



Harvest of the Month | Fact Sheet

Strawberries

The United States is the world's largest producer of strawberries. They are grown in every state in the United States and almost every country in the world. Americans consume about eight pounds of strawberries per person per year, with about 75% being fresh strawberries and the remainder being frozen.



Did you know?



On average, there are 200 seeds in a strawberry, which is the only fruit with seeds on the outside.



In medieval times, strawberries were served at important functions as they were thought to bring peace and prosperity.



Strawberries are the first fruit to ripen in the spring in Pennsylvania. They do not continue to ripen after they are harvested.

Selection

Strawberries should have a bright red color, natural shine and fresh-looking cap (Calyx). They should be evenly shaped and firm, but not rock-hard. Avoid strawberries that are wrinkled, soft, spotted with mold, or have more than just a touch of green or white around the caps.



Storage

Ideal storage temperature for strawberries is 32°F with a relative humidity of 95%. Under those conditions, strawberries are acceptable for up to 2 weeks. Strawberries stored at general refrigeration temperatures below 41°F will have a shelf life of approximately 3 days. Strawberries may be held in dry storage for up to 24 hours. Strawberries may be stored with any refrigerated produce since they are not ethylene producers or ethylene-sensitive.

Harvest Season

According to the PA Preferred Seasonal Calendar, strawberries are in season in Pennsylvania in May and June.

Handling

Check strawberries for any sign of mold growth. Discard berries with mold and any adjacent berries to prevent further mold contamination.

Do not wash strawberries until they are ready for use or they will become mushy and develop mold quickly. Wash berries under cold, running water. Do not remove the caps prior to washing as doing so can result in a loss of juice and increase the amount of water absorbed, which may dilute the flavor of the strawberries.

Seal, date, and refrigerate cut berries immediately and use by the next day.

Nutrition

Strawberries are an excellent source of vitamin C. Vitamin C is important in the body's healing process and may play a role in guarding against heart disease and cancer. Vitamin C also helps the body absorb iron.



Finding Strawberries

Child Nutrition Program operators may be able to find local strawberries in a variety of ways. Check with your produce distributor to learn what they have available. You can search for products through the PA Preferred website or connect with local producers through produce auctions or farmer's markets.

Serving Suggestions



While strawberries are delicious on their own, they can be enjoyed in many different ways:

- Add sliced strawberries to salads.
- Use strawberries as a topping on desserts such as angel food cake.
- Make a parfait with yogurt, strawberries, and granola.
- Use strawberries in smoothies.
- Top pancakes or waffles with strawberries.
- Add sliced strawberries to cereal.



Recipe | Seasonal Fruit and Yogurt Parfait

50 servings (1 parfait)

Credits: One parfait provides 1 oz eq M/MA, ½ cup fruit, and 0.5 oz eq grains.

Ingredients	Weight	Measure	Directions
Granola USDA Recipe for CACFP			1. See Granola USDA Recipe for CACFP for recipe ingredients and directions (Page 3). 2. Set granola aside for step 7.
Fresh strawberries, sliced	6 lb 4 oz	1 gal+2 qt+1 cup	3. Place 25 clear, plastic cups (9 oz each) on a sheet pan (18" x 26" x 1"). For 50 servings, use 2 pans.
Low-fat yogurt, plain	12 lb 8 oz	1 gal+2 qt+1 cup	4. Place ½ cup (about 2 oz) strawberries in each cup.
Vanilla extract		1 Tbsp+1 tsp	5. Combine yogurt, vanilla, and honey in a large bowl. Stir well.
Honey		2 Tblsp	6. Using a No. 8 scoop, portion ½ cup (about 4 oz) yogurt mixture on top of strawberries. 7. Sprinkle ⅓ cup (about 0.5 oz) granola over yogurt. Critical Control Point: Hold at 41°F or below.
Variation 1: Fresh blueberries	8 lb 4 oz		8. Serve 1 parfait.
Variation 2: Canned peaches, drained	10 lb 8 oz		9. Variation 1: Replace strawberries with blueberries in step 4. OR Variation 2: Replace strawberries with peaches in step 4.

Source: USDA Standardized Recipes Project. [Accessed from ICN Child Nutrition Recipe Box for Schools - Fruit](#)



Recipe | Granola USDA Recipe for CACFP

50 servings

Ingredients	Weight	Measure	Directions
Brown sugar	2 oz	¼ cup	1. In a large stock pot, add brown sugar, apple juice, canola oil, honey, salt, cinnamon, and vanilla extract. Heat uncovered over medium heat for 4 minutes. DO NOT BOIL.
Apple juice		½ cup	
Canola oil		1 Tbsp+2 tsp	
Honey		⅛ cup+1 Tbsp+1¼ tsp	
Salt		½ tsp	
Ground cinnamon		1½ tsp	
Vanilla extract		2 tsp	
Oats, rolled, dry	15 oz	1 qt+1⅔ cups	2. Combine brown sugar mixture and oats in a large bowl. Toss to coat evenly. 3. Transfer 1 qt 1½ cups (about 1 lb 10 oz) granola to a half sheet pan (18" x 13" x 1"). For 25 servings, use 1 pan. 4. Bake: Conventional oven: 250°F for 1 hour 15 minutes. Convection oven: 200°F for 1 hour 15 minutes. 5. Remove from oven. Allow granola to sit at room temperature for at least 2 hours.
Coconut, sweetened, shredded	2 oz	⅔ cup	6. Fold in coconut. 7. Portion with No. 24 scoop (⅛ cup 2 tsp).

Source: USDA Standardized Recipes Project. [Accessed from ICN Child Nutrition Recipe Box for Schools - Grains/Breads](#)



Check out the PA Harvest of the Month website (www.paharvestofthemonth.org) for sources, additional resources, and recipes.

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