

Fabulous Food

Sweet Onion Salad Is The New Salsa

(NAPSA)—The latest sweet take on salad has a surprise star—the onion.

It's a crunchy burger topper, a savory side to roast chicken or steak and a salsa-like slaw that takes seconds to prepare. It's healthy, sweet, savory and in season all year long.

While traditional salsa shines in summer when tomatoes are at their peak, sweet onions are available in every season. In winter, the No. 1 onion in the market is the OsoSweet, and it happens to be the sweetest of all, with the highest-recorded sugar content at 12 percent, about 50 percent more than summer Vidalias. So the cold weather months are the perfect time to try this tasty new dinner-time go-with.

Crisp, Sweet Onions

A salad of crisp, sweet onions might be new to the American condiment collection, but raw onion relishes are found on tables all around the globe, a fact that explains why onions are the world's most consumed vegetable. In India, it is common to find a dish of chopped onion, flecked with finely ground cayenne on the dinner table, and no meal in Peru would be complete without the classic South American Salsa Criolla, an onion relish spiked with hot pepper, lime and cilantro. The whole world knows that onions are a quick and easy way to spark up the flavor of any simply cooked meat or basic dish, and the unique crispness and crunch of an OsoSweet onion makes any meal more delicious.

Don't worry about bad breath or an upset tummy. Fact is, because sweet onions are grown in soil with low amounts of sulfur, they have pyruvic acid levels that measure below 5 percent, while an average yellow onion usually runs



However you slice it, sweet onions are healthy, sweet, savory and in season all year long.

10 percent to 13 percent. This lower acid content of sweet onions can make them easier to digest and reduces the incidence of reflux and other unpleasant abdominal upsets.

Health Benefits

In fact, research has indicated that eating onions is good for the digestive tract.

Quercetin, the main antioxidant in onions, has been shown to prevent and promote the healing of gastric ulcers. Even more important, in a number of studies, onion consumption has been correlated with a reduced risk of stomach cancer.

The health benefits of onions, though, go far beyond that. Onions are nutritional powerhouses. They contain fiber, calcium, iron, several B vitamins, and more vitamin C than apples. They are also a rich source of important phytochemicals.

Flavonoids, such as Quercetin, are antioxidant compounds that have been shown to decrease cancer formation and growth. Organosulfur compounds in onions seem to be responsible for onion's anti-cancer effects, reduce symptoms associated with diabetes, help prevent heart disease, and have anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial properties.

Sugar Lowering

Onions also seem to have powerful blood sugar-lowering effects. Research indicates that compounds in onions increase the amount of free insulin available and help cells respond appropriately to insulin.

Sweet onions are oh so healthy and because they are so mild, it is easy to eat more of them. This sweet onion salad is a fast and easy way to make your meals more delicious while doing something great for your family's health. Use it to top burgers and sandwiches; spoon onto nachos, tacos or salads; or pile it on as a side dish for grilled steak, roasted chicken or pan-seared fish.

Make the variation of the dish that you like best. Prepare it with lime juice, lemon juice or unseasoned rice vinegar and add cilantro, parsley, basil or mint and, if you like, a hint of chopped hot pepper. For fish, try lemon and parsley; for steak, think lime and cilantro; with lamb, you will love rice vinegar and mint.

SWEET ONION SLAW

- 1 large OsoSweet onion**
- 6 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro, parsley, mint or basil**
- 4 tablespoons lime juice, lemon juice, or unseasoned rice vinegar**
- ½ teaspoon minced jalapeno (optional)**
- ¾ teaspoon salt**

Peel and halve the onion and slice as thinly as possible. Add juice or vinegar, herbs, jalapeno and salt and let stand 20 minutes. Serve right away or refrigerate for up to one week.

Makes 3 cups.