

Health Benefits of Citrus Fruit

Citrus fruits include oranges, lemons, limes and grapefruits, in addition to tangerines and pomelos. Not only are the citrus fruits in this diverse group delicious and refreshing, they earn their definition of an all-star food for their richness in compounds called flavonoids, which have anticancer properties. Citrus fruit flavonoids have been shown to inhibit the growth of cancer cells and prevent the spread of tumors.

Citrus flavonoids are also antioxidants that can neutralize free radicals and may protect against heart disease. Studies show that citrus flavonoids may improve blood flow through coronary arteries, reduce the ability of arteries to form blood clots and prevent the oxidation of LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, which is an initial step in the formation of artery plaques.

Citrus fruits are also high in vitamin C, and are good sources of folate and potassium. Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant and protects the body from damaging free radicals. It is also required for the synthesis of collagen, which helps wounds heal and helps hold blood vessels, tendons, ligaments and bone together. Potassium is a mineral and electrolyte that is essential for the function of nerves, heart contraction, and some enzymes involved in carbohydrate metabolism.



Wonderful World of Citrus Fruit

While the orange is a favorite among citrus, there are many other unique varieties of citrus that you may not have heard about. Try something new!

Cara cara orange – a type of navel orange that looks like a regular orange on the outside, but is a distinctive pinkish red on the inside. Cara cara oranges are very sweet and have a tangy hint of cranberries.

Blood orange – smaller than the average orange, the blood orange gets its name from the striking bright red to maroon interior. Blood oranges have an intense orange flavor with a hint of fresh raspberry.

Pomelo – the largest citrus fruit, the pomelo closely resembles the grapefruit. Pomelos have a thick yellow to green skin, with an interior that ranges from white to deep pink. Pomelos taste sweeter and less acidic than grapefruit.

Minneola tangelo – a hybrid between the grapefruit and tangerine, this fruit has a refreshing combination of tart and sweet flavors.

Did you Know?

The vitamin C in citrus fruit strongly enhances the absorption of iron in food. Vitamin C binds to iron in the digestive tract and the iron-vitamin C complex is absorbed together.

Useful Tips

*Store citrus fruit at room temperature if you'll eat it in a week or so; otherwise, it will keep in the crisper for six to eight weeks.

*Squirt some lemon juice on fresh cut fruits or fresh guacamole to prevent them from browning quickly.

*Enjoy health benefits of citrus fruit with recipes with [lemon](#) or [orange](#).

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