

August 9th, 2012

This week's "Colorado Peach" box features peaches as they were meant to be, picked by hand at their peak of flavor. A huge thank you to Brant and Carol and their extended family and crew for dealing with all that nature has thrown at them this season to bring us these delicious peaches. My son says that Colorado peaches are better than Smores and that says a lot when you're sitting around a campfire enjoying a summer evening outdoors.

From my family to yours Enjoy!

Everett Myers, Founder and President of FruitShare™

Storage and Ripening

Take your peaches out of the box immediately. Place them on the counter at room temperature. Peaches are perfectly soft and juicy for eating when they give to slight thumb pressure. Some peaches may take 1-4 days to give to pressure. Keep an eye on your fruit, checking it daily. When soft to gentle pressure, you can put some peaches in the refrigerator to keep them from becoming overripe. Peaches can also be frozen; wash and slice them, removing the pit. Lay them out on a baking sheet and freeze. When they are frozen, transfer them to an airtight bag or container. Frozen peaches are perfect for baking and blending into smoothies, especially once fresh peaches are no longer in season.

What It Takes

Brant and Carol are truly the premiere growers of organic Colorado peaches. This year with the early spring and no cold periods once spring began along with warm dry weather the trees have produced the earliest ever. Through Brant and Carol's watchful eyes and attention to detail, the orchard is in good hands. Located on the western slope of Colorado's Rocky Mountains, Brant and Carol's orchard is on a high desert plateau where the water comes from the melting snow pack high in the mountains. They say that the warm nights and cool mountain nights are what bring such flavor to their peaches.

Brant has had over 33 years of experience farming. He knew from a young age that he wanted to raise peaches, and bought his first orchard at the age of 19. Along with Carol and their sons, Aaron and Elijah, Brant has expanded his farm to include 8,000 trees. Brant has always worked to be a good steward of his land, being sure to maintain a healthy balance of nutrients and beneficial insects. By 1990, he and Carol felt it was time to switch from conventional to organic practices. After all, he knows that less chemicals on the fruit means less chemicals in our bodies. Now, Brant and Carol use both old and new technologies to keep the orchard healthy and defend the delicate peaches from pests.

It truly is a family affair on Brant and Carol's orchard. The whole family, including their sons, parents and nephews, work together side by side. It's necessary for everyone to be involved because every single peach that is harvested is picked by hand. Machinery is too hard on the fruit, causing bruising, and picks fruit indiscriminately. Hand-picking and packing allows for peaches to fully ripen; if a peach is not ready, it will be left on the tree to ripen. Brant says that the few extra days of ripening on the tree is what makes the difference between a good peach and a fantastic peach.

Health and Wellness

This time of year is peak peach season, and that's good news - not just because they are so delicious, but because peaches are incredibly nutritious. Like most fruits, peaches offer plenty of nutrients, but they have a few extra tricks hidden in their juicy sweetness. For starters, peaches are a great source of potassium. If you

have a potassium deficiency, you might experience fatigue, anxiety, muscle weakness, skin problems, poor memory, hypertension, or even heart problems. Good thing there's such a tasty source of potassium in this week's box of Colorado peaches! Peaches also contain plenty of beta carotene, an antioxidant most often associated with carrots. Your body converts beta carotene into vitamin A, which is an essential vitamin for supporting healthy eyes and heart. Lycopene and lutein are two more antioxidants found in peaches, and studies show that both may help prevent heart disease and cancer. These three major antioxidants are also what give peaches their rich yellow-orange coloring. Peaches contain high levels of iron, too, which is necessary for improving metabolism, regulating body temperature, creating antibodies, and making neurotransmitters and hemoglobin. Peaches are also high in vitamin C, fiber and water. Recent studies are even beginning to find that peaches contain antioxidants called polyphenols that may even help prevent breast cancer. No wonder peaches are known as superfoods, joining the ranks alongside blueberries and cherries!

Recipes

Grilled Peaches with Cardamom Sugar Crust

4 semi ripe peaches cut in half and pit removed
6 tbl turbinado sugar
1 tbl ground cardamom

Toss the sugar and cardamom together in a bowl. Dip the peaches, flesh side down, into the sugar. Place on a medium/high heat grill and let them alone for approximately 7 minutes. You want the sugar to caramelize on the peaches and create a crust. Serve with your favorite ice cream, creme fraiche or mascarpone. Courtesy of foodily.com

Peach Buckle

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened, plus more for skillet
3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
3 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour (spooned and leveled)
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 pounds peaches, pitted, peeled, and cut into 1/2-inch pieces (4 cups)
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/3 cup sliced almonds

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 10-inch cast-iron skillet, 9-inch square baking pan, or 2-quart shallow baking dish. In a large bowl, cream butter and 3/4 cup sugar with an electric mixer until fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, and vanilla; beat to combine. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture; beat until incorporated. Fold in peaches. Spread batter in prepared skillet. In a small bowl, mix together remaining 2 tablespoons sugar, cinnamon, and almonds. Sprinkle mixture over top; bake until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean and topping is golden, 45 to 50 minutes. Let cool 20 minutes before serving. Courtesy of marthastewart.com

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