



By Peggy Crum, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

Sour grapes are as rare as hen's teeth. Especially so when they're harvested in late summer and early fall, prime season for the grapes of Michigan.

Grapes fall into two groups—table grapes and wine grapes, classified according to their intended method of consumption. Meant to be eaten raw, table varieties have large fruits with thin skin, firm flesh and very small, edible seeds. In contrast, wine grapes are smaller and thick skinned with soft juicy flesh and prominent seeds.

Grapes found in the supermarket are table grapes, available in shades of red, green and purple (black). How can you select sweet juicy grapes without tasting one? First, look at the color. Ripe green grapes have a yellowish hue. The ripest red grapes will be evenly dark red. Ripe purple grapes are dark blue to almost black. Next, squeeze them—gently; they should be firm, not soft. Finally, the grapes should be securely attached to the stem, not loose in the bag.

When you get your bunch home from the store, discard any grapes that are split or starting to spoil. Remove grapes that have fallen off the stem; store these separately and use them first. The bunch left on the stem will keep as long as a month in the refrigerator if you leave it unwashed in its mesh plastic bag.

Before serving, wash your grapes thoroughly in plain water, swishing gently and changing the water until the water remains clear. The foggy white color, especially noticeable on red and purple grapes is called bloom, a natural waxy coating that is harmless and doesn't need to be washed off.

Table grapes are delicious in many ways. Add to salads for a sweet crunch. For a cool refreshing snack, wash grapes, snip into small bunches and place on a tray in the freezer. They're ready to eat in just 2 hours.

RECIPE for health

SEPTEMBER 2012

featured food:

GRAPES

Grapes and Greens with Shallot Vinaigrette

Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services. Serves 8

- 3 Tablespoons thinly sliced shallot
- 1/3 cup champagne vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/3 cup grape seed oil
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 8 ounces red seedless grapes
- 9 ounces spring mix salad greens
- 4 ounces double cream brie cheese
- 4 ounces walnut halves

Place vinegar in a small bowl; add sliced shallot and set aside for 30 minutes. Add mustard to bowl then drizzle in oil while whisking. Let dressing set for 30 minutes. Taste; add salt and pepper as needed.

Meanwhile wash and dry grapes and remove from stem; cut grapes in half lengthwise. In large bowl toss greens, walnuts and grapes with desired amount of vinaigrette. Place salad on individual plates or bowls and top with cheese.

Try **Grapes and Greens with Shallot Vinaigrette** for lunch at The Gallery at Snyder/Phillips, Brody Square and Riverwalk Market at Owen on September 26.