



Did You Know?

- Persimmons are known by many other names around the world, including kaki fruits and sharon fruits. The botanical name literally means “food of the gods.”
- The Fuyu variety is non-astringent, meaning it does not cause the dry, mouth-puckering feeling that the astringent Hachiya variety does when unripe. This astringency is due to plant tannins which act as a natural pesticide!
- Persimmon trees are used for timber (i.e. golf clubs, textiles, and furniture) and create important habitats for wild life (e.g. flowers create nectar used by bees and the bees pollinate the trees in the orchard).
- The bright orange color of persimmons indicates that they are high in a type of nutrient called beta carotene which converts to Vitamin A in the body. A large fuyu persimmon can have as much as 70% of your daily recommendation of Vitamin A, which supports healthy eyes and body! Persimmons are also an excellent source of Vitamin C, fiber, potassium, and phytonutrients that keep you healthy and strong!



Recipe Corner

Persimmon Salsa

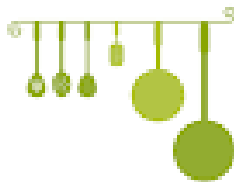
Ingredients:

2 ripe Fuyu persimmons
1 lime
2 scallions, finely chopped
2 Tbsp. ginger
1 tsp. mint leaves
salt
crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

Directions:

1. Dice persimmons into cubes.
2. Juice lime and make zest using a fine grater.
3. Place all ingredients into a bowl.

Add salt and lime juice as needed.



Where It's From

Persimmons are native to China and different varieties were spread all over the world, to Southeast Asia, Africa, the Middle East and North America. They are so popular in Japan that it is the national fruit!

In California, persimmons were introduced by Chinese immigrants in the mid-1800s and they are now grown state-wide, mostly in the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys. However, this month's fuyu persimmon, is from a Sebastopol family-run farm, Gabriel Farm.

Persimmon/Persimo

Suggested Literature

The Tiger and the Dried Persimmon
by Janie Jaehyun Park

The Land of the Dragon and other Korean Stories
by Gillian McClure

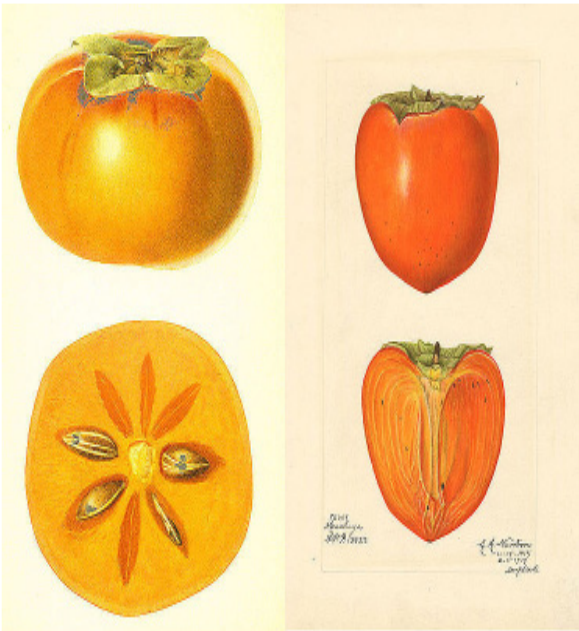
Folktales from the Japanese Countryside
by Fran Stallings, Harold Wright, and Miki Sakurai

Student Sleuths

1. Some persimmon varieties contain tannins, which cause astringency. What are tannins? What are other sources of tannins?
2. Persimmons are high in antioxidants. What are antioxidants and what do they do for the body?
3. What is beta-carotene? Describe how beta-carotene is converted to vitamin A in the body.
4. Create a presentation on several fruits and vegetables from different parts of the plant we eat (roots, seeds, leaves, fruits, etc.) List the key nutrients found in each item and the health benefits of these nutrients.
5. What are the top three persimmon-producing counties in California? Locate on a map. When do these regions harvest persimmons? What similarities are there between these counties (e.g., climate, location, geography)?

California Grown

- In 2004, California produced 99 percent of the *D. kaki* crop in the United States.
- Tulare and Fresno counties produce 53 percent of the state's total production
- Other major persimmon-producing regions include Orange, Riverside, and San Diego counties. A small percentage is grown in Sutter and Placer counties.
- Persimmons reach their peak in popularity during the first half of the 20th century. Initially, the Hachiya was the preferred variety, but production declined and has since been surpassed by the Fuyu, which is non-astringent and can be eaten any time.
- They are best eaten in season, which is October -- December.



Handling Tips

- Store at either room temperature for 3 weeks or refrigerated up to 2 months. Rinse the fruit before cutting and serving.
- Fuyus are best eaten when skin is firm and can be eaten raw. Eat them like an apple, and keep the skin on as fiber and many nutrients are contained in the skin!
- The other main variety, the Hachiya, must be very soft, almost like a mushy pudding before they are edible because they are very astringent if unripe! variety must be eaten when the fruit is extremely soft and mushy as they are otherwise very astringent

Fun facts

- During the Civil War, southern families roasted and boiled persimmon seeds to make a coffee-like drink!
- Most persimmon trees are either male or female, but there are some trees with both male and female flowers.
- Tea can be made from fresh or dried persimmon leaves due to the high tannin content in the leaves.

