

Onions



Onion Facts

- The onion, also known as the bulb onion or common onion, is a vegetable and is the most widely cultivated species of the genus *Allium*.
- Onions are pungent when chopped and contain certain chemical substances which irritate the eyes.
- As a food item, they are usually served cooked, as a vegetable, or part of a prepared savoury dish, but can also be eaten raw or used to make pickles or chutneys.
- The onion plant has a fan of hollow, bluish-green leaves and its bulb at the base of the plant begins to swell when a certain day-length is reached.
- The onion is most frequently a biennial or a perennial plant, but is usually treated as an annual and harvested in its first growing season.
- Culinary uses of onions date back thousands of years in China, Egypt and Persia.
- While the large, mature onion bulb is most often eaten, onions can be eaten at immature stages. Young plants may be harvested before bulbing occurs and used whole as spring onions or scallions.
- Onions can be baked, boiled, braised, grilled, fried, roasted, sautéed, or eaten raw in salads.
- Onions have particularly large cells that are readily observed under low magnification and are therefore, commonly employed in science education to teach the use of a microscope for observing cell structure.
- Onions are toxic to dogs, cats, guinea pigs animals.

