to dry out and fall over on the soil.

See the NDSU Extension Service publications "From Garden to Table: Salsa!" (FN584) and "Growing Great Vegetables" (H1185) for more information about growing onions.

Storage

Store onions in a cool, dry, dark place with good air circulation. You can store them in woven bags, a basket or even a crate. Whole onions can keep for weeks. Store cut onions in a covered container in the refrigerator.



Preparation

If your eyes water during preparation of onions, try chilling them for 30 minutes before cutting. Leaving the root end intact, peel the onion. The root end holds the highest concentration of the sulfuric compounds that make you cry.

Preservation

Freezing chopped onions: Clean onions. Chop, then place in freezer bags in recipe-sized amounts. Press out air and leave head space. Label bags with contents and the date and seal. Freeze flat on a cookie sheet, then stack the bags.

Freezing whole onions: The National Center for Home Food Preservation recommends water blanching whole onions in boiling water about three to seven minutes until the center is heated. Cool promptly and drain. Place in freezer containers, leaving ½ inch head space. Label with contents and the date, seal and freeze. These are suitable for use in soups and other cooked dishes.

Freezing green onions: Young green onions may be frozen without blanching, but they will not be crisp. Peel, wash and chop. Loosely pack and freeze in large freezer bags. Take out as needed.

Nutrition

Onions are a low-calorie food that provides flavor in many recipes. Studies show that the phytochemicals in onions may protect against certain types of cancers.

One medium onion (2½ inches in diameter) has 44 calories, 0 grams (g) fat, 1 g protein, 10 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 4 g sodium. Onions provide vitamin C and minerals including phosphorus and potassium.

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Recipes

Key to abbreviations

c. = cup	oz. = ounce
tsp. = teaspoon	g = gram
Tbsp. = tablespoon	mg = milligram



Baked Onion Rings

1 large yellow onion	2 eggs
1/3 c. flour	2 Tbsp. water
1 tsp. seasoning salt	Dipping sauce of your choice
1/2 tsp. chili powder	(ketchup, barbecue sauce,
2 c. panko breadcrumbs	sweet chili sauce, etc.)

Preheat oven to 450 F. Line a baking sheet with foil and spray with nonstick spray. Peel the outermost layer from the onion and discard. Cut off the ends (sparing as much of the onion as possible) and slice the rest of the onion into thick rings. Separate the rings and place in a bowl of water.

Line up three bowls with these contents:

Bowl 1: Stir together flour, seasoning salt and chili powder.

Bowl 2: Whisk together eggs and water.

Bowl 3: Panko crumbs

One at a time, place each onion ring in the flour mixture, turning to coat well. Next, dip the onion ring in the egg mixture, being sure to coat all sides. Finally, toss the ring in the panko crumbs to coat. Place on prepared baking sheet. Repeat process with remaining rings.

Spray the rings with nonstick spray (optional, but it helps to get them crispy). Bake rings for 10 to 15 minutes until golden brown. Remove from oven and serve with your favorite dipping sauce.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 230 calories, 2.5 g fat, 9 g protein, 42 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 450 mg sodium.

Pickled Cucumbers and Onions

2 to 3 cucumbers, peeled and sliced
1 onion, sliced
1 c. vinegar (white or apple cider)
1 c. water
1/4 c. sugar

Rinse and prepare vegetables. In a container (with a lid) combine the water, vinegar and sugar. Add the cucumbers and onions. Place lid on top and shake. Allow flavors to mix by chilling in the refrigerator for at least two hours before serving.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 80 calories, 0 g fat, 1 g protein, 21 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 5 mg sodium.

Note

Try chewing parsley to get rid of onion breath.

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