

State's peach crop soars while national production drops

A good peach crop is being harvested in Michigan. The state crop is estimated at 45 million pounds, up 29 percent from that of a year ago. Elsewhere in the country, peaches didn't fare so well this year.

Production in the nine southern peach states is forecast at 360 million pounds — 50 percent of last year's crop. North Carolina was especially hard hit by cold weather this spring — the peach crop there is a mere 2 million pounds, compared with 40 million pounds in 1981. Nationally, the fresh peach crops forecast at 220 billion pounds — 21 percent below last year's harvest.

California's peach production is significantly lower in both freestone and clingstone peaches. The clingstone crop, which goes primarily into cans, is off 10 percent. California is the major producer of clingstone peaches, so this very likely will mean higher prices for canned peaches.

As a result of the good peach crop in Michigan and a short crop elsewhere, buyers from other states are looking to Michigan for fresh peaches. Consumers, therefore, can expect to pay top prices for fresh peaches.

No doubt the most economical time to purchase peaches will be during the third week in August. That's when the Red Haven variety — No. 1 in volume and a favorite of Michigan shoppers — will be in peak supply.

Several factors have endeared Red Haven peaches to shoppers. Besides having an extremely good flavor, Red Haven (and all other Haven varieties except Hale Haven) are resistant to browning. This makes them ideal for freezing as well as canning. Red Hav-

ens are freestone (the flesh comes off the pit easily) when the fruit is fully ripe.

Red Haven peaches will likely be available through the second week in September. Other varieties have a season 10 to 14 days long. Red Havens are around so much longer because they have been planted in the northern as well as the southern regions of the state.

During the Red Haven season, the following varieties come to market in this order: Glohaven, Canadian Harmony, Cresthaven and Kahaiven. Redskins follow to end of the Red Haven. Other varieties that are not produced in sufficient quantities to be commercially important across the state are available in various local areas. Always inquire if peaches are freestone if you are purchasing a quantity for canning or freezing.

Michigan peaches have yellow skins and flesh and should be firm, mature, well formed and free from decay. Look for a creamy yellow to gold skin under the outer red blush. Red blush alone is not a sign of ripeness — the amount of red blush varies with the variety. Do not purchase hard peaches with a ground color that is more green than yellow. They're immature, they lack flavor, and they'll never ripen properly.

Peaches picked at the firm ripe stage will become fully ripe and ready to eat in three or four days at room temperature. Ripen out of the sun or — to speed up ripening — place the peaches in a brown paper bag. Keep fully ripe peaches refrigerated and use within two or three days.

For flavorful dinner fare, make it Mexican chicken

Ethnic foods have become meal-time favorites. These foods delight our senses and can be prepared to meet any special dietary need. For example, we have here a recipe for low saturated fat/low cholesterol Mexican Chicken.

The chicken is covered with onion, garlic, pimiento and other spices and margarine for a flavorful blend and an interesting entree.

Be sure to follow the one-day guide to good diet. It provides a delicious variety of low saturated fats or cholesterol foods in well balanced portions — the key to good health.

Lunch
fillet of sole with lemon
¼ cup carrots with ¼ tsp. margarine
¼ cup peas with ¼ tsp. margarine
Fruited gelatin mold

Snack
1 cup skim milk
2 crackers

Dinner
Fruit cocktail
Mexican Chicken
¼ cup rice
Tossed spinach with mushroom salad
Vinegar and vegetable oil dressing
Dinner roll with ¼ tsp. margarine
sherbet

MEXICAN CHICKEN

(meat & servings)
1 (2½-lb.) frying chicken, cut up
2 Tsp. margarine
1 cup chopped onion
¼ tsp. crushed fresh garlic
¼ tsp. ground cumin



¼ tsp. ground black pepper
2 jars (4 oz. each) sliced pimientos
3 cups hot cooked rice
Parsley

Remove loose skin and visible fat from chicken pieces. Melt margarine in a large skillet over medium heat. Add chicken pieces and brown on all sides until golden. Remove chicken from skillet. Add onion, garlic, cumin and pepper to skillet; saute until tender, stirring occasionally, 2-3 minutes.

In a blender or food processor, process undrained pimientos until smooth; stir into skillet mixture. Return chicken pieces to skillet; cover and cook 20 to 25 minutes, or until tender. Serve with hot cooked rice and garnish with parsley.

MENU PLAN

Breakfast
¾ cup skim milk
¼ cup cold cereal with ¼ cup skim milk
Sliced strawberries
Coffee

Snack
1 breakfast roll
Coffee

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1. Change in bowel or bladder habits.
2. A sore that does not heal.
3. Unusual bleeding or discharge.
4. Thickening or lump in breast or elsewhere.
5. Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing.
6. Obvious change in wart or mole.
7. Nagging cough or hoarseness.
8. A fear of cancer that can prevent you from detecting cancer at an early stage. A stage when it is highly curable. Everyone's afraid of cancer, but don't let it scare you to death.

American Cancer Society