

MAY – Featured Fruit: STRAWBERRY



WASH. BITE.



(how easy is that?)



Hi, we're **Stan and Sarah Strawberry.**<sup>1</sup>

Strawberries are the most popular berry in the United States. Although they are available year-round, spring and summer always makes us think about eating juicy, sweet strawberries. That's because strawberries grow locally in many areas of the country in the spring and summer.

## Facts

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There are 200 tiny seeds in every strawberry!

## History

Strawberries have a history that goes back over 2200 years. Strawberries grew wild in Italy as long ago as 234 B.C.

Wild strawberries were discovered in Virginia by the first Europeans when their ships landed there in 1588.

Early settlers in Massachusetts enjoyed eating strawberries grown by local American Indians who cultivated strawberries as early as 1643.

After 1860, strawberries were widely grown in many parts of the country.

Strawberries have been grown in California since the early 1900'.

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Source: <sup>1</sup>Dole 5 A Day. [www.dole5aday.com](http://www.dole5aday.com)

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Today, over 25,000 acres of strawberries are planted each year in California and the state produces over 80 percent of the strawberries grown in the United States.

On average, each acre produces about 21 tons of strawberries and the state produces one billion pounds of strawberries a year! WOW, that's a lot of strawberries!

## Where Grown

Most strawberries brought into the United States come from Mexico, but they might come from as far away as New Zealand.

In the United States, California grows the most strawberries for the marketplace. Other top producing states include Florida and Oregon.

## Types

There are more than 600 different varieties of strawberries, each with its own look and characteristics. Strawberries vary in size, shape, and color (some are off-white and yellowish).

The most common American variety is the result of several centuries of cross breeding of the wild Virginia strawberry (North American's main native strawberry) and a Chilean variety. It is probably today's most hardy berry and is able to withstand both storage and shipping.

Another variety is the French grown European Alpine strawberry, better known as the "queen of strawberries." This strawberry is tiny and extremely flavorful.

## Nutrients

- High in vitamin C