Lesson 4
Avocado Storing and Handling

Storing and Handling
There are over 500 avocado varieties in the global marketplace, but the Hass variety dominates in volume and popularity. Fresh California Avocados’ peak season is typically March through September.

Storing
- For best results, order pre-conditioned avocados
- Stack cases to allow proper air circulation
- Check daily and refrigerate any ripe avocados
- Only RIPE avocados should be refrigerated
- Store at 36° to 40° F for up to one week

Storing Cut Fruit
- Preserve a cut avocado’s color by spraying, brushing or dipping exposed surfaces with lemon juice or milk
- Cover cut surface with plastic wrap to seal out exposure to air
Ripening Techniques

Careful pre-conditioning by packers and importers ensures better tasting, more flavorful avocados and allows greater flexibility when ordering avocados. Order according to the ripening chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>Pre-Conditioned</td>
<td>Breaking (Pre-Ripened)</td>
<td>Firm Ripe (Pre-Ripened)</td>
<td>Ripe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very hard fruit; usually green in color. (25 lbs. of pressure or more)</td>
<td>Ready-to-eat in about 3 days if held at room temperature. (15-25 lbs of pressure)</td>
<td>Slight give to the fruit. Ready-to-eat in approximately 2 days if held at room temperature. (10-15 lbs of pressure)</td>
<td>Yields to gentle pressure. Good for slicing. Fully ripe next day if held at room temperature. (5-10 lbs of pressure)</td>
<td>Easily yields to gentle pressure. Good for all uses. Will remain in this condition for 2-3 days if held at room temperature. (5 lbs or less pressure). Stem nub easily falls off when thumb is rolled over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ripening Stages

- Store at room temperature; stack cartons to ensure good air circulation
- Cradled in your palm, a ripe avocado yields to gentle pressure
- **Stage 1: Hard Fruit** – Very hard fruit; usually green in color (25 lbs. of pressure or more)
- **Stage 2: Pre-Conditioned** – Ready-to-eat in about 3 days if held at room temperature (15-25 lbs of pressure)
- **Stage 3: BREAKING (Pre-ripened)** – Slight give to the fruit. Ready-to-eat in approximately 2 days if held at room temperature (10-15 lbs of pressure)
- **Stage 4: Firm Ripe (Pre-ripened)** – Yields to gentle pressure. Good for slicing. Fully ripe next day if held at room temperature (5-10 lbs of pressure)
- **Stage 5: Ripe** – Easily yields to gentle pressure. Good for all uses. Will remain in this condition for 2-3 days if held at room temperature (5 lbs or less pressure). Stem nub easily falls off when thumb is rolled over
Hot Applications

- Fresh avocados can be sautéed, grilled, baked, char-grilled, battered, breaded and fried
- Avocados retain their shape and color during any cooking method
- Avoid exposure to direct heat (broiling); cook the avocados briefly or add at the end of long-cooking dishes
- For best results, choose nearly ripe avocados (Breaking Fruit)
- Avocados will soften during cooking resulting in a pleasant flavor
- If deep-frying, protect/coat the avocado with batter, dough or wonton wraps

Ordering and Selection Process

- 36 Count
  - Weight: 10.7 oz
  - Yield: 7.4 oz or 15/16 cup

- 40 Count
  - Weight: 10.0 oz
  - Yield: 7.0 oz or 7/8 cup

- 48 Count
  - Weight: 7.7 oz
  - Yield: 5.4 oz or 2/3 cup

- 60 Count
  - Weight: 5.9 oz
  - Yield: 3.9 oz or 1/2 cup

- 70 Count
  - Weight: 5.0 oz
  - Yield: 3.6 oz or 7/16 cup

- 84 Count
  - Weight: 3.7 oz
  - Yield: 2.6 oz or 1/3 cup

Source: Mattson & Company 2001

Fruit shown is actual size.
Peeling Techniques

1. Rinse avocados under running water or in your selected produce wash.
2. Cut the avocado lengthwise.
3. Twist the halves apart.
4. Tap the sharp edge of a knife into the seed. Twist and lift out the seed...
   or slip a spoon between the seed and the fruit and work the seed out.
5. Scoop the fruit away from the peel with a spoon.