



# APRICOT

## Description

The apricot is a round, fleshy fruit that is closely related to the peach, plum, almond and cherry. It has a single seed enclosed in a stony shell. The edible, pale-orange skin is smooth and velvety. The flesh is drier than that of most other fruits.

## Varieties

Approximately 12 varieties of apricots exist, with flesh that varies from yellow to deep orange. Some of the better known varieties are the Blenheim, the Tilton, the Patterson, and the Castlebrite.

## Nutrient Content

Fresh apricots are high in vitamin A(beta-carotene) and are a good source of vitamin C.

## Uses

Apricots are best when purchased ripe or slightly under ripe and allowed to ripen in a paper bag. Green-tinged fruits will not ripen properly and should be avoided. Ripe apricots can be stored in the refrigerator up to a week, but apricots that are soft and juicy should be eaten within a day or two of purchase. Apricots should be washed just before they are eaten. They are excellent eaten out of hand or used in any recipe that calls for peaches or nectarines. Apricots should not be cooked for an extended time because they tend to lose their flavor rather quickly; poaching is an ideal cooking method. Dried apricots are a convenient, non-perishable snack.

## Origin

The world's leading producers of apricots are Turkey, Italy, Russia and Greece. Ninety percent of the U. S. domestic market is supplied by growers in California; Utah and Washington supply the rest. During the off-season, apricots are imported from Chile and New Zealand. Apricot trees grow to about 20 feet in height and spread to a width of 30 feet. The white or pink flowers appear in early spring and give way to fruits in late summer. Because of this early flowering, apricot yield may be limited by late frosts that kill the flowers. The domestic crop is available from mid-May to mid-August, and imports arrive in December and January

## Availability

The fresh apricot harvest begins in mid-May and lasts for about eight weeks. When selecting fresh apricots, look for plump, well-formed, fairly firm fruit with a delicate aroma and golden orange color. To ripen firm fruit, hold at room temperature or place in a paper bag with an apple or a banana.

## Recipe

### Fresh Apricot Pie

2 tbsp lemon juice

1/2 tsp cinnamon

10 cups sliced fresh apricots (4 lb)

Double crust pastry for 9-inch pie

2 cups sugar

1/4 cup quick cooking tapioca

2 tbsp butter

Cream or beaten egg

Sprinkle lemon juice over apricots. Blend in sugar, tapioca, and cinnamon; mix lightly. Let stand 15 minutes.

Pour half of apricot filling into unbaked 9-inch pie shell; dot with 1 tbsp butter. Add top pastry; flute edge of crust. Brush top of pastry with beaten egg. Bake at 425 degrees for 40 minutes or until fruit in center of pie is cooked.

### FREEZE EXTRA PIE FILLING

Place half of filling in large freezer bag; dot with 1 tbsp butter. Squeeze out air and seal. Place in 9-inch pie pan; shape to fit pan and freeze. Once frozen, remove pan.

### TO BAKE FROZEN PIE FILLING

Unwrap and place frozen filling in unbaked 9 inch pie shell. Add top pastry; flute edge of crust. Bake at 425 degrees for 60 to 70 minutes. Makes 2 nine-inch pies, 8 servings each.

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