



## The Amazing Avocado!

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I love avocados! The creamy texture seems to go perfect with just about anything! My favorite combo is avocado and egg, they are a match made in heaven! But avocados are great on salads, in sandwiches, wraps, smoothies, soups, and even desserts! Luckily avocados are also a nutritional powerhouse!

Here's the breakdown of avocado's top nutrient benefits:

### **Healthy Fats**

Avocados are loaded with Monounsaturated Fatty Acids (MUFA's). This healthy fat has been shown to reduce LDL cholesterol and triglycerides and increase HDL cholesterol. MUFA's have also been shown to reduce oxidation and inflammation, lower blood pressure, decrease thrombosis, and reduce the incidence of heart disease overall. Avocados also contain Omega-3 fatty acids (ALA) that have anti-inflammatory effects.

### **Potassium**

A mineral most of us don't get enough of. Potassium is very important in maintaining healthy blood pressure levels. Half an avocado has more potassium than 1 medium banana!

### **Phytochemicals**

Avocados are loaded with a variety of phytochemicals such as Lutein and Zeaxanthin that act as powerful antioxidants in our bodies. Make sure to scrape off the dark green flesh that's right next to the peel, it's even higher in phytochemicals!

### **Fiber**

Avocados' creamy flesh is an unexpected rich source of fiber, about 14 grams in one avocado. Avocados are also a good source of Vitamin K, Folate, Vitamin C, Vitamin B5, Vitamin B6, and Vitamin E.

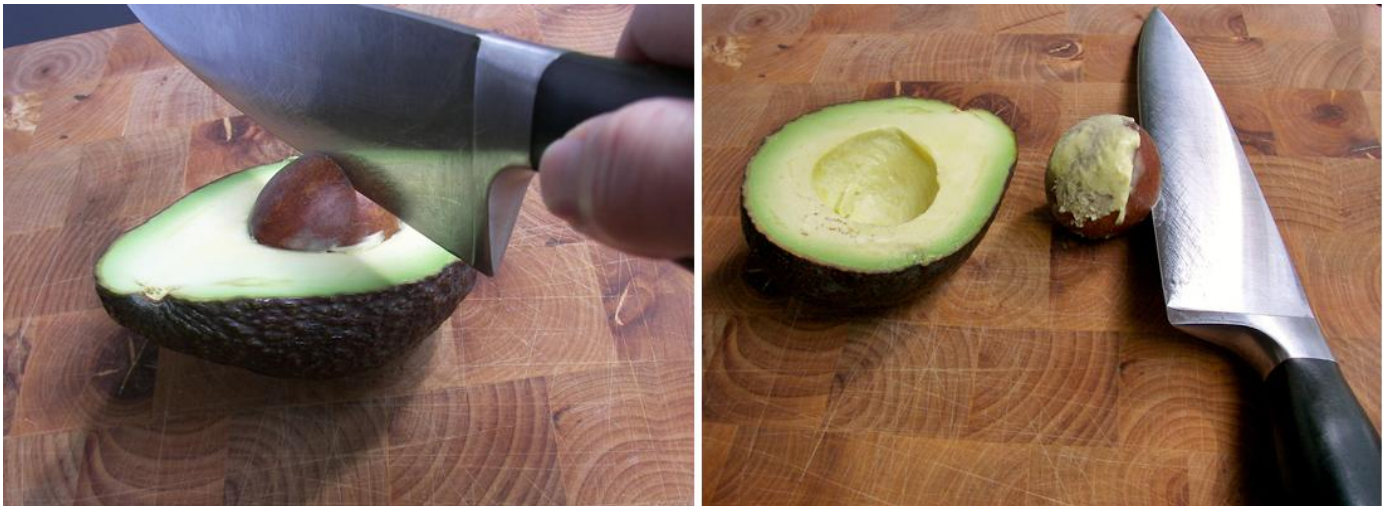
### **How to tell if it's ripe**

Your avocado is ripe when the skin is a very dark greenish black color and it gives a little when you gently squeeze it. You can also look under the button on the stem end. If it is green, but comes off fairly easily, it's ripe. If it's brown, your avocado is too ripe and likely mushy on the inside.

If your avocado is still too green, it will ripen within 2-5 days on the counter. To speed up the ripening process you can place it in a paper bag with an apple or a banana. The gases produced by these fruits will speed up the ripening process for the avocado. To slow down the ripening process, simply place the avocados in the refrigerator.

## How to cut

There are a few ways to easily cut into an avocado. My go-to is to simply cut it in half, then using my chef's knife whack the seed (carefully), twist and pull it out.



You can also cut the avocado in quarters, then simply take out the seed with your hands.

## How to store

The hardest thing about storing avocados is keeping them from turning brown. Just like with cut apples, the browning is caused by oxidation. The easiest way to prevent the oxidation is to mix the avocado with lemon or lime juice (or vinegar) then store in an air tight container. If you want to freeze avocado, you can puree it with a little lemon or lime juice then freeze it in small portions (in zip lock bags) or in ice cube trays.