

Zest up your life with oranges

By Michael Bonn
Photo Editor

If a bunch of drunk, seafaring marauders say something will keep you from dying a horrible disease-ridden death, you might consider listening. I am, of course, talking about oranges.

In ye olden days, they were carried by the bucket load on ships to prevent scurvy; today we know that they are rich in the coolest vitamin to ever be discovered: vitamin C. Beyond their ability to boost your immune system, there are many other benefits to eating oranges on a regular basis.

For example, did you know that oranges boost your body's levels of folate, or folic acid? Don't know what that is? Well, you should; it breaks down compounds in your body that attribute to heart disease and heart attacks. This easily puts oranges pretty high on the awesome scale; no one wants a heart attack.

Now when I say orange, you likely think of the sweet, soft meat. But if that's the case, you are overlooking the unsung hero of the orange world: the peel. The orange peel contains oils that are beneficial to skin health. The peel is also home to another big portion of vitamin C; the white bit (pith) actually contains a large amount of

the stuff.

Eating the peel might sound like a fool's errand to you now, but have you ever heard of orange zest? It's essentially finely grated orange peel. It's extremely fragrant and can be used to add flavor to all sorts of things. I myself have had a particularly good coffee cake that had orange zest in it, and it was quite tasty.

To top it all off, oranges are incredibly flexible. You could just eat 'em raw and be happy, but they also can be put into all sorts of dishes from desserts to dinners and can even be preserved.

Now here are a few pro tips about snacking on oranges. As it is said,

"with great power comes great responsibility," and with oranges you've got to watch out for the acid content.

Oranges are saturated with citric acid, which is particularly hard on your teeth and can cause indigestion, especially if paired with milk. To help with that, I'll let you know that the recommended number of oranges per day is less than three. Another thing to consider is that once you've cut into an orange and it's been exposed to air, the vitamin C content decreases, so eat them up fast.

Next time you're in your local produce aisle, think like a pirate: eat an orange.

Recipe: Orange Simple Syrup

Ingredients:

- Two cups of fresh orange juice
- A half cup of sugar
- Eight sprigs of fresh thyme

1. In a small saucepan, combine orange juice, sugar and thyme.
2. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and simmer until mixture is reduced to one cup.
3. Strain mixture, discarding any solids.
4. Use this syrup to add intense orange flavor to everyday foods like pancakes or waffles, or brush it on cake layers or yeast rolls before baking. You can also use it to baste chicken or pork chops during the last few minutes of grilling.

Michael Bonn, Clackamas Print

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