

April showers bring May flowers...this has nothing to do with my subject this month but it came to mind when I was thinking 'April' for this column...you have to be overtired to think like this! 😊

The avocado. One of my favorite foods, it is classified as a fruit. For whatever reason I could never see it as a fruit or a vegetable...it's, well, an avocado. Grown on trees, it falls off before ripening. Unbeknownst to me until just now while looking up some details on the fruit, it has 60 percent more potassium than a banana. And it's great for your skin since it is rich in oils and A and B vitamins. The most commonly known types we see here are from Florida and California. The Florida variety is larger, lighter in color and to me, somewhat bland, where the Californians are smaller, darker and richer in flavor. To be truthful, though, they both have their place on the table. I find our West Coast avocado great for guacamole, fillings and omelet's and the firmer Florida's better for slicing in a salad, stuffing chicken breasts or rolled in sushi. A variety grown in Brazil is even used in milk shakes! China refers to them as 'butter fruit' or Asian Pears. I've made an avocado butter for sandwiches by mashing it with a little salt and pepper and I love it.

When shopping for an avocado of any variety, carefully squeeze it to check its ripeness. It should be somewhat firm, but yield to gentle pressure. Unripe fruit can be ripened at home in a dark place or brown paper bag. Once cut, it will turn brown quickly, so rub it with lemon or lime juice if not using all of it at once. Following are some recipes for this healthy little fruit.

**Avocado and Citrus Salad**  
3 large avocados (ripened)

# The Sailaway Gourmet



by Cathy Smith

Juice of 1 small lemon  
1 large grapefruit  
1 large orange  
Sugar (optional)  
Mint for garnish if desired

Peel the avocados with a stainless steel knife to prevent discoloration. Cut the avocado into quarters and remove the pit. Cut the quarters into thin slices and pour the lemon juice over them. Cut the grapefruit and orange into sections over a large bowl (to collect juices), removing the pith. Carefully blend the avocado and lemon juice with the fruits and sweeten to taste if desired. Spoon into dishes and garnish with mint if desired. Serves 4-6.

**Chicken Breast with Avocado Salsa**  
4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts  
2 tsp canola oil  
2 Tb. lime juice

For the Salsa:  
2 avocados, peeled and pitted  
1/4 cup seedless grapes

1/2 cup cashews, chopped  
1 serrano chile, seeded and minced  
1 Tb. lime juice  
Pita bread, toasted  
Fresh cilantro or parsley, chopped

Season chicken with a little salt and pepper and sauté in hot canola oil over medium heat for 5 minutes, turning once until golden brown. Add 1/4 cup of water and the lime juice to the pan and cover. Reduce heat to low and cook about 2 minutes. Remove chicken from pan and set aside.

To prepare the salsa, dice the avocados and slice the grapes in half. In a bowl combine the avocados, cashews, grapes, chile and lime juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Coarsely chop the chicken and stuff into the pita pockets. Add salsa and garnish with cilantro or parsley. Serves 4.

## Avocado Cream Soup

2-3 avocados  
4 cups of chicken stock  
1/2 cup of sour cream  
1/2 cup of light cream  
\*1 cup of milk or Half & Half can be substituted for the creams  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 tsp. grated onion  
2 tsp. fresh lemon juice

Peel and mash the avocado and run through a food mill or blender to purée. Place in a large bowl and add the chicken stock, creams, salt and pepper and grated onion. Blend well and chill. Just before serving add the lemon juice. Serves 6.

FYI - The Aztecs ate the fruit as an aphrodisiac to become passionate and well, you know...



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