

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Don't go looking up in the sky for these UFOs, look in the produce section of your grocery store! The UFO peaches are here, and are they delicious! These are the little peaches that look like they got squashed, they're so flat. They're as wide around as a regular peach, but only about as tall as the seed inside is. Some are labeled "flying saucer" peaches because of their flat shape. Give one a try and you'll be ready for more.

Flat peaches have been around for centuries. The story is that they were favorites of ancient Chinese emperors, partly because of their sweetness and partly because of their shape. Supposedly the emperors could eat them without dripping juice into their beards. Most of us don't have to worry about the beard problem, but sweetness is still a great quality.

Unfortunately, along with flat shape and extra sweetness came extra softness. The early varieties of saucer peaches were so soft that they could not be shipped. They bruised too easily. So only people (other than Emperors) who grew them at home or lived next to an orchard could enjoy them.

Another concern was that the saucer peach trees didn't do well in continuously warm climates. Most peaches need a certain amount of winter cold for flowers and fruit to form. With our usually warm winters, Florida doesn't have an ideal climate for raising most varieties of peaches. But we do like to eat them. So University of Florida

researchers started working, trying to develop trees that could tolerate our warm weather and produce fruit that could tolerate being shipped to stores.

They succeeded, and trees became commercially available in 2001. Now the fruit is showing up with more frequency in our grocery stores. Yes, it doesn't look like our usual big, round peach. But don't be put off by the looks. It certainly tastes like a peach, a delicious sweet one!

The nutritional content is not much different from regular round peaches. Because each fruit is smaller, we get less sugar, less carbohydrate, and fewer calories when we eat one. Of course if we use a full cup of chopped peaches we'll still get the same calories no matter which variety we use. But it's easier to enjoy the flavor and still keep the calories under control with one peach when that fruit is smaller.

How do you pick a good peach? Please, don't pinch them! Especially with these new firmer varieties, the UFO and others, softness is not a useful clue. They are grown to be firm when they're ripe, so they can make the trip to your grocery store. Look for color instead. On most peaches look at the area around the stem, not at the nice pink cheeks. The background color, around the stem, should be yellow or whitish, not green. If you see green streaks then the fruit most likely is not ripe enough to finish ripening on your counter.

Once home, keep your peaches on the counter, at about 70° F. At refrigerator temperatures they tend to get brown inside, an injury caused by too cold temperatures. Peaches that are ripe but still firm will be fully ripe in 3-4 days and ready to enjoy.

Here's an easy, no bake recipe for peach pie. If you use sugar-free gelatin you'll reduce the calories significantly. A baked pie crust does a better job of holding the

filling, but you could use a graham cracker crust too. Follow the directions for baking the empty pie crust, and cool it completely before adding the filling. You'll need about 2 pounds of fresh peaches for one pie. Enjoy!

No-Bake Fresh Peach Pie

4 cups fresh peeled and sliced peaches	1 C equivalent low-cal sweetener
1/2 pkg (1/4 C) lemon-flavored gelatin	1/4 C cornstarch
1 C cold water	1 pie crust, baked or crumb

Combine gelatin, cornstarch and sweetener (or sugar) in small saucepan. Slowly stir in cold water until all lumps are dissolved. Cook at medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens slightly and becomes clear. Cool until it just begins to stiffen. Pour about half the mixture into pie crust. Arrange fruit slices over gelatin mixture, then top with remaining gelatin mixture. Refrigerate until firm. Garnish with whipped topping and additional fruit if desired. Serves 6-8.

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