

Ingredient of the Month

Tangerine

TANGERINES are a group of citrus fruit consisting of hybrids of mandarin oranges. Tangerines are small and imperfectly rounded with flatter tops and bottoms. The peel is reddish-orange, thin and pebbly. Once the skin is torn, it slides easily off the segmented fruit. The taste of a tangerine is sweeter and less acidic than that of an orange. The fruit prefers a warm, humid climate to grow. Tangerine season lasts from autumn to spring.

Tangerines had been cultivated in China and Japan for over three millennia. However, the name "tangerine" did not originate until the nineteenth century. The name is based on the port city of Tangier, Morocco, where the fruit was first shipped to Europe and the United States. Major Atway first brought the fruit over to the Americas and cultivated it in Palatka, Florida. He sold his groves to N.H. Moragne in 1843, giving the Moragne tangerine the other part of its name.

Tangerines are quite nutritious. They are rich in vitamin C, as well as fiber and folic acid. Research shows that eating fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin C reduces your risk of heart disease and stroke. Tangerines and Mandarin Oranges have very similar nutritional values.



Healthy Ingredient Contribution

Values from NutritionData.com based on tangerines, (mandarin oranges), raw, 1 cup sections (195g)

VITAMIN C: One serving of tangerines provides 87% of the daily-recommended levels of vitamin C. Research shows a correlation between vitamin C consumption and developed immunity against infectious agents. Consuming vitamin C also reduces colds and coughing.

VITAMIN A: One serving of tangerines contains 27% of the daily recommended value of vitamin A. This vitamin is essential for vision, and it helps to maintain healthy mucus membranes and skin. Research shows that significant consumption of vitamin A provides protection from lung and oral cavity cancers.

DIETARY FIBER: Tangerines contain 14% of the daily recommended value of dietary fiber. Soluble fibers help control weight by making the stomach feel full. Insoluble fibers add bulk to the diet and help prevent constipation.

POTASSIUM: One serving of tangerines provides 8% of the daily recommended value of potassium. Potassium helps to control blood pressure and heart rate. It is also important in neuron functioning.

VITAMIN B6: One serving of tangerines offers 8% percent of the daily recommended value of vitamin B6, which is important in cognitive functions and building new red blood cells.

THIAMIN: Thiamine, or vitamin B1, plays an important role in improving the cardiovascular function of the body. It helps in the conversion of carbohydrates into glucose, which is then used to produce energy. One serving of tangerines provide 8% of the daily recommended value of thiamine.

TYPES AND VARIETIES

Since we refer to most mandarin orange hybrids as “tangerines” there are a great variety of fruit with different genetic makeup under that same category. Common varieties of tangerine include Dancy, Fairchild, and Sunburst. While Satsumas and Clementines are technically members of the tangerine family, they are often marketed under a separate category.

In fact, many tangerines are simply labeled as mandarins themselves. According to the Florida Department of Citrus standards, the market classification of “mandarin” can be interchangeable with “tangerine” provided the “mandarin” is seedless or low-seeded and meets the maturity standards.

There are tangerine hybrids as well. Tangors are a cross between tangerines and sweet oranges and tend to be large and similar to oranges in flavor. Common varieties of tangors include honey murcott, ortanique and temple. Tangelos are hybrids of tangerines/mandarin oranges with either a grapefruit or pummelo. They are noted for their juiciness and mildly sweet flavor. Common varieties of tangelos include minneloa, orlando and honeybell.

SELECTING AND STORING

- Ripe tangerines are heavier and deep in color. They are firm to slightly soft to the touch.
- Make sure tangerines stay chilled and keep them out of direct sunlight
- Rinse tangerines off under cold water and dry them completely with a cotton towel.
- Tangerines will keep at room temperature for about one week.

INTERESTING FACTS

- They are sometimes called “easy peelers.”
- China produces more tangerines than any other country
- Tangerines of all types are often part of Chinese New Year celebrations. They are considered symbols of happiness and prosperity, and are eaten and displayed in residences, stores, and offices around the holiday.
- The oil from the skin of a tangerine is actually a signature ingredient in several orange liqueurs.

CULINARY USES

- Use tangerine juice in sauces, dressings, sorbet, and marmalades.
- Replace lemon juice and zest for tangerine in any curd, pie or tart recipe.
- Add grated tangerine peel to brownies, cheesecake, or custard.
- Slice tangerine and roast with chicken, goose, or salmon.
- Tangerines make a great addition to any citrus salad.

