

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:



<u>Stage 1</u>	<u>Stage 2</u>	<u>Stage 3</u>	<u>Stage 4</u>	<u>Stage 5</u>
Hard	Pre-Conditioned	Breaking (Pre-Ripened)	Firm Ripe (Pre-Ripened)	Ripe
Very hard fruit; usually green in color. (25 lbs. of pressure or more)	Ready-to-eat in about 3 days if held at room temperature. (15-25 lbs. of pressure)	Slight give to the fruit. Ready-to-eat in approximately 2 days if held at room temperature. (10-15 lbs. of pressure)	Yields to gentle pressure. Good for slicing. Fully ripe next day if held at room temperature. (5-10 lbs. of pressure)	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)

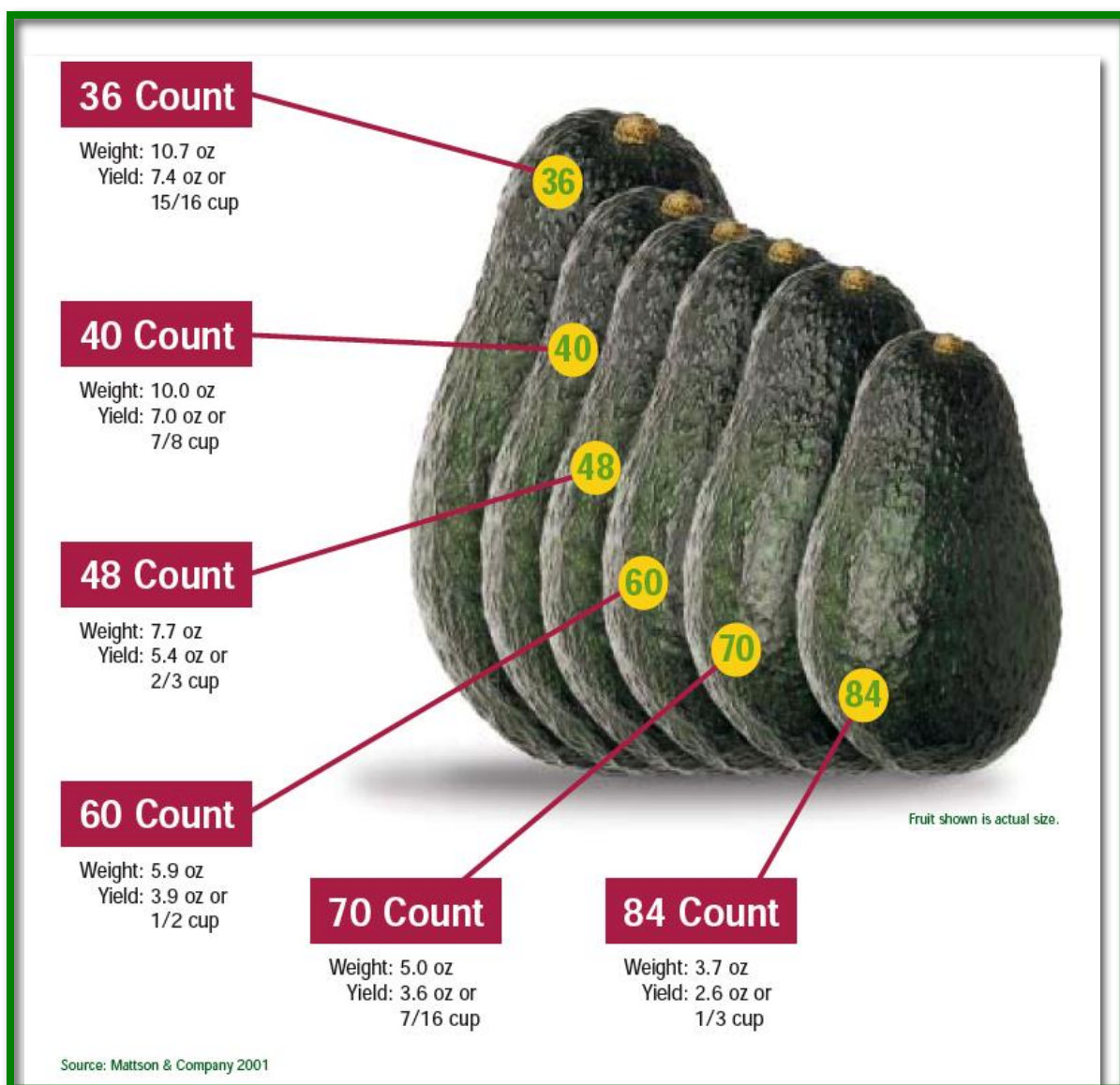
Ripening Stages

- 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

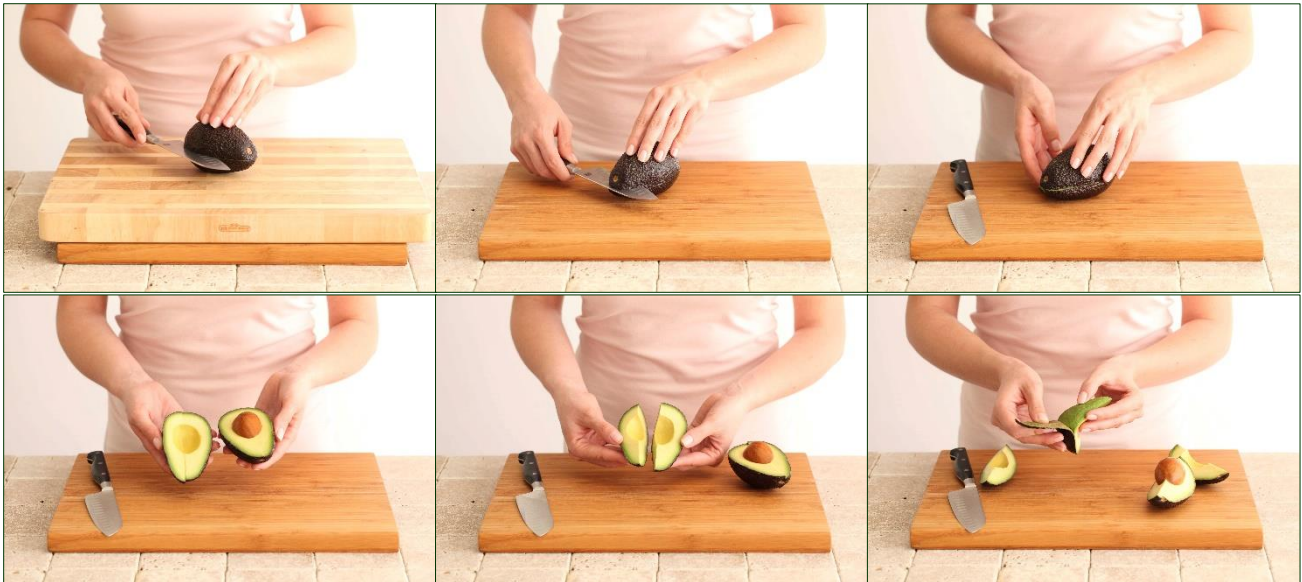
- Fresh avocados can be sautéed, grilled, baked, char-grilled, battered, breaded and fried
- Avocados retain their shape and color during any cooking method
- Avoid exposure to direct heat (broiling); cook the avocados briefly or add at the end of long-cooking dishes
- For best results, choose nearly 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



Cutting and Peeling a California Avocado

1. Like all fruit, wash the avocado before cutting
2. Carefully cut the ripe avocado in half lengthwise around the seed
3. Rotate the avocado $\frac{1}{4}$ turn and cut lengthwise around the seed to make $\frac{1}{4}$ -avocado segments
4. Separate the quarters and remove seed
5. Starting from the tip, carefully peel each segment



The greatest concentration of carotenoids, or beneficial plant pigments, is in the dark-green fruit closest to the skin. In fact, avocados contribute 11 beneficial carotenoids to one's diet, including lutein, which helps to maintain healthy eyesight as we age.

