



APRICOT TALKING POINTS

2. Apricot History

- **Apricots originated on the Russian-Chinese border in about 3000 BC** and were imported along with peach seed into Europe through the “Silk Road” that extended camelback trading to the Mideast.
- Apricots were known in ancient Greece in 60 BC and later introduced into the Roman Empire.
- The apricot trees arrived in the early American colonies in seed form for growing into fruit trees by the French explorers of the 1700’s in Gulf regions and in the Eastern United States and at California monasteries by Spanish explorers and missionaries.
- The apricot tree came to Virginia in 1720 but its appearance in the Spanish missions of California around 1792 marked the fruit's real arrival.



3. How do apricots grow? (What plant part do we eat?)

- Apricots can be a challenge to grow in cold regions because the trees bloom early and the flowers are often killed by late frosts. If you garden in the north, choose late-blooming varieties.
- Although most apricots are self-fertile, **fruit set is better when planted with one or two other varieties nearby and insects pollinate the flowers**. Cross-pollination describes the process of the transfer of pollen between two varieties of a plant, such as between two varieties of apricot tree (*Prunus armeniaca*). When an apricot tree blooms and is receptive, the pollinator must be blooming as well.
- **Lots of bees, flies, butterflies, and wasps ensure a good apricot harvest.**
- Trees will start bearing in the third or fourth season. Expect 3 to 4 bushels of fruit from a standard-size tree, 1 to 2 from a dwarf variety.
- Apricots flourish on deep, moisture retentive, well-drained, ideally slightly alkaline soils and struggle in poor, shallow soils.

4. What season do we pick apricots?

- Since South Dakota does not have ideal growing conditions for the apricot, they are mostly grown in the temperate areas of California, Indiana & Washington.
- Apricots are typically ripe between May and July.

5. Why should we eat apricots?

- Apricots contain a number of potent antioxidants, and are a good source of both **vitamin A (from beta-carotene) and vitamin C**.
- Apricots are rich in the carotenoids and xanthophylls, nutrients that researchers believe may help protect eyesight from aging-related damage. To give an example of how this works, one of these nutrients (lutein) appears to be able to protect the retina—the part of the eye that picks up the visual image from the environment—from damage caused by blue light.

- Apricots are a good source of **dietary fiber**. This overall fiber content should be helpful for most people in supporting digestive health. Within the total dietary fiber provided by apricots, about half consists of soluble fiber. Soluble fiber is one type of fiber that can help to control blood cholesterol levels.
- Dried apricots also have more **potassium** than a banana. Potassium is a very important mineral for the proper function of all cells, tissues, and organs in the human body. It is also an electrolyte, a substance that conducts electricity in the body, along with sodium, chloride, calcium, and magnesium.
- **How much do I need?**
- The amount of fruits and vegetables you need depends on your age, gender, and physical activity level. all forms of fruits and vegetables count toward your daily needs – fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% juice!
- Everyone, at a minimum, needs about 2 cups of fruit a day. One small apricot would be equal to ½ cup and one medium to large apricot would equal 1 cup.

6. How do you pick good apricots?

- Relatives to peaches, apricots are small, golden orange fruits, with velvety skin and flesh, not too juicy but definitely smooth and sweet. Some describe their flavor as almost musky, with a faint tartness that lies somewhere between a peach and a plum.
- Apricots should be firm, plump, and have a consistent yellow/orange/red color.
- Avoid those with bruises or soft spots.
- **Apricots can be stored in the refrigerator for up to a week.**
- **They should be rinsed before eating.**

Fun Facts

- Both the apricot and the peach are members of the rose family.
- One apricot tree can produce fruit for as many as 25 years, its fruit picked by hand when firm.
- In the United States, apricots are grown in California, Indiana and Washington. Fresh U.S. apricots are available from mid-May to mid-August.
- In one ounce apricots contain enough beta carotene to supply 20 percent of your daily vitamin A requirements.
- Astronauts ate apricots on the Apollo moon mission.

Sources:

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