



Bella Vita

MEDITERRANEAN TASTE

Kiwi Fruits (Actinidia)



Kiwi Fruits

Italy, the world's largest Kiwi producer, boasts a production of 410'000 tons in 2004. The Hayward variety is the most common, constituting 95-percent of crops. Other varieties include the SummerKiwi, KiwiGold, Bruno, Koryoku and Top Star.

Also known as the Chinese Gooseberry, Kiwi is a member of the berry family. The oval, ovoid or oblong fruit grows up to 2 1/2-inches. It is easily recognizable by its russet-brown skin, densely covered with short, stiff brown hairs. The flesh, firm until fully ripe, is usually glistening, bright green, but can also be yellow, brownish or off-white. Tiny, flavorless blackish seeds are scattered between fine pale lines that radiate from its white succulent center. When ripe, Kiwi has a sweet-tart, sometimes slightly acidic flavor. Kiwi are harvested mature but unripe, and they are ready to eat when they yield to gentle pressure.



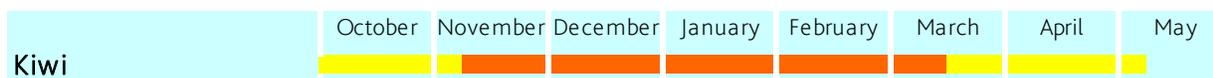
In Italy, Kiwi is found in all regions, but the main growing areas are Latium, Calabria, Emilia-Romagna, Piedmont and Abruzzo. Plants require a long growing season—at least 240 frost-free days that are not affected by late winter or early autumn freezes. In addition to the frost free days the kiwi in the northern hemisphere needs a high temperature range between day and night in the months of September and October, typical climate of regions with Mediterranean climate. This allows the kiwi to develop a higher brix sugar level and consequently to be sweeter. When fully dormant, kiwi can withstand temperatures to about 10° F. A sudden plunge in temperature, however, may cause trunk splitting and subsequent damage to the vine. Plants must acclimate to cold slowly. Late winter freezing temperatures will kill any exposed buds, which limits the areas adaptable for growing Kiwi.



Kiwi vines are trained to grow on either T-bar or Pergola trellis systems. This helps plants get enough light and air for optimal fruit quality. Fruit grown on the T-bar trellis system hangs down along the sides, like table grapes. Kiwi grown on Pergola trellises grows overhead. Vines can grow as much as 15-feet high. Plants bud in early spring, and bloom in late spring.

Kiwi flowers rely on bee pollination, and between two and five beehives are designated per acre of orchard. Both male and female plants are required for fruiting, with a ratio of one male plant for every eight female plants for proper pollination.

Kiwi Fruit - Commercialization periods in Italy



Disclaimer: The information provided is thought as general information about the produce. Average countings, weights and dimensions may vary throughout the harvesting season and the production areas.

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The Italian Trade Commission requires that Kiwi designated for export reach at least an 8-percent brix sugar level (*is this the same as the "brix" level? YES! If so, it should read "brix sugar level."), as compared to the state of California's required 5-percent. It is no wonder Italian Kiwi stands out as superior in the world. Besides eaten fresh, Kiwi is used as an ingredient in appetizers, main courses, fruit salads, tarts, and other recipes. It is also processed into juice, syrup, preserves and jams. Kiwi cannot be blended with yogurt, however, because it contains an enzyme that conflicts with the yogurt process.

History and Background

The history of the Kiwi Fruit began in the Yangtze River valley in China, where it was called "Yang-tao". The small, brown, fuzzy fruit grew wild on vines that wrapped around trees. Actinidia was introduced in New Zealand the beginning of the century and only in the 60's it reached California

Until the sixties Kiwi Fruits were called Chinese Gooseberries. It was not until New Zealand's "Chinese Gooseberries" were first shipped to the United States in the 70's, that they were re-named "Kiwi Fruit" after New Zealand's national bird the "Kiwi."

Nutritional Information

The Kiwi Fruit has a strong thirst-quenching, refreshing, diuretic and depurative action. Based on the serving size of two medium Kiwi Fruit, there is no registered cholesterol or sodium and only one gram of total fat. This fruit is also a great source of Vitamin C, two Kiwi Fruits provide 240% of the daily value.

In a large part due to its high content of Vitamin C, it also reinforces the body's natural defenses and protects the vascular walls.

Kiwi Fruit is also a good source of fiber. Just one Kiwi Fruit has 16% of the fiber we need every day.

In addition to fiber, Kiwi Fruit is a good source of Vitamin E and potassium. That's because one serving of Kiwi Fruit has 14% of the Potassium and 10% of the Vitamin E our bodies need every day for good health.

Alternative Uses:

In cosmetics, the pulp is used for nourishing packs, while the juice is an excellent cleansing agent and is used as an ingredient in skin solutions.

Serving Tips

Kiwi Fruit comes with its own serving cup, just cut them in half through the middle and scoop out each half with a spoon.

Garnish breakfast, lunch, and dinner entrees with Kiwi Fruit slices or wedges.

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