



# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

# GRAPES



The grape is a fruit that is classified as a berry. Grapes grow in clusters on woody vines. They are a part of the Vitaceae family. The exact origin of grapes is unknown. Grapes were cultivated over 10,000 years ago in the Middle East and Caucasus mountains near present day Armenia and Azerbaijan. They were carried on trade routes around the world for thousands of years. French settlers bought grapes to New France in the 1600s. Spanish missionaries brought grapes to New Spain in the 1700s. There are also over 30 species of native grapes in North America. The most common in Michigan is the riverbank grape. Riverbank grapes have a sour taste, edible leaves, and their vines are used in basketmaking. They are not commonly used for eating or drinking. Grapes taste sour to sweet and can be soft or firm. Grapes are used fresh, baked, canned, dried, fermented, juiced, sautéed, or roasted. In Michigan, grapes are harvested from late summer through fall.



## GRAPES ARE

- A good source of vitamin K. Vitamin K is vital for blood clotting and healthy bones.
- A source of potassium. Potassium helps maintain healthy blood pressure.
- A source of vitamin C\*. Vitamin C is important to the body's tissues and supports a healthy immune system.

*\*Foods that are high in vitamin C, calcium, and/or iron can help protect you from lead absorption.*

## MICHIGAN MADE

Michigan ranks first nationally for Niagara grape production. Michigan is the eighth largest producer of grapes in the United States. There are over 15,000 acres of vineyards within 25 miles of Lake Michigan. Popular juice, jam, and table grape varieties include Catawba, Concord, Delaware, Fredonia, and Niagara. Michigan vineyards grow over 50 grape varieties that are harvested for wine and spirits like brandy. Many Michigan orchards and vineyards offer "u-pick" operations where consumers can pick their own grapes for the table, canning, juicing, and home winemaking. In the Southwest, Berrien and Van Buren Counties produce the majority of Michigan grapes for juice and jam production. In the Northwest, Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties' grape production continues to increase, primarily for wine grapes. In Northern Michigan, Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, and Emmet Counties have seen a rise in grape production. The same is true for the Upper Peninsula where they are growing more hardy varieties like Frontenac, Marquette, and La Crescent.

## FUN FACTS

- Raisins are dried grapes.
- There are two types of grapes, red and white.
- Red grapes have a sweet, rich taste.
- Red grapes can be pink, red, blue, indigo, violet, or black.
- White grapes have a tart, light taste.
- White grapes can be pale green, light green, greenish yellow, golden yellow, or pinkish yellow.
- Moon Drops are elongated black grapes that are crisp, sweet, and juicy.
- Cotton Candy grapes are hybrid Concord and table grapes that taste like juicy globes of cotton candy.
- Grapes are about 80% water. In addition to drinking water, eating grapes can help us stay hydrated.
- Stuffed grape leaves are a traditional Mediterranean dish made with a combination of rice, fruit, meat or seafood, and spices wrapped in grape leaves.
- Grapelade, grape jam, was invented for soldiers fighting in World War I. After the war, it was sold in stores and markets across the United States.
- The peanut butter and grape jelly sandwich was popularized by soldiers during World War II using Grapelade with two new ration items, peanut butter and sliced bread.
- In 1869, Thomas Welch and his son Charles developed pasteurized grape juice and called it unfermented wine as an alternative to wine for church services.



## BUYING AND STORING

- Select grapes that are firm and plump with even color attached to green, flexible stems.
- Store grapes in the refrigerator unwashed with stems intact in a clean perforated plastic bag for up to one to two weeks. Store grapes in the freezer washed, dried, and stems removed in airtight plastic bags or containers up to one year.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using.





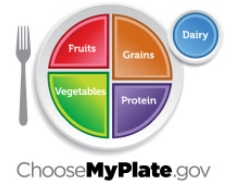
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## MORE THAN FRESH

In addition to fresh, grapes are available canned, dried, frozen, and juiced. Grape leaves are available fresh, canned, and dried for teas. When buying packaged grapes, choose items with no added sugar and grape juice that is 100% juice. Unpasteurized juices may contain harmful bacteria that can make you sick.

## EAT WITH MYPLATE

MyPlate focuses on whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and half the plate being fruits and vegetables. Grapes are part of the Fruit Group. Most people need 1–2 cups of fruit per day. For more information visit: [myplate.gov](https://myplate.gov).



## IT ALL COUNTS

Fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% vegetable and fruit juices count toward your daily MyPlate goals.

## ENGLISH MUFFIN FRUIT PIZZAS

Time: 5 minutes | Makes: 2 servings | Serving Size: 1 slice

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 124, Carbohydrate 25g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 5g, Total Fat 1g, Saturated Fat 0g, Cholesterol 2mg, Sodium 216mg

Always wash hands before preparing food. Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using.



### INGREDIENTS

1 whole-grain English muffin, sliced in half  
2 tablespoons low-fat or fat-free cream cheese  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup strawberries, sliced

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup seedless red or green grapes, quartered lengthwise  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup pineapple tidbits in 100% fruit juice, drained, or 1 kiwi, peeled and sliced

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Toast English muffin slices.
2. Spread 1 tablespoon of cream cheese on each slice.
3. Arrange fruit evenly on each slice. Serve immediately.

### TRY THIS

- Add sliced grapes to chicken or tuna salad.
- Keep grapes in the freezer for quick snacks and to chill water and other beverages.
- Roast or sauté grapes and spoon over grilled chicken or fish, oatmeal, pasta, and toast.

### CHANGE IT UP

- Try with sliced apples and pears and a sprinkle of cinnamon.
- Make with whole-grain bread or bagels.
- Use fruit flavored cream cheese, farmers cheese, or low-fat or fat-free ricotta cheese.