

AVOCADOS, FULLY



THE COOKFUL

Edited by Amy Bowen and Christine Pittman

Avocados, Fully

Our newest ebook from The Cookful is all about avocados. Rich, creamy, delicious and so versatile. Let's dig in!

We love featuring specific fruits and vegetables on our site. One of our favorites is avocado. It's so rich and creamy, and so very versatile. It can be used in so many ways.

In this ebook we give tons of info about preparing avocados like how to prevent them from browning, how to cut them safely and how to cook with them. And we have so many recipes, from avocado fries to avocado brownies, we've put avocado everywhere and made it shine from every single spot. Enjoy!

Now, let's start smashing!

Christine



THE COOKFUL

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11 Ways to Prevent Avocados from Browning

By Amy Bowen

Once cut, avocado is exposed to oxygen which makes it turn brown. Here are 11 ways to stop the browning from even starting.

Let's say I don't have to use an entire avocado. I actually chuckled as I typed that because this is never a problem, but play along. Anyway, the only problem with avocado is when you try to save it and the outside turns brown. Not very appetizing.

So why does this happen? It's just like apples and bananas. Avocado contains an enzyme that turns flesh brown when cut. This doesn't impact taste, just appearance. But it's not very pretty.

Luckily, you can prevent this from happening a few different ways.

Your main goal is simple. Prevent oxygen from touching the cut avocado. No oxygen equals no browning. Got that? Let's get started.

1. My grandma uses the old Saran Wrap trick. You simply put plastic wrap over the cut side of the avocado and press it into place. She swears by this. But I've run into two major issues. First, plastic wrap is not easy to put on. At least for me. It gets stuck together. I cut myself on the box's serrated edge. I become frustrated and colorful words flow from my lips. Second, if you don't have it on tight enough, air gets in and here comes brown avocado.
2. I opt for spritzing my avocado with lemon or lime juice. In a pinch I'll use orange juice. This creates a barrier that keeps your avocado green. Note some people say that this can leave avocado slimy. I've never had this happen, but again, avocados don't last long in my house.
3. Some people say that simply keeping the pit in the halved avocado works. I disagree. It does not. BUT, it does mean that there is less surface area exposed to air. So leave it in there and then combine ideas (1) and (2) from above: Spritz with citrus juice and cover with plastic wrap. Keep it in the refrigerator for best results.
4. One friend of mine swears by keeping her avocado in a small airtight container with a couple of slices of onion. She thinks it counteracts the enzyme that causes browning. You have to like onion for this trick. She does!

11 Ways to Prevent Avocados from Browning

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5. You can also spray the halved avocado with cooking spray or rub it with cooking oil. It works like the citrus juice to keep a barrier between the avocado and the air.
6. Some cooks use cold water baths to prevent browning. This keeps air from reaching the flesh. Use this technique if you're prepping several avocados for use later in the day. Fill a bowl with cold water, add your halved avocados. Refrigerate. Use within four hours.

If you have guacamole, or mashed avocado, there are a few other things you can do.

1. Press plastic wrap over the mound of guacamole.
2. Scoop the guac into a tall thin container (a cylinder). Then only the tiny bit at the top opening is exposed to air. Top that with plastic wrap and refrigerate until you're ready to use it.
3. Or, instead of plastic wrap on the top of the cylinder, pour cooking oil onto the top, about 1/8 of an inch. That acts as a barrier to the air. Pour off the oil and discard before serving (or stir it in).
4. Spritz the top of the guacamole with citrus juice before topping it with plastic wrap. My favorite method for preventing brown avocados and brown guacamole though? Eat it. Seriously, invite some friends over. Have a guacamole party. I'll bring the margaritas. Problem solved.

The Ultimate Guide to Guac

By Amy Bowen

Make the best ever guacamole ever! For real. Our secret ingredients will wow you.

Making great guacamole isn't rocket science. It contains simple ingredients that come together and make something spectacular. But you have to use excellent ingredients. Excellent ingredients equal excellent guacamole.

CHOOSE GREAT AVOCADOS

This is always a tough one, especially when staring at a huge bin of avocados. Pick ones with dark pebbly skin that yield to gentle pressure. Those will be ready to use in guacamole right now. If you're planning to wait a couple of days, buy firmer avocados.

Fun fact: There are hundreds of avocado varieties. But only eight are grown in California, where most of your avocados are coming from. Choose hass avocados, which comprises about 95 percent of the yearly crop. These are small with pebbly skin. This variety is hands down the best variety to use.

RIPEN THOSE AVOCADOS

If you want to speed up ripening, then put them in a paper bag on their own or better, with a banana or apple. To slow them down, pop them into the fridge.

If you're feeling adventurous and have a rock hard avocado, nuke your avocado on low-medium heat for 30 seconds. Give it a gentle squeeze. If it gives, you have a softened avocado. If not, put it in for another half minute.

GUACAMOLE IS MORE THAN AVOCADO

You need avocados, of course. Mash those up really well with a fork or use a Mexican mortar and pestle, which is a very traditional method. You definitely need to add lime juice (fresh is best). And salt. Guacamole really needs salt. Please don't forget it.

If you do those things (mashed ripe avocado, fresh lime juice and salt) you've got a really good guacamole. But we promised you greatness. Now we're going to come through on that...

The Ultimate Guide to Guac

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FOR THE BEST GUACAMOLE

First you need to decide if you want smooth guacamole or guacamole with some texture.

If smooth, then add garlic powder, onion powder and, a tiny (tiny!) pinch of cayenne pepper and/or ground cumin. If you're somebody who loves cilantro but you don't want leafy bits in your smooth guacamole, we've got the secret ingredient for you: Ground Coriander. Coriander is the seed of the cilantro plant. It has some very similar flavor notes and really brings together your guacamole.

If you want a chunkier guacamole, then don't mash the avocado quite as well and add minced garlic and minced onion. You can do finely chopped tomatoes and finely chopped cilantro as well. For the ultimate, add the tiniest bit of minced jalapeno.

ONE MORE GUACAMOLE SECRET INGREDIENT

O.K., we have one more little secret for you. Please don't get mad. We know this isn't traditional but it's still a thing. Whether you're doing smooth or chunky guacamole, try adding a tiny bit of mayonnaise. I know. I know. But please try it. We're talking 1 tablespoon per whole avocado. You won't taste the mayonnaise flavor but it does something to the texture and adds this subtle tang. It takes your regular guacamole and makes it the best ever. Go on. Try it. You're gonna like it.

We've given you a smooth guacamole recipe below that you can use as a guide. It has the (dreaded?) mayonnaise and the ground coriander in it so it will let you try both of these secret ingredients.

The Ultimate Guide to Guac

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Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

1. Measure all ingredients in a medium bowl.
2. Stir until smooth and well-combined.
3. Taste and add more salt if desired.

Ingredients:

2 whole avocados, mashed
very well

2 Tablespoons mayonnaise

2 teaspoons fresh lime juice

1/4 teaspoon table salt

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

1/4 teaspoon onion powder

1/8 teaspoon ground
coriander (optional but
highly recommended)

pinch of cayenne pepper
(optional)

pinch of ground cumin
(optional)

Ranch Guacamole

By Christine Pittman

Who loves ranch dressing? Try adding it to your next batch of guacamole. It's pretty cool.

Earlier we told you about how to make the ultimate guacamole. In doing so, we revealed a certain creamy secret ingredient. That led to the idea of adding another creamy ingredient to create a whole new guacamole variation, ranch dressing.

You can go in with a store-bought ranch. Choose your favorite one. Some people love buttermilk ranch and others do not. It's up to you. You can alternatively use homemade ranch.

To boost the ranch flavor in this guacamole, there's also some ranch powder. You can find this in the grocery store near the salad dressings.

Enjoy!



Yield: 6 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

3 Avocados, peeled, pitted
and mashed

1/3 cup ranch dressing

2 strips of cooked bacon,
crumbled

2 tsp. lemon juice (plus more
to prevent browning)

2 tsp. ranch dressing powder

1. Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl. Drizzle with extra lemon juice to prevent browning, if desired.

Are Avocados Healthy or Not?

By Amy Bowen

Can you eat an entire avocado and not feel guilty? Let's find out about the health benefits of this delicious fruit.

First the bad news. One avocado is about 320 calories and 29 grams of fat. Wowza. Maybe it's not the best idea to down an entire avocado.

Stop right there. Just because avocado doesn't have the low calorie count of a head of broccoli (205 calories, 2.2 grams fat), doesn't mean it's not good for you. Avocados are high in monounsaturated fat and vitamin E, which protects your heart and lowers your blood pressure. It also contains oleic and linoleic acids to help lower cholesterol.

Avocado also has plenty of soluble fiber. That fiber combined with all that healthy fat, makes you feel fuller for longer which studies have found can lead to greater weight loss. So it has a lot of fat but that isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Avocados also contain potassium (it has more than a banana), folate and Vitamins K, C, B5, B6 and E. It also contains iron, copper, folate and carotenes.

What's the bottom line? It's delicious AND healthy. It's definitely possible for avocado to be part of an uber-healthy diet. Don't go crazy and have one with every meal. But 1/2 to 1 whole avocado a day might be just the thing your body needs.

Now, bring on that avocado toast!

The Many Different Kinds of Avocados

By Amy Bowen

Hass avocados may be the most familiar and popular variety, but there are other kinds as well.

There are hundreds of avocado varieties. We won't cover them all --- just the top nine that you can find in United States.

Avocados are native to southern Central America. Here in the United States, California has the avocado bragging rights. Its farmers grow the majority of the country's avocados. Kudos, dudes.

HASS

This is the popular kid in class. Most of the U.S. crop is Hass with it's creamy texture.

GWEN

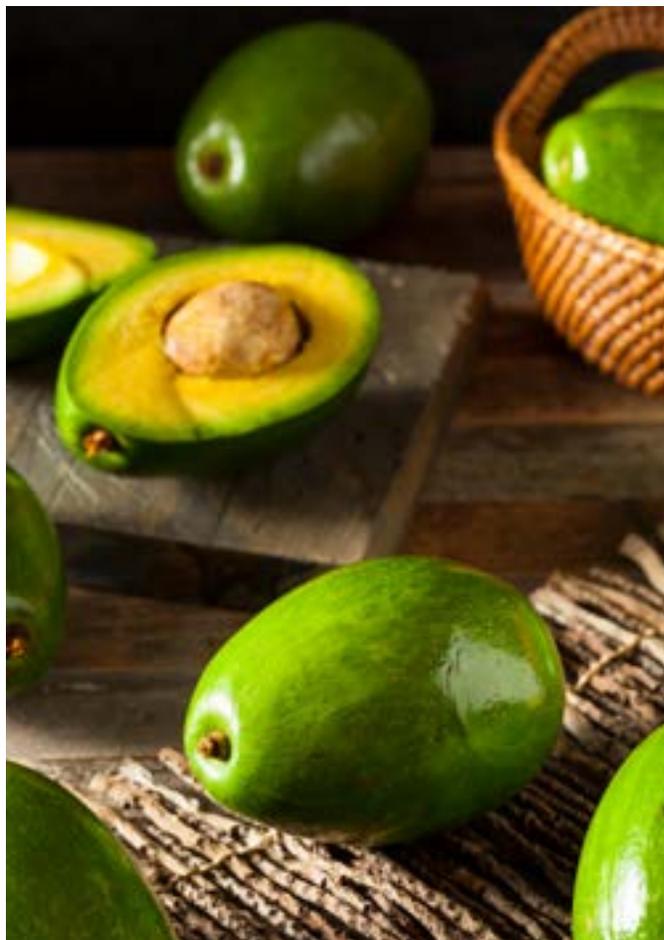
If you like Hass, you'll like this variety. It tastes similar to Hass. The only difference? It's slightly larger.

LAMB HASS

Lamb Hass is bigger than Hass. It's known for its creamy, nutty taste.

BACON

No, it doesn't taste like bacon. Dang it. It's less oily than Hass.



The Many Different Kinds of Avocados

Continued from previous page

FUERTE

This is a big avocado and the taste is supposed to be amazing. Good luck finding one though. They are rarely found in grocery stores.

PINKERTON

Pinkertons are long and slender. It has a rich and creamy flavor.

REED

Reed avocados are round and have a sturdy skin.

SLIMCADO

This variety is grown in Florida and is the trade name for the Florida Avocado, pictured on the previous page. It is large and kelly green. It has much less fat than a Hass but a higher water content yielding less of the rich flavor we're used to.

ZUTANO

This has a mild flavor. It's also one of the first avocado varieties of the season.

Can You Cook Avocados?

By Amy Bowen

We know avocado is the best food ever. But can you cook it?

I've always heard that you shouldn't cook with avocado. Supposedly, heating an avocado turns it mushy and bitter, so you should always add it at the very end. All of that is wrong, wrong, wrong.

You can bake avocado wedges to make avocado fries (yum). We have two great recipes for avocado fries coming up soon, one breaded and one with the avocado slices wrapped in bacon. Oh yeah!

You can also put mashed avocado into cakes, muffins and brownies. The healthy fats in the avocado add moisture to baked goods and this is a great way to add a nutritional boost to traditionally unhealthy foods. Just add blended avocado to your batter and no one will ever know you snuck it in. We've got an avocado brownie recipe for you coming soon. You'll see. It's pretty great.

You can grill avocado too. Put it at the edge of the grill's heat so that it gets more subtle treatment. Place a halved avocado cut side down for about 5 minutes, until grill marks just appear.

Another way to cook with avocado is to add it to sauces. There's an avocado mac 'n' cheese and an avocado alfredo coming up soon to show off that technique.

See, you can cook with avocado. If you're using it mashed in things, then just go for it. Add it in. If you're trying to keep it in intact slices, wedges or halves, you must treat it gently or it will turn to mush. The more you handle it, the more mushy it becomes. That's why you add it just before serving in many recipes.

Finally, remember that avocado does turn brown, even when cooked. Even when mashed and cooked. So that avocado mac 'n' cheese we mentioned, it has some citrus juice included to counter that a bit. It's still not totally perfect though. The dish will start to turn a slight beige color if you don't serve it immediately. In general, dishes that contain avocado need to be eaten right away or else they will start to discolor. It's not harmful to eat discolored avocado though. It just doesn't look pretty.

So the take away is simple. Cook with avocado. You know you want to. Just follow those few tips and it will all turn out smashing.



Fish Tacos with Avocado Cream Sauce

By Christine Pittman

Who's looking for some Taco Tuesday fun? Fish tacos go on a new journey with an avocado cream sauce that has fresh basil and lemon in it. It's an amazing combination

When we were deciding what recipes to include in this ebook, we did some thinking about dishes that tend to have avocado in them. One thing that kept coming up was tacos. I'm a real sucker for fish tacos so that's what I've gone with here.

Instead of just slicing some avocado and putting it on the tacos though, I decided to do something a bit more special. I made a cold cream sauce to drizzle over everything. To make it, you just put some ingredients, including the avocado, into a food processor or blender and whiz it up. Then I poured it into a zip-top plastic bag, cut a tiny corner off of the bag, and

Fish Tacos with Avocado Cream Sauce

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squeezed it into the tacos.

The ingredients in the avocado cream sauce are mostly “normal” for tacos. There’s the avocado and then I used Greek yogurt (instead of sour cream). What’s perhaps unusual is that I also used basil and lemon juice, instead of the more expected cilantro and lime juice. Totally go ahead and use cilantro and lime if you’d like. It’s delicious. I just wanted something different. Mostly, I wanted to show off that avocado is really delicious with basil. Really, really delicious.

Enjoy!

Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 2 minutes

Cook Time: 18 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

2 tilapia fillets
1/2 teaspoon lemon pepper
2 cups shredded cole slaw mix
1 Tbsp. + 1 tsp. lemon juice, divided
salt
black pepper
1/8 tsp. garlic powder
1 ripe avocado, peeled and pitted
4 large fresh basil leaves, torn into pieces, plus more (whole) for garnish
1/4 cup plain Greek yogurt
4 taco shells, heated according to package instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Arrange fish on a foil-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle with lemon pepper. Bake until flaky and cooked through, 10-12 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and cut into bite-sized pieces.
3. Meanwhile, measure cabbage, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1/4 teaspoon salt, black pepper and garlic powder into a medium bowl. Stir. Set aside.
4. Into a food processor or blender, put the avocado, basil leaves, Greek yogurt, 1 teaspoon lemon juice, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Blend until smooth, adding a drizzle of water (start with 1 tablespoon) if it isn’t pureeing easily. Transfer sauce to a plastic bag and cut a tiny bit off of one corner of the bag.
5. Drizzle some basil cream sauce into each taco shell. Top with some tilapia and then some cabbage. Drizzle with more basil cream sauce. Garnish with a whole basil leaf to serve.

Breaded Avocado Fries

By Chrstine Pittman

Who loves avocado? Now try Avocado Fries! They're soft on the inside, crunchy on the outside and just plain delicious. Bet you can't have just one!

There's this trend out there in the food world of taking different ingredients and turning them into french fries. I'm guessing that the idea is that fries made with potatoes aren't exactly healthy. Using a healthier main ingredient, and maybe baking them instead of deep-frying them, gives you that same fun finger food feeling without the guilt.

Thus enter Avocado Fries. Avocados are a healthy item for sure and fries made out of them are really tasty. The first time I tried them was at a photo shoot that I was doing for [Produce for Kids](#). I was a bit skeptical that they would be good. I thought they'd be kind of mushy. But they weren't. Nope.



What they were was addictive. Try them now!

Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 14 minutes

Total Time: 24 minutes

Ingredients:

2 avocados, sliced 1/2 inch thick

1 lemon, juiced

1 lime, juiced

1 cup panko breadcrumbs

1/2 tsp. salt, divided

1/2 tsp. lemon pepper

seasoning, divided

2 Tbsp. lowfat ranch dip

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Spray baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. Combine lemon & lime juice in small bowl. Mix bread crumbs, 1/4 teaspoon of the salt and 1/4 teaspoon of the lemon pepper in separate bowl.
3. Dip avocados into juice, season with remaining 1/4 teaspoon of salt and of lemon pepper, and press into bread crumbs.
4. Lay avocados in a single layer on prepared baking sheet and bake until golden brown, 12-15 minutes.
5. Served with ranch dressing for dipping.

Recipe courtesy of Produce for Kids, recipe and picture published with permission.

Bacon-Wrapped Avocado Fries

By Christine Pittman

Bacon + Avocado = BLISS! These Bacon-Avocado Fries are the ultimate finger food. Time to dig in!

The previous avocado fries were breaded and then baked until golden brown. They were seriously addictive. So addictive that I needed to riff on them. Riff on them by adding bacon, of course.

These avocado fries are really easy to make. You simply take bacon and wind it around avocado wedges. I stretch the bacon a bit first so that it's thinner and crisps up quickly. Also, make sure you only do a single layer of bacon for the same reason. Then you put the bacon-wrapped avocado wedges on an oiled pan and bake them until the bacon is crispy. Around 20 minutes. That's it, that's all. Couldn't be easier or tastier.

Love them up!



Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

Cooking spray
2 ripe avocados
16 strips of bacon
1/4 cup ranch dressing

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. Cut the avocados in half and carefully remove the pit. Use a soup spoon to carefully scoop the avocado halves out of the skin, keeping the halves intact. Slice each half into 4 wedges.
3. Take a slice of bacon and stretch it to make it thinner. Wind it around an avocado wedge in a single, slightly overlapping, layer. Trim the bacon if it is too long. Place bacon-wrapped slice on the baking sheet and repeat with remaining avocado wedges.
4. Bake for 12 minutes. Use a spatula to carefully lift the avocado wedges from the baking sheet and flip them over. Bake until bacon is crisp all around, about 4-6 minutes more. Serve with ranch dressing for dipping.

How to Cut Avocados Safely

By Christine Pittman

Avocados can be tricky to get into. Learn how to do it safely here.

Have you ever seen someone split an avocado in half and then whack the pit with a big knife to extract it from the fruit? It looks really cool. But have you tried it? It's...ummm...not always so easy. And it's definitely not safe.

There's no pit-whacking here because we're not show offs. We want to get at that avocado and retain all our fingers. That's the goal and we've accomplished it easily.

1. Rest avocado on counter/cutting board on its side. (Don't do it with avocado in your hand in case you cut yourself. I know you've seen people do this. It is not a good idea. Trust me).
2. Make a lengthwise slice into the avocado just until your knife reaches the pit.
3. Keep knife in the avocado and carefully spin the avocado around so that the knife is sliding around the pit and making one ring-of-a-cut around the avocado.
4. Now the avocado is cut in half but is being held together by the pit. Hold the two halves, one in each hand, and twist a bit while pulling gently to separate them.
5. Now, one half has the pit in it. Run a small spoon around the pit and then scoop the pit out.
6. Peel the skin off of the avocado using your hands.
7. Slice avocado on the bias for slices. To chop/cube, slice and then turn the cutting board 90 degrees and slice in the other direction. If making guacamole, no need to slice or cube. Put avocado halves into a bowl and mash with a fork.





Avocado Smoothie

By Christine Pittman

Who loves smoothies? Who loves avocados? Well, you have got to try this! A delicious smoothie with avocado, kale and tons of berries. Tasty, very satisfying and healthy to boot.

Smoothies rule the world, dontcha think? I'll admit that when I make them I do have a tendency to put everything I have into them. And I don't mean just in terms of effort. Ingredients. All of them. All aboard! Get into the blender all y'all. And that's how this smoothie was born.

It's got Greek yogurt and banana, like many smoothies do. It has kale for all those nutrients that we love to hide in our thick drinks. Tons of berries for fruity flavor. And then. And then. And then. AVOCADO! That's right. It's an avocado smoothie. Why put avocado in there? Well, as mentioned, it happened originally because I had avocado in my fridge and I'm prone to throwing everything into the blender. But the result was so good. Really creamy and rich. I

Avocado Smoothie

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also found that the avocado made the smoothie more filling and satisfying for a longer time period. This is a known thing about avocados, their high fat content (healthy fats, don't forget) makes you feel satiated for a long time which results in less overeating later in the day.

I just plain loved the combination in this smoothie and I'm betting you will too. Go make it and love it now!

Yield: 6 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 cup Greek yogurt

1 cup chopped kale

1 cup frozen mixed berries

1 cup ice

1/2 of a ripe banana

1 ripe avocado, peeled and
cored

1 tsp. lime juice

1-3 Tbsp. honey

1. Measure Greek yogurt into a blender.
2. Add kale, berries, ice, banana, avocado, lime juice and 1 tablespoon of honey. Pulse the blender. Add 1-4 tablespoons of water to help the blender puree if needed.
3. Taste. Add more honey if desired.



Avocado Soup

By Christine Pittman

Avocado soup is lusciously creamy and rich with lots of good flavors like lime, garlic, onion, cumin and cilantro. This recipe is based on a Columbian soup called Crema de Aguacate.

When I first heard of Columbian Crema de Aguacate (Cream of Avocado Soup) I thought ewwww. I don't know what I was thinking of, like, guacamole thinned out with water. Something like that. Kinda lumpy, watery, bland.

I was soooo wrong!

Avocado Soup is full of rich and delicious flavor. Which wasn't surprising when I realized that it is made in basically the same way as other creamy soups. That is, nobody just mashes up the ingredient and adds water. Duh. To make Avocado Soup, you sauté onions and garlic in olive oil and then add chicken broth, lime juice, mashed avocado, cumin and salt. You cook that for a bit. Then puree it until smooth. The final touch is to add half and half and heat it all through.

Avocado Soup

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See? There's so much flavor there. I actually wound up addicted to it and ate most of the pot of soup myself the first time I made it. Every time I walked by it, I had a few spoonfuls until very little was left. You're going to love this one too. I just know it!

Yield: 6 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
4 cups unsalted chicken broth
2 tsp. lime juice
2 ripe avocados, peeled, cored and mashed
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. cumin
1 pint half and half
6 sprigs cilantro (optional)

1. Heat a large pot over medium heat. Add onion and sauté until translucent. Add garlic and cook 30 seconds. Add chicken broth and lime juice. Stir. Add avocados, salt and cumin. Stir.
2. Increase heat to high and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce to a simmer and cook 5 minutes.
3. Transfer to a blender (depending on the size of your blender, you may have to puree half of the mixture at a time). Puree until smooth.
4. Return avocado puree to the pot. Add the half and half. Heat through over medium heat, stirring continuously. Ladle into soup bowls and garnish with cilantro, if desired.

Avocado Toast

By Christine Pittman

Who loves guacamole? It's not just a snack anymore. Now it's breakfast too! Learn how to make quick and delicious avocado toast for a filling and satisfying weekday breakfast.

One of the most interesting things that I've learned during our focus on avocados is that the abundance of healthy fat and fiber in avocados makes you feel fuller for longer, which can lead to weight loss. An avocado a day and I get thinner? Sign me up!

To make sure that I get some avocado into my diet every day, I decided to try to eat it for breakfast. There are lots of things you can do, like scramble some egg whites and top with diced avocado. Or, smash up some avocado and put it on toast. Avocado toast. Mmmm.



For this one, I added protein in the way of Greek yogurt. So there's the filling fat and fiber and also the protein that I crave. It's a perfect breakfast or snack that really highlights this wonder fruit. Enjoy!

Yield: 1 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 2 minutes

Total Time: 7 minutes

Ingredients:

1 slice of multigrain bread

1/2 of a Hass avocado

1/4 cup fat-free Greek yogurt

1 Tbsp. chopped cilantro (I snip it into the mix using kitchen shears)

a squeeze of lemon

2 dashes of salt, divided

2 grinds of pepper, divided

1. Put the bread in the toaster to toast.
2. Scoop the flesh of the avocado into a small bowl. Mash it with a fork. Add the yogurt, lemon, a dash of salt and a grind of pepper and mash it all together.
3. Once the toast has toasted, mound the guacamole onto the toast. Sprinkle the top with the second dash of salt and second grind of pepper.

Avocado Shrimp Cocktail

By Christine Pittman

There's a divot in an avocado half for a reason. The hole is for the dip! Here we fill it with a spicy cocktail sauce and pile on some shrimp.

That little crater in the center of an avocado just plain begs to be filled with something. For this recipe, we've filled it with a cocktail sauce and served shrimp on the side. It's a really fun twist on the classic shrimp cocktail. Give it some love! :-)



Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 cup ketchup

1 tsp. lime juice

1/4-1/2 tsp. strong prepared horseradish*

1/8 tsp. ground cumin

1/4 tsp. chili powder

2 ripe avocados, each cut in half with pit removed

20 cooked, peeled tail-on extra large shrimp (that's about 3/4 lb. of 26/30 count shrimp)

tortilla chips, for serving

1. In a small bowl combine the ketchup, lime juice, horseradish, cumin and chili powder.
2. Place an avocado half onto each of 4 plates, cut side up. Spoon a tablespoon or so of the ketchup sauce into the whole left by the pit in each avocado half.
3. Surround each avocado half with 5 of the shrimp. Serve with tortilla chips.

NOTE: In my experience, the horseradish that is sold in the refrigerated section near the refrigerated pickles is much better (more potent and more flavor) than the horseradish that is sold at room temperature.

Avocado Macaroni and Cheese

By Christine Pittman

Let's make macaroni and cheese more decadent and, at the same time (yes, really) healthier than ever by adding creamy, luscious avocado. Who's in?

I developed this recipe for Produce for Kids because, in recognition of the health benefits of avocado, they were trying to find more ways to get kids eating them. Avocado Macaroni and Cheese is definitely one of those ways.

The avocado is right in the cheese sauce. It's pureed right in there. It makes the sauce extra rich and creamy while adding tons of nutrients. Healthy and delicious. Everyone loves this one!



Yield: 6 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

1 lb. whole wheat elbow macaroni
1 1/2 cup 1% milk
3 cloves garlic, chopped
1/2 tsp. chili powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
2 avocados, halved, pitted
2 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
1 Tbsp. (plus 1/2 Tbsp.) lemon juice, divided
2 Tbsp. chopped chives, (optional)

1. Cook macaroni according to package instructions.
2. Meanwhile, combine milk, garlic, chili powder, salt and pepper in microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on high in 1 minute intervals until hot.
3. Place 1 and 1/2 of avocados and 1 tablespoon lemon juice into blender and pulse. Add cheese and hot milk, and blend until smooth. Chop remaining 1/2 avocado and toss with the remaining 1/2 tablespoon lemon juice.
4. Mix avocado sauce with pasta. Serve topped with chopped avocado and chives, if using.

Avocado Alfredo

By Christine Pittman

Enjoy this delicious fettuccine alfredo that is as creamy and luscious as the traditional version but with no cream or butter. The secret ingredient that brings the creaminess to the dish is avocado.

Alfredo sauce is an all-time favorite of mine. So rich and creamy. Unfortunately, given all that rich-and-creamy, it's not a great idea to make it very often. That's actually too bad because it's so easy to make. It could be the quickest and simplest of weeknight meals if only it was good for me.

Well, I summoned myself to the rescue and came up with a much healthier version. To make this alfredo sauce you skip both the butter and the cream. How? By adding milk and luscious avocado instead. There's still Parmesan cheese and garlic in the mix. How could there not be? But the result is much healthier than the original. Thankfully, it's still quick and easy to make. Quick and easy enough to be dinner tonight. Go on...try it!



Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

8 oz. dry fettuccine noodles
1 medium ripe avocado,
peeled and pitted
1 cup fat-free milk
1/2 cup shredded Parmesan
cheese, plus more for
garnish
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1 Tbsp. lemon juice

1. Cook fettuccine according to package instructions.
2. Meanwhile, put the avocado, milk, Parmesan cheese, olive oil, garlic powder and salt into a blender or food processor. Blend until smooth.
3. Transfer sauce to a small sauce pot. Warm it over medium-low heat stirring frequently. Do not simmer the sauce.
4. Drain the pasta. Remove the sauce from the heat and stir in the lemon juice. Toss pasta with sauce. Garnish with additional Parmesan cheese and serve immediately.

Avocado Popsicles

By Christine Pittman

Bring some healthy fats into your life when you add avocado and coconut milk to your homemade popsicles. These are such a luscious and creamy treat that you'd never know they're good for you too.

When you start making homemade popsicles your brain explodes. There are simply so many things you can add to them.

In this case we made them extra creamy and delicious by using coconut milk. We also blended avocado in there. They're sweet and creamy and healthy. Such a delicious treat!



Yield: 10 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 2 hours freezing

Total Time: 2 hours and 5 minutes

Ingredients:

1 medium ripe avocado
2 Tbsp. lime juice
1 (14oz.) can coconut milk
1/4 cup honey
1/8 tsp. salt

1. Scoop avocado into a blender. Add lime juice and mash it together with a fork. Add the coconut milk, honey and salt. Puree until smooth.
2. Pour mixture into ice pop molds and add treat sticks. Freeze until solid, about 2 hours.

Avocado Brownies

By Christine Pittman

Avocado takes the place of butter in these decadent, fudgy, dark chocolate brownies.

I work a lot with the organization [Produce for Kids](#). They're a healthy-eating resource for families and I always love the new ideas they come up with. Recently they asked me to develop a brownie recipe with avocado in it. I was a bit perplexed. I mean, how could that possibly be good?

Well, I gave it my all. I went with a dark chocolate, fudgy-style brownie hoping that all that rich flavor would mask some of the avocado flavor. It did! My kids gobbled these up without a second glance. I will say that if you know there's avocado in there, you can taste it a tiny bit. But if you don't tell anyone, they'll never know. Shhhhh.



Yield: 16 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

4 large eggs

1 cup sugar

8 oz. dark chocolate chips

1/2 cup dark cocoa powder

1/4 tsp. salt

1 tsp. vanilla extract

1/2 cup whole wheat flour

2 avocados

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8x8-inch cake pan with parchment paper and spray with cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Beat eggs and sugar with electric mixer at medium speed until bubbly and fluffy.
3. Place chocolate chips in microwave-safe bowl and microwave on high in 15 seconds increments, stirring in between, until melted.
4. With mixer running, add chocolate to egg mixture. Fold in cocoa, salt, vanilla and flour.
5. Mash avocados in separate bowl until very smooth. Add to batter and mix well.
6. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake 30 minutes, or until toothpick is inserted in center and comes out clean.
7. Let cool before slicing

This recipe is courtesy of Produce for Kids and the recipe and images are used with permission.

Contributors

Many thanks to our writers for this edition of The Cookful.



Amy Bowen, editor

Amy admits that she had no clue how to cook until she became the food reporter for a daily newspaper in Minnesota. At 25, she even struggled with figuring out boxed mac and cheese. These days, Amy is a much better cook, thanks to interviewing cooks and chefs for more than 10 years. She even makes four cheese macaroni and cheese with bacon, no boxed mac in sight. Amy is also on the editorial team at The Cookful and is the primary editor for this ebook.



Christine Pittman, editor

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Christine is the Founder and Senior Editor of The Cookful. She also blogs at COOKtheSTORY where she specializes in easy healthy homemade recipes. Healthiness aside, she has been known to shred cheese onto a dinner plate, microwave it for 30 seconds, and then eat the messy goop with a spoon.

About The Cookful

Do you love to geek-out over food and cooking? Then The Cookful is where you need to be.

We cook and write about one topic at a time, diving in deep to help you cook (and eat!) better than ever. Each topic comes with How-To's, innovative recipes, and a bunch of interesting tidbits so that you can learn all about it. Some topics we've covered are Margaritas, Quick Soups and Popcorn. Head over to [The Cookful](#) to find out what our next topic is and then get ready to go off the deep end with us.



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