

# Is Avocado Really Good for You?

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If you are a foodie and on social media you would assume that avocado toast was the most important invention since, well, sliced bread. For years, the main use for avocado was guacamole, but now it is used in everything from smoothies to salads to sandwiches. My office mate cuts an avocado in half, removes the pit, and then fills the hole with Sriracha hot sauce and eats it right out of the skin.

Avocado has been touted as a superfood, which is, along with its exquisite creamy flavor, a big reason why everyone goes cuckoo over avocados. But is it really that good for you? Let's take a deep dive into the nutrition of an avocado.

**1) People think avocados are high in fat and calories** – An average size whole avocado has 227 calories and about 30 grams of fat. Yikes! Shouldn't we be throwing our avocados out the window with that much fat? Nope! The majority of the fat that is in an avocado is the healthier monounsaturated fat (similar to what is found in extra virgin olive oil). This kind of fat is beneficial for the prevention of both heart disease and diabetes. The fat is also filling which means it can be helpful for losing weight (if you keep your serving size small of course). As far as the calories, 227 is not ridiculously high and many recipes call for only half of an avocado which would be around 114 calories, about the same number of calories as in a banana.

**2) Avocados are high in fiber** – One avocado has about 9 grams of dietary fiber – about a third of most people's daily fiber needs. The fat in an avocado covers up the not so great taste of the large amount of dietary fiber.

**3) Avocados are nutrient dense** – Avocados are packed with nutrients. They are high in magnesium, potassium, vitamins K and E and phytosterols, which can help decrease your cholesterol as well as decreasing risk of cancer, just to name a few. One avocado has more potassium than a banana!

**4) Avocado consumers are healthier** – “An analysis of adult data from the NHANES 2001–2006 suggests that avocado consumers have higher HDL-cholesterol, lower risk of metabolic syndrome, and lower weight, BMI, and waist circumference than nonconsumers.” In other words, avocado consumers are indeed healthier than nonconsumers, whether it’s only because of avocados is yet to be seen.

**How to choose an avocado** – If you are planning on eating avocado you should plan a few days ahead, because you never know how ripe the avocados in the store might already be. When choosing an avocado, lightly press the avocado with your thumb and forefinger. If it is soft to the touch, then it is ripe and ready to go. If it is still very firm you will need to let it ripen for a few days before using it. If your avocado is getting too ripe you can refrigerate it to slow down the ripening process or simply use it as quickly as possible. Once the avocado begins to brown inside it becomes bitter and should be thrown away.

**How to cut an avocado** – There have been many reports (unfortunately with photos) of avocado cutting injuries. The most important tip is to make the cuts on a cutting board instead of in your hand. Here is a video on how to cut an avocado in a totally unique and safe way.

For the traditional way to cut an avocado without cutting your hand, here is a video by Jamie Oliver.

