

## Avocado: The alphabet fruit

**E**VERYONE IS asking me why I eat avocado every day. I eat avocados for two simple reasons. First, I like the taste. Second, and most important, because of its nutritional benefits. Avocado got its name from the ancient Aztec word for "testicle," and maybe that's why men once thought eating avocados would boost their virility.

Throughout Central and South America, the avocado is highly regarded for its extremely nourishing properties. It is a favored saying among the Maya Indians inhabiting the Yucatan Peninsula and the highlands of Guatemala that where avocados grow, "hunger (or malnutrition) has no friends."

Among the Mayan, the avocado is considered to be a food that keeps the joints of the body moving freely and the skin young and supple. Avocado is very nutritious and makes an excellent baby food.

Avocado, which is also called "The Alphabet Fruit," has 322 calories – which is a fairly high number of calories. However, because avocados have 54 percent of our recommended daily value of fiber, it is very good at burning fat. Although you may not like the way I eat my avocado, with milk and cereal (Dominic's reaction: "Yikes!"), you sure can use it on a salad or sandwiches – or on any of your favorite dishes.

## Reversing diabetes with exercise

I am 73 years old and was diagnosed with diabetes 15 years ago. I was able to control my blood sugar, first with medication, then going from a vegetarian to a vegan diet. I also swim regularly.



Three months after starting my training at Bench Gym, I was told that I no longer was diabetic. In three months I had gone from control to reversal of diabetes. (My doctor never had told me I could get off my medication and reverse my diabetes.)

I owe a debt of gratitude to the Bench Gym team and to my trainer, Q, who has motivated me to get me to this point. He and the others are true professionals and they know their craft well. I have far more energy, feel good, have lost body fat and gained muscle mass. — *Thomas Allen*

### DID YOU KNOW?

In the Caribbean and Latin America, the avocado has many uses. A powder made from its seeds is used to control dandruff. Some chew the seeds to reduce toothaches, and the skin is used as an antibiotic. The flesh has long been used to condition dry hair and as a soothing shaving cream.

## Top 10 Reasons for Eating Avocado

- 10 Alphabet Fruit:** Avocado has nearly 20 vitamins and other nutrients thought to help prevent many chronic diseases. One avocado provides vitamins A, C, E, K and B6 as well as riboflavin, niacin, folate and pantothenic acid. Pay close attention to potassium, though: one avocado has 975 mg.
- 9 Bone Health:** Avocado is helpful in preventing rheumatoid and osteo-arthritis. The many different antioxidants found in avocados help reduce inflammation, a major concern for sufferers of either type of arthritis.
- 8 Healthy Skin:** Like our skin's oil, avocado oil nourishes and maintains skin tone and helps prevent premature wrinkling. Avocados offer remarkable benefits to human skin, both when eaten and when used topically. Long-term treatment with avocado oil helps relieve eczema. The seed oil is used in treating skin sclerosis.
- 7 Good Fat Substitute:** Avocado, due to its mono and polyunsaturated fat content, is a healthy substitute for foods rich in saturated fat.
- 6 Maintain Healthy Cholesterol Levels:** Avocado contains beta-sitosterol which is a natural plant sterol and may help maintain healthy cholesterol levels.
- 5 It burns fat:** Avocado has 54 percent of recommended daily value of fiber, to help burn fat.
- 4 Healthy Heart:** One cup of avocado has 23 percent of the recommended daily value of folate, which lowers the risk of heart disease. Vitamin E, monounsaturated fats and glutathione in avocado are great for your heart. Its high folate levels also protect against strokes.
- 3 Cancer Prevention:** Avocados have been shown to inhibit the growth of prostate cancer. Avocado, like olive oil, is high in oleic acid, which has been shown to prevent breast cancer. In addition, research has shown that certain compounds in avocados are able to seek out pre-cancerous and cancerous oral cancer cells and destroy them without harming healthy cells.
- 2 Eye Health:** Avocados have more carotenoid lutein than any other commonly consumed fruit. Lutein protects against macular degeneration and cataracts, two disabling age-related eye diseases.
- 1 Nutrient Booster:** By adding avocado to certain foods, you can improve your absorption of nutrients. Avocado acts as a "nutrient booster" by enabling the body to absorb more fat-soluble nutrients in foods that are eaten with the fruit. So, when you combine *other* fat burning foods with avocado, you can improve your nutrient absorption by up to 400 percent!