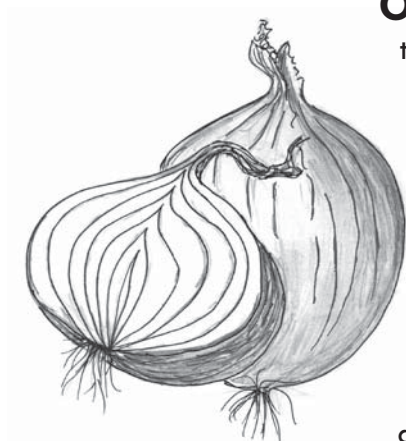


ONION



ONIONS, like garlic and chives, belong to the lily family. It is not known when or where onions were first cultivated, only that they have been used for food and as medicine for thousands of years. There are over 300 varieties of onions that vary in size, shape, taste, and smell. The bulb onion is the most common and universally used. The red and white varieties of the bulb onion tend to be sweeter and milder, while the tan skinned storage onion is the most pungent. Red, white, and yellow onions are available in the Northeast from late summer through the fall and winter.



STORAGE

- ◆ Bulb onions will **store for several months** in a cool, dry, ventilated place. Warmth and moisture will cause sprouting.
- ◆ Store cut onions tightly wrapped in plastic in the refrigerator to avoid transference of flavors to other foods.
- ◆ **Do not store onions near potatoes, as they cause spoilage.**

PREPARATION

- ◆ Cut the top and bottom of the onion, using a sharp knife and a cutting board. Carefully remove the outer paper-like skin. Slice or chop as desired.
- ◆ To reduce the fumes that cause your eyes to burn, chill the onions in the refrigerator or cut them under running water. Pam Koch from the Roxbury CSA suggests “whistling while you work.”
- ◆ Onions are extremely versatile and almost any cooking method is appropriate - **steaming, boiling, sautéing, stir-frying, braising, baking, grilling, roasting, and more!** The longer onions cook (over a low flame), the sweeter they become.
- ◆ To **caramelize** onions cook in a pan on low heat with butter stirring often until onions are browned.

Nutritional Information

Onions contain moderate amounts of Vitamin C and quercetin. Vitamin C acts as an antioxidant and may help the immune system. Quercetin is a flavonoid that also acts as an antioxidant. Antioxidants help prevent cell and tissue damage that could cause disease.

Onion Recipes

Easy French Onion Soup

2 Tablespoons butter
3 cups thinly sliced onions
2 Tablespoons flour
1 can low-sodium beef (or vegetable) broth
1 can water
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup lowfat milk
Grated Swiss or Cheddar cheese



In a heavy soup pot, over medium-low heat, melt butter. When foam subsides add onions. Stir and cook slowly until onions become golden. Stir in flour. Stir in broth and water. Add salt and pepper. Simmer covered for about 25 minutes. Then slowly add milk and stir. Pour into bowls and top with freshly grated cheese. Serve with crusty bread.

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Onion Frittata

1 Tablespoon olive oil
1 Tablespoon melted butter
1-2 onions, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 teaspoon basil
1/2 teaspoon oregano
1/4 teaspoon summer savory
1/4 teaspoon tarragon
4 eggs, beaten
1/2 cup of your favorite cheese, grated



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a 9 inch oven-proof skillet, over medium flame, heat olive oil and butter. Add onion, garlic, salt and herbs. When onions turn golden, add beaten eggs. Cook several minutes, lifting the edges and letting the uncooked egg flow underneath. When eggs are nearly cooked, add cheese. Transfer skillet to oven and bake 12 to 15 minutes until frittata is lightly browned.

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Grilled Red Onions

Red onions, peeled and sliced 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick
Olive oil
Balsamic vinegar
Salt and pepper

Heat a grill or barbecue. In medium bowl, toss onions with the olive oil, vinegar and salt and pepper to taste. Place on the hot grill or barbecue and cook until tender, and slightly charred. These onions are delicious served over salads, with fresh mozzarella cheese, on top of chicken or on a sandwich.



Recipe contributed by Adrienne Maher, Just Food dietetic intern, 2001