

Press Release

Onions 101

Tried-and-True Tips on Buying, Cutting and Storing Sweet Onions

SAN FRANCISCO (January 19, 2006)

Because sweet onions sell out quickly, it's a good idea to stock up when you can. Here are simple tips for buying, cutting and storing "sweets."

Buying the Right Sweet Onion

Look for sweet onions that are light golden-brown in color, with a shiny tissue-thin skin and firm, tight, dry necks. (Ordinary storage onions are darker and have a thicker skin.) When cut into, sweet onions should have a creamy white interior. Avoid onions that have soft spots or surface bruises.

Simple Onion Cutting Tips

The bigger and firmer the onion, the easier it will be to cut. Use a sharp knife—a dull knife can slip and will mash rather than slice through the onion. Use a straight-edge chef's knife, if you have one, rather than a serrated knife, for cleaner cuts. Be sure your cutting board is positioned securely on the counter. If necessary, place a damp kitchen towel underneath to keep the board from sliding around. If cutting onions ahead of time, pack them in a plastic zipper-lock freezer bag, squeezing all the air out, then enclose in a second plastic zipper-lock freezer bag, and refrigerate, to keep everything in your fridge from tasting like onions. Use pre-cut onions within 2 days. Save onion trimmings, including the papery brown skin and add to soup stock for golden color, store in a well-sealed plastic zipper-lock freezer bag in your freezer. Visit www.sweetonionsource.com for a pictorial step-by-step guide on various ways to cut onions, including dices, wedges, slices and strips.

Storing Sweet Onions

Sweet onions are high in water and sugar content so they require more care when storing; treat them gently to avoid bruising. Store away from potatoes because they'll absorb water. Generally, sweet onions will keep for 4-6 weeks or longer. Cut onions should be wrapped tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerated. Favorite ways to store "sweets": In the refrigerator: Store in a single layer in the vegetable bin on paper towels. Or, for longer storage, wrap in foil. In pantyhose: Take a leg from a pair of clean, sheer pantyhose, drop an onion into the foot, tie a knot and repeat as necessary. Hang in a cool, dry, well-ventilated area. Cut above the knot when ready to use. On racks or screens: Place on elevated racks or screens, not touching, in a cool area. In the freezer: For long-term storage, sweet onions can be frozen, but their texture changes so frozen onions should be used only for cooking. Chop and place on a cookie sheet and place in the freezer. When frozen, place in freezer containers or bags. To store whole onions, peel, wash, core and freeze in a freezer-proof container or bag. Drying: Chop and dry in the oven, using the lowest setting. Remove when thoroughly dry but not brown. Store at room temperature in airtight containers.