

Seasonal Eating
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Holy Guacamole!
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Mexican food is probably my favorite ethnic cuisine. I enjoy making and eating enchiladas and chile rellenos as well as tamales and tacos. And for serving with these dishes, guacamole is the king of toppings. Just give me a bowl of guacamole and I'm happy.

Of course avocados are the base of guacamole, with their creamy texture and mellow flavor. Did you know that an avocado is actually a berry? It is full of monounsaturated fat which is a healthy fat along with vitamins E and K, potassium and fiber.

There are many types of avocados with Hass being the most common variety with its dark, bumpy skin. For ripe, ready to use avocados, look for ones that are firm but give slightly when pressed. If they are hard, store at room temperature for a few days until ripe and then refrigerate for up to 5 days.

Slices of avocado make a great topping for salads or tacos or sandwiches. They can also be blended into smoothies with their rich and creamy texture. Or they can be mashed and spread on toast or turned into guacamole.

The key to a great guacamole is the balance of avocado, salt and lime or lemon juice. The juice helps keep the mixture green and fresh looking and adds a tangy zip and the salt brings out the flavor. The avocado on its own will turn brown when exposed to air so add some citrus and when storing, be sure to press the wrap directly onto the surface of the guacamole. Other flavorings and herbs can be added to your preference and include things like ground cumin, cilantro, garlic, onion, salsa, hot sauce or tomato.

I use what I call a strawberry cutter to mash my avocado. It is a metal ring with a serrated blade around the bottom edge with a handle. If you don't have that, you can use a pastry blender, potato masher or even a fork to create the texture you desire. Some people want it completely smooth while others like it on the chunky side—I'm somewhere in the middle. Stir in your choice of seasonings and you are ready to go.

So whip up a bowl of guacamole to enjoy with your next Mexican meal or just a bowl of tortilla chips for a snack. Check out the Bedford County Farmer's Market opening on Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. (one hour later than last year) at the Celebration Pavilion in front of Cooper Arena starting May 7. For more information and recipes check out the Seasonal Eating page at bedford.tennessee.edu.

Guacamole

3 avocados
2 tablespoons lemon juice or lime juice
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/8 teaspoon ground cumin



1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon onion powder
1/4 cup cilantro leaves, chopped
10 cherry tomatoes, chopped

Cut the avocados in half lengthwise and remove the pit with a spoon. Scrape the flesh from the skin with the spoon into a medium bowl. Mash the avocado to the desired texture. Add lemon juice, salt, cumin, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, cilantro and tomatoes. Stir to mix. Serve immediately or cover with plastic wrap on the surface and refrigerate. Serve as a topping or with chips.