Strawberries are one of the healthiest fruits you can eat. They are a great source of Vitamin C. One serving of just eight strawberries will provide 140% of the US Recommended Daily Allowance of Vitamin C.

In a recent study, strawberries ranked second among the top ten fruits in antioxidant capacity (TAC), which is one reason why they may help prevent cancer and heart disease.

Storage and Handling:
Warm temperatures cause strawberries to brown. The pigment that makes them red is heat sensitive, and it starts to break down when exposed to heat. Strawberries also lose Vitamin C when they brown, or are cooked.

Store unwashed berries loosely covered with plastic wrap in the coldest part of your refrigerator for 2-3 days at most. Do not wash berries until you are ready to use them. Place berries in a colander and rinse under cold water.

After washing, remove the green cap without removing any of the fruit. Enjoy!

The Berry Best Pick:
Select bright red berries with their caps intact. Smaller berries are usually sweeter and more flavorful. Avoid soft, moldy and/or shriveled berries. The unripe berries will not ripen after being picked. Remember that strawberries will mold quickly at room temperature and can only last a few days in the refrigerator. They taste the best if eaten on the same day they are picked.

The Naming of Strawberries:
The name strawberry came about easily because straw was used freely to mulch the plants during the winter, a practice that discourages weeds and lifts the berries up from the soil. When it came time to harvest the berries, children would pick them and string them on a blade of straw. At the London market the children would sell "Straws of Berries."

Spinach & Strawberry Salad
- 2 bunches spinach, rinsed and torn into bite-size pieces
- 4 cups sliced strawberries
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon poppy seeds

In a large bowl, toss together spinach and strawberries. In a separate bowl whisk together oil, vinegar, sugar, paprika, sesame and poppy seeds. Pour over spinach and strawberries, just before serving.

BERRY IOWA:
- According to the 2001 study done by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, "Growers receive nearly $3.5 million in gross income as a result of strawberry production in Iowa."
- Strawberry Point, Iowa is home to the “World’s Largest Strawberry” which sits atop city hall, standing 15 feet high and 12 feet wide and weighing in at 1,430 pounds.
- Iowa varieties include Tristar, Earliglow, Jewel, and Honeoye.
- Fifty-four strawberry growers from 37 counties in Iowa have enrolled in the Fruit and Vegetable Growers Directory. Check out our website at: http://www.iowaagriculture.gov to view the directory.
Did you know that strawberries are:

- The only fruit with seeds on the outside
- The first fruit to ripen in the spring
- A member of the rose family
- Consumed by 94% of all US households
- A symbol of perfection and righteousness
- A fruit that has on average of 200 seeds
- The favorite fruit of 53% of all 7-9 year olds

- Grown in all 50 of the United States, every providence of Canada, and all over parts of Europe.
- Used topically to help whiten teeth, reduce blemishes and help skin look younger.
- One of the world’s most popular fruits, and can be found in jams, jellies, ice cream, pies, cakes, shakes, salads, dipped in chocolate, liquors and many other culinary treats.

A BERRY GOOD IDEA!

CREAMY STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKES

Prep Time: 10 min
Total Time: 10 min
Makes: 2 Servings, one shortcake each

2 Tbsp. Neufchatel Cheese, 1/3 Less Fat than Cream Cheese (softened)
1 Tbsp. strawberry preserves
2 individual sponge cake shells
3/4 c. sliced strawberries
2 Tbsp. thawed Whipped Topping

COMBINE: Neufchatel cheese and preserves: spoon evenly over cake shells. Top with Strawberries, and then add some whipped topping.

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Easy Strawberry Jam

2 cups of strawberries capped and cut up
1 1/2 cups of sugar
2 teaspoons of pectin

Pour the sugar over the berries and let sit for 10 minutes. Mash well. Stir in Pectin. Microwave high for 4 minutes. Then, microwave medium for 6 minutes. Pour in hot glasses or cups. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate. Keeps for 2-3 months in fridge.

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