

# PRODUCE TALK

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## Item of the Week: PINEAPPLES

Pineapples have exceptional juiciness and a vibrant tropical flavor that balances the tastes of sweet and tart. They are second only to bananas as America's favorite tropical fruit. Although the season for pineapple runs from March through June, they are available year-round in local markets.

Pineapples are a composite of many flowers whose individual fruitlets fuse together around a central core. Each fruitlet can be identified by an "eye," the rough spiny marking on the pineapple's surface. Pineapples have a wide cylindrical shape, a scaly green, brown or yellow skin and a regal crown of spiny, blue-green leaves and fibrous yellow flesh. The area closer to the base of the fruit has more sugar content and therefore a sweeter taste and more tender texture.



### Health Benefits

- **Potential Anti-Inflammatory and Digestive Benefits of Pineapple**

Bromelain is a complex mixture of substances that can be extracted from the stem and core fruit of the pineapple. Among dozens of components known to exist in this crude extract, the best studied components are a group of protein-digesting enzymes (called cysteine proteinases). Originally, researchers believed that these enzymes provided the key health benefits found in bromelain, a popular dietary supplement containing these pineapple extracts. In addition, researchers believed that these benefits were primarily limited to help with digestion in the intestinal tract. However, further studies have shown that bromelain has a wide variety of health benefits, and that many of these benefits may not be related to the different enzymes found in this extract. Excessive inflammation, excessive coagulation of the blood, and certain types of tumor growth may all be reduced by therapeutic doses of bromelain when taken as a dietary supplement. Studies are not available, however, to show these same potential benefits in relationship to normal intake of pineapple within a normal meal plan.

Bromelain extracts can be obtained from both the fruit core and stems of pineapple. Potentially important chemical differences appear to exist between extracts obtained from the stem versus the core fruit. However, the practical relevance of these differences is not presently understood. Most of the laboratory research on bromelain has been conducted using stem-based extracts, however.

Although healthcare practitioners have reported improved digestion in their patients with an increase in pineapple as their "fruit of choice" within a meal plan, we haven't seen published studies that document specific changes in digestion following consumption of the fruit (versus supplementation with the purified extract. However, we suspect that the core fruit will eventually turn out to show some unique health-supportive properties, including possible digestion-related and anti-inflammatory benefits.

- **Antioxidant Protection and Immune Support of Pineapple**

Vitamin C is the body's primary water-soluble antioxidant, defending all aqueous areas of the body against free radicals that attack and damage normal cells. Free radicals have been shown to promote the artery

plaque build-up of atherosclerosis and diabetic heart disease, cause the airway spasm that leads to asthma attacks, damage the cells of the colon so they become colon cancer cells, and contribute to the joint pain and disability seen in osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. This would explain why diets rich in vitamin C have been shown to be useful for preventing or reducing the severity of all of these conditions. In addition, vitamin C is vital for the proper function of the immune system, making it a nutrient to turn to for the prevention of recurrent ear infections, colds, and flu.

- **Pineapple's Manganese and Thiamin (Vitamin B1) for Energy Production and Antioxidant Defenses**  
Pineapple is an excellent source the trace mineral manganese, which is an essential cofactor in a number of enzymes important in energy production and antioxidant defenses. For example, the key oxidative enzyme superoxide dismutase, which disarms free radicals produced within the mitochondria (the energy production factories within our cells), requires manganese. In addition to manganese, pineapple is a good source of thiamin, a B vitamin that acts as a cofactor in enzymatic reactions central to energy production.
- **Pineapple's Potential Protection against Macular Degeneration**  
Your mother may have told you carrots would keep your eyes bright as a child, but as an adult, it looks like fruit is even more important for keeping your sight. Data reported in a study published in the Archives of Ophthalmology indicates that eating 3 or more servings of fruit per day may lower your risk of age-related macular degeneration (ARMD), the primary cause of vision loss in older adults, by 36%, compared to persons who consume less than 1.5 servings of fruit daily.

## How to Select and Store

Look for pineapples that are heavy for their size. While larger pineapples will have a greater proportion of edible flesh, there is usually no difference in quality between a small and large size pineapple. Pineapples should be free of soft spots, bruises and darkened "eyes," all of which may indicate that the pineapple is past its prime. Pineapple stops ripening as soon as it is picked, so choose fruit with a fragrant sweet smell at the stem end. Avoid pineapple that smells musty, sour or fermented.

Pineapple can be left at room temperature for one or two days before serving. While this process will not make the fruit any sweeter, it will help it to become softer and more juicy. Yet, as they are very perishable, you should still watch them closely during this period to ensure that they do not spoil. After two days, if you are still not ready to consume the pineapple, you should wrap it in a plastic bag and store it in the refrigerator where it will keep for a maximum of three to five days.

Pineapple that has been cut up should be stored in the refrigerator in an airtight container. It will stay fresher and retain more taste and juiciness if you also place some liquid, preferably some juice from the pineapple, in the container. Although pineapple can be frozen, this process greatly affects its flavor.

## Recipe (Source: Allrecipes.com)

### CHICKEN AND PINEAPPLE

#### Ingredients:

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 6 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves    | 1 1/2 cups water       |
| 1 pinch poultry seasoning                     | 2 cups yellow rice mix |
| 1 pinch salt and ground black pepper          | 1 teaspoon soy sauce   |
| 2 (15 ounce) cans pineapple chunks, undrained |                        |



#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Season chicken breasts with poultry seasoning, salt, and black pepper.
2. Combine water, yellow rice mix, and soy sauce in a baking dish. Arrange chicken over rice and pour pineapples and juice over chicken.
3. Bake in the preheated oven until chicken breasts are no longer pink in the center and rice is tender, about 45 minutes. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the chicken should read at least 165 degrees F (74 degrees C).

## Western Vegetables

**ARTICHOKES:** Artichoke volumes are winding down until Mexico begins harvesting. Although Oxnard has begun harvest, we are not going to see significant numbers for another week or so.

**AVOCADOS:** Good supply; market continues to drop.

**BROCCOLI:** The broccoli market remains to have a wide range throughout the industry. As we hit the holiday, product holds through with strong quality and great volume.

**CAULIFLOWER:** Market has remained steady with good quality as we drive into the holiday.

**CELERY:** Large volumes have been filling Thanksgiving requirements. Prorates have started as we keep up with the demand. Product is becoming extremely tight as Salinas ends.

**LETTUCE:** The mixed leaf market remains steady. Outside of minor quality issues varying due to weather, all varieties of lettuce are coming in with great quality.

## Value-Added

The transition from Salinas, California to the desert growing region for the winter is almost complete with most shippers and processors sourcing their raw product from new fields. Raw product supplies are good with only a few shortages. Organic butter lettuce and organic Romaine hearts are both in limited supply but should improve in 2-3 weeks.

## Southern Vegetables

**CABBAGE:** Still out of Michael's farm until about the middle of November. Local product is finished; cabbage now being shipped from the south.

**CORN:** Coming out of the south. Market extremely high priced and product scare due to skip in Florida.

**GREENS:** Michigan greens finished; product now being harvested in Georgia.

**PEPPERS:** Coming out of Georgia and also out of Mexico. Market is on the increase.

**POTATOES:** Markets are mostly steady; supplies continue to improve. Quality continues to improve on Idaho Russets.

**YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH:** Price is down; mostly coming out of Mexico.

## Organics

**BEETS:** Beets still remain a challenge due to curly top virus that impacts the plant leaves and bulb. Supplies will be limited for a few more weeks until growers move to lower elevation new fields that should be clean.

**BROCCOLI:** Due to weather issues (heat) in growing regions in the west, we are seeing suppliers limit available supply driving market cost up. There will be discoloration to the tops as heat will cause a darker head on the broccoli.

**BUNCH CARROTS:** Supply has rebounded quite well and we are seeing much better quality.

**CABBAGE:** Regional supply has really come on from Ohio and other surrounding areas. Great time for promotion!

**CAULIFLOWER:** Supplies are starting to improve and the quality is good. Market has gradually decreased, high temperatures out west should not affect supply.

**CELERY:** Supply is getting better as we have moved up in to California regions. Pricing will remain stable for the next 2-3 weeks as we move closer to Thanksgiving.

**CUCUMBERS:** Supply is looking great right now as Florida product is coming on in the next couple weeks.

**GREEN PEPPERS:** Steady supplies regionally with good quality.

**KALES:** Great supplies of kale currently; plenty of regional product from all over the Midwest available. We are sourcing from North Carolina, Ohio and other regions. Product is in great supply and pricing is very promotable.

**LETTUCES:** Inbound quality on leafs from the west have rebounded in quality and we are seeing much better supply. Canadian and regional supply has finished up.

**RADISHES:** Supplies are improving with better quality tops. Very little damage now to the tops and they look much cleaner than they have been.

**YELLOW SQUASH & ZUCCHINI:** Supply has been very good out of Ohio on the zucchini with yellow being much more limited.

## Asparagus

Good supplies overall out of Mexico and Peru have markets dipping for after Thanksgiving business. As we move into December, Mexican volume will begin to tail off and market will move upward. Organic supply back on the rise as volume is dripping.

## Fruit

**APPLES:** Michigan and Washington apples are still in great supply. The Rockit apple is a great new conventional item that we carry. The Little Snapper apples from Stemilt are back as well. The Little Snappers are organic; we are currently carrying Fuji, Pink Lady and Gala.

**BLACKBERRIES:** Good volume out of new regions in Mexico; quality remains average but has improved. Bigger pack pints will be coming available as the quality fruit will allow packing. Organics blackberries also ramping up for the month of December and deals could be had.

**BLUEBERRIES:** The market has taken a dramatic shift and continues to be strong as product is shifting to arrive via ship but due to some of the harvest delays in Chile that was hit by rain problems, product has been delayed hitting into ports causing demand to exceed supply situation until volume reappears in mid-December. Once supplies are in, the market will decrease dramatically and will be a great time to promote. Organic supplies are on the increase and next few weeks will give opportunity to promote.

**CANTALOUPE & HONEYDEWS:** Market strong out of Mexico and Arizona with typical green cast to outer netting of cantaloupes but brix levels inside high and good eating quality. Move to off shore cantaloupe season has begun. Organic supplies steady but high priced. Honeydews reasonable on both 5 and 6ct sizes.

**CHERRIES:** Better supplies and markets are decreasing. As December moves in, 3 week window to promote cherries for Holidays. New crop Rainiers will also be available come late next week.

**CITRUS:** The California navel orange season has begun; early quality is good. Supplies are starting out light but will continue to improve in the weeks to come. Florida grapefruit and tangerines are available; early quality is good.

**CLEMENTINES:** New crop Spanish and Moroccan clementines getting into full swing; quality looks outstanding. California harvest is ramping up and many options will be available to promote great eating clementines for the holiday season. 10/3# bags are most popular retail size but still good supplies of 5# boxes will be available.

**GRAPES:** Latter part of the California domestic grape season but still good solid grapes available. Some of the newer varieties of green and white seedless grapes are great size and eat well. Outstanding varieties on reds; Holidays are still moving along, but market increasing and quality is average. The markets are starting to move upward and it'll continue as we move into December. Organics all finished except for limited Reds.

**PINEAPPLES:** Good supply; good deals on organic pineapple in the coming weeks.

**POMEGRANATES:** A lot of issues with pomegranates. The heatwave that hit California earlier in the season while they were getting ready for the harvest, has caused some damage to the product. Market will remain strong.

**RASPBERRIES:** Supply has been affected by delayed inbounds on the east coast leaving us to move out west on orders. Supply should bounce back to loading in the east.

**STRAWBERRIES:** With the increased temperatures in growing regions, we are starting to see loading and available supply slow down. Inbound quality will be an issue as with higher temperatures will bring increased bruising and sun-scolld.

## **Tropical Fruit**

**BABY FRENCH BEANS:** Good supplies.

**KIWI:** Steady supplies as we move into the Italian deal.

**LIMES:** Prices has firmed up and increased on some sizes with better demand this week. Size 200 and large remained limited. Overall quality is very nice.

**MANGOES:** Product is beginning to tighten as the transition to Ecuador begins; should see relief in the coming weeks.

**MARIDOL PAPAYAS/ GOLD PAPAYAS:** Stable market; excellent quality on Caribbean Red Maridol papayas and Brazil Gold.

**SUGAR SNAP PEAS/SNO PEAS:** Supplies improved; markets easing back down.

## **Merchandising Tips**

As we move past Thanksgiving and look toward Christmas, it's time to plan your fruit basket display. Choose an area up front or in a high-traffic area. Decorate your display with Christmas decorations, poinsettias and other seasonal floral items. Keep a good selection of fresh fruit baskets on display at all times. Keep some order forms out for customers to fill out and get their basket ordered. Be sure to list the price of each size of basket and what fruit comes in each one. Make sure you have taken an inventory of what supplies (baskets, bows, wrap and tissue paper) you have on hand and order more now if you need anything. Other various gift baskets have proven to be a big hit in recent years. These could contain, candy, nuts, wine and unique foods. Keep your displays fresh and full and watch your sales soar!

## CROSSET NEW ITEM & DELETION SHEET

W/B: 12/3/17

ITEM #	NEW ITEMS	SIZE
104320	Spicy Avocado Vegy Dip	6/14oz
104714	Scirachi Ranch Vegy Dip	6/14oz
68120	CV Rainier Cherries	11#
64100	OG Maradol Papayas	12/23#
	<b>DELETIONS</b>	
63031	Lemon peel	12/4oz
63035	Candied Red Cherry	12/8oz
63042	Red Cherry	12/4oz
63044	Fruit Cake Mix	12/8oz
205	Cantaloupes	6ct
1220	Honey Kiss Melons	9ct
69204	OG white grapes	19#
69200	OG White Grapes -FM	19#