

Avocados: Take A Fresh Look At This Versatile Fruit

(NAPSA)—Avocados—they're not just for guacamole anymore. In fact, they're showing up as an ingredient in all kinds of recipes, including casseroles, sandwiches, soups and salads. The addition of this fruit brings a creamy and delicious flavor to meals and can add a new twist to classic dishes.

Right now is the perfect time to use this delectable fruit in your meals, as now through September marks California avocado season. Ninety percent of the nation's avocado crop is grown in California by more than 6,000 farmers who nurture their trees by hand from seed to harvest. Their commitment to quality can be seen in the fruit they produce and tasted in their flavorful avocados.

Avocados are an extremely versatile ingredient that also packs a nutrient punch. With nearly 20 vitamins, minerals and beneficial plant compounds, avocados can contribute to the nutrient quality of your diet.

A few simple ways to incorporate this delicious fruit into your meals include:

- Add fresh, diced avocados to pasta and rice creations.
- Dress meats and fish with a chunky avocado salsa.
- Include avocados in breakfast favorites, such as omelets and Eggs Benedict.
- Pair cubed avocado with fresh fruit and drizzle with honey for a sweet and nutritious alternative to regular desserts.
- Top salads, burgers and pizzas with sliced avocado for a rich and creamy accent.

California avocados can also place a new spin on a traditional dish. Here is a new take on the classic Caprese salad, featuring fresh California avocados:



Avocados can add flavor and style to a variety of dishes.

CALIFORNIA AVOCADO CAPRESE SALAD

Serves: 4

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 ripe, fresh California avocado, halved, seeded, peeled and cut into ¼-inch slices**
- 2 lemons, juiced**
- 2 ripe tomatoes, each cut into ¼-inch slices**
- 8 medium fresh basil leaves**
- 1 (8 oz.) ball of fresh mozzarella cheese, cut into ¼-inch slices**
- ¾ cup lemon-scented olive oil**
- 3 Tbsp. capers, drained**
- Sea salt, to taste**
- Fresh ground black pepper, to taste**

Instructions:

- 1. Place avocado slices in shallow bowl and dress with lemon juice, making sure all slices are coated.**
- 2. On individual salad**

plates, layer tomato slice, fresh basil leaf, mozzarella slice and avocado slice. Repeat with a second tomato slice, fresh basil leaf, mozzarella slice and avocado slice alongside. Drizzle with lemon-scented olive oil and sprinkle capers over all. Repeat process for each plate.

3. Season with sea salt and fresh ground black pepper, to taste.

Note: Large avocados are recommended for this recipe. A large avocado averages about 8 ounces. If using smaller or larger size avocados, adjust the quantity accordingly.

Nutrition information per serving: 380 calories; 31 grams fat (11 sat, 13.5 mono, 2 poly); 40.5 mg cholesterol; 575 mg sodium; 10.5 grams carbohydrate; 2 grams fiber; 14 grams protein

For more recipes featuring fresh California avocados, visit www.CaliforniaAvocado.com.