

# CAULIFLOWER



The name cauliflower means "cabbage flower," coming from the Latin *caulis* (stalk) and *floris* (flower).

In 2005, Yuma County producers grew over 5,500 acres of cauliflower with a farmgate value of \$50 million.

As cauliflower plants are larger than broccoli plants at maturity, producers plant a single seed line of cauliflower per bed. There are 2 seed lines per broccoli bed.

Filling, high in fiber, and low in calories, cauliflower is a great food for reducing your waistline. Weighing in at only 25 calories, a cup of florets contains 100% of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) for vitamin C, one-third of the RDA for folate, and is a good source of Vitamin A, potassium and Vitamin B6.

Cauliflower contains bioflavonoids and other chemicals that protect against cancer.

To retain the flavor of cauliflower and minimize nutrient loss, cook it rapidly by boiling or steaming. Overcooking cauliflower diminishes the nutrients significantly. Food writer Mark Bittman quoted a Cornell University study, stating that 100 grams of cauliflower had 55 mg of vitamin C after boiling, 70 after steaming, and 82 after being cooked in the microwave oven.

In its early stages of growth, cauliflower resembles broccoli, which is its closest relative. While broccoli opens outward to sprout bunches of green florets, cauliflower forms a compact head of undeveloped white flower buds.

The heavy green leaves that surround the head protect the flower buds from the sunlight. The lack of exposure to sunlight does not allow chlorophyll to develop. Therefore, color is not produced, and the head remains a white color.

Cauliflower is a cruciferous vegetable being studied for its role in reducing cancer risk.

There are two types of "cauliflower" on the market today. The creamy white florets are more abundant in the United States but some markets sell a recently developed cauliflower-broccoli hybrid or "broccoflower." This type of cauliflower has a green curd and resembles broccoli. The green variety is less dense than the white, cooks more quickly, and has a milder taste.

When selecting cauliflower, look for heads that are white or creamy white, firm, compact, and heavy for their size. There should not be any speckling of discoloration on the head or leaves. Avoid cauliflower with brown patches.

A medium-size head, that is 6 inches in diameter and weighs about 2 pounds, will serve 4 to 6 people.

Cauliflower will keep for up to five days if stored in the crisper section of the refrigerator. If the head is not purchased wrapped, store it in an open or perforated plastic bag. Keep the head stem-side up to prevent moisture from collecting on it. For the best flavor, cau-

liflower should be eaten as soon as possible. Precut florets do not keep well, and they are best when eaten within a day of purchase.

Cauliflower can be served cooked or raw. Peel off stem leaves. Turn cauliflower upside down. Cut the stem just above where the florets join together. Separate the florets into equal sized pieces.

Cauliflower may turn yellow in alkaline water. For whiter cauliflower, add a tablespoon of milk or lemon juice to the water. Do not cook cauliflower in aluminum or iron pots. The chemical compounds in cauliflower will react with the aluminum and turn the vegetable yellow. While in an iron pot, it will turn a brown or blue-green color.

Raw florets make a crunchy, nutritious appetizer with low-fat dressing or dip. Add fresh or leftover cauliflower to soups or stews.

Cauliflowers are selected for size and compactness of the head or curd. Mature curds are at least 6 inches in diameter. Loose or protruding floral parts, creating a 'ricy' appearance, are a sign of overmaturity. Cauliflower is packaged after being closely trimmed into single layer cartons of 12 to 24 heads, with 12's most common.

Cauliflower is primarily marketed with closely trimmed leaves and wrapped with perforated film providing four to six 1/4-inch holes per head to allow adequate ventilation.

A firm and compact head of white to cream white curds surrounded by a crown of well-trimmed, turgid green leaves indicates a cauliflower of high quality.

A native of Asia, the cauliflower was once described as resembling a bridal bouquet. The Romans grew cauliflower but we know little about how they prepared it.

Asian Indians eat cauliflower seasoned with curry spices.

With the leaves attached, Cauliflower will last 2 weeks, without the leaves only a few days.

Those with thyroid problems should avoid eating large amounts of cabbage or cauliflower. They both interfere with the body's absorption of iodine, needed by the thyroid gland.

Stir cooked cauliflower into mashed potatoes to enhance their texture.

Cabbage family vegetables include cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale and Bok Choy.

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