



# FACT SHEET

## Family and Consumer Sciences

HYG-5524-09

# Selecting, Storing, and Serving Ohio Onions

Onions are a strong-flavored vegetable and can be used in a variety of ways. French-fried onion rings and French onion soup are favorites. Onions are used as a popular seasoning in salads, soups, casseroles, main dishes, sauces, and relishes. Onions are at peak in Ohio from August 1 to October 15 and at other times in storage.

For information on onion varieties in Ohio, contact your county Extension educator, Agriculture and Natural Resources.

### Selection

- **Green onions**—Select fresh, dry, crisp onions free of decay.
- **Dry onions**—Select bright, clean, hard, well-shaped onions with dry skins that crackle and without seed stems or sprouts. A thick, woody, tough or open condition of the neck or presence of a stem indicates seed stem development. Moisture at the neck is an indication of decay. Buy onions free from green sunburn spots and other blemishes.

### Storage

- **Green onions**—Keep cold and moist in the refrigerator. Store in plastic bags and use within 3–5 days.

- **Dry onions**—Store onions in a cool, dry, dark place to prevent sprouting and decay. Be careful not to bruise them. Be sure to cure onions to harden and dry the outer scales before you store them. Cured onions can be stored in loosely woven or open-mesh containers for several months.

### Yield

Due to many variables, including moisture content, size, and variety, it is impossible to give specific recommendations as to quantity to buy. The following recommendations are approximations.

- 1¾ pounds onions equals 6 one-half cup servings.

### Nutrition

The “Dietary Guidelines for Americans” recommend that adults need 2–2½ cups of a variety of vegetables daily. Onions can help meet this nutritional requirement. They have phytochemicals and flavonols that help prevent cancer and heart disease. Onions have small amounts of iron, calcium, thiamin, niacin, riboflavin, and vitamins. A one cup serving of onions contains only 30 calories.

## Safe Handling

Clean surfaces, utensils, and hands after touching raw meat and poultry and before you use them on fresh produce. Wash onions just before serving. To remove dirt, wash onions thoroughly in cold water. Do not use soap, dish detergent, or bleach since these household products are not approved for human consumption. Remove outer layers that may hold soil.

## Serving

- Cook onions uncovered and as quickly as possible to prevent undesirable flavor changes. The amount of water to use is a debatable point. A large amount is frequently recommended since it produces a product more acceptable to some

people. A large amount of water, though, lowers food value.

- Serve onions creamed, scalloped, au gratin, fried, baked, stuffed, sliced, or French fried.
- **Herbs to use**—Caraway seed, mustard seed, nutmeg, oregano, sage, thyme, chili powder, marjoram, dry mustard, rosemary, cloves, dill.
- Use 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon dried herbs for each 2 cups of vegetable. Chop fine to release flavoring oils and add at the beginning of cooking period.

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