

Table Grapes

Information compiled by the California Table Grape Commission

How Produced – Growing fresh market grapes is a year round job. Growers vigorously prune the vines in the winter. In the spring, buds appear, shoots emerge and grow, cluster florets develop, and flowers begin to bloom when daytime temperatures reach approximately 68°F. As the flowers die, fruit set follicles and tiny green berries appear. These will eventually grow and ripen into mature clusters of grapes. In late spring, the farmers girdle the vines of many varieties, stripping a small ring of bark from the shoots, canes, or trunks. This forces nutrients from the vines and roots into the fruit, resulting in larger berries.

When grape berries achieve the correct size, sugar content, and color, clusters are harvested by hand with special clippers. Harvest usually occurs in late spring to mid-July in the warm desert area of the Coachella Valley. In the San Joaquin Valley, harvest begins in late June and continues through late fall. At harvest, the clusters are trimmed and inspected, packed into shipping boxes, palletized, and transported to a cold storage facility to quickly cool the grapes. Grapes that are not immediately shipped to market are maintained in a controlled climate storage facility between 30°F to 32°F with 90 to 95% relative humidity. This storage process allows consumers to enjoy California table grapes through January.

History – Viticulture, or the science, production and study of grapes, first began in California in the late 1700s when Spanish friars arrived to establish Catholic missions. Because the native grapes were sour and made poor wine, the friars brought over grapes from Europe and planted their own vineyards to make sacramental wine.

In the mid-1800s, prospectors poured into California. They came looking for gold until some discovered that there might be more money in grapes. Shortly after the Gold Rush, California's fledgling agricultural society declared, "Capital put into vineyards would bring greater rewards than... fluming rivers for golden treasures." Their instincts were good. California's warm, dry climate turned out to be ideal for growing grapes. Today, more than 689,000 acres across California are planted with fresh grape, wine, and raisin vineyards.

Varieties – California produced 1.8 billion pounds of table grapes in 2021. To give an idea of the total crop production, the 2021 season of California table grapes supplied an



average of 4.2 pounds per person. There are 80 varieties of table grapes grouped into three color classifications: green, black and red. The numerous varieties enable consumers to have fresh California table grapes from May through January.

Commodity Value – In 2021, the total crop value of fresh grapes in California was 2.14 billion dollars. Typically, 20 to 30% of California's table grapes are exported to countries around the world. The top five export markets by volume include Canada, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Top Producing Counties – California produces 99% of the nation's commercially grown table grapes.

California's table grapes are produced in the Coachella and San Joaquin Valleys, which include Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Riverside, and Tulare counties.

Nutritional Value – Grapes of all colors make a healthy snack. A serving of grapes ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) is just 90 calories, has no fat or cholesterol and virtually no sodium. Grapes are an excellent source of vitamin K, and contain 7% of the recommended daily intake for potassium. Fresh grapes are also a natural source of beneficial antioxidants and other polyphenols. Research shows that grape polyphenols may help maintain a healthy heart. It is recommended that people consume a "rainbow" of naturally colorful, whole fruits and vegetables; eating a variety of fresh grapes helps achieve this goal and is a great start to a healthy lifestyle. Eat them fresh by the bunch, tossed into salads, yogurt, and more. Frozen grapes also make a refreshing snack on a hot day.

For additional information:

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