



**PACIFIC COAST
FARMERS' MARKET
ASSOCIATION**

PCFMA.ORG

TEN WAYS TO ENJOY SWEET CHERRIES



Cherry season is here and the season is short so hustle over to your local farmers' market and get farm-fresh, just-picked sweet cherries before they're gone. There will be many varieties to choose from as the season progresses, from Bing and Rainier, to Brooks, Lamberst, Tulare, and more. Each has its own distinctive color and flavor. You won't find many of these varieties anywhere other than your local farmers' market.

California is home to over 600 cherry growers, farming over 26,000 acres from the fertile San Joaquin and Santa Clara Valleys, which receive nutrient-rich soil, sunny days, and mild nights. The state grows mostly sweet cherries as opposed to tart varieties, and small farmers bring a nice variety to your farmers' market. They come to us from farms in Brentwood, Lodi, Stockton, Linden, Gilroy, Hollister, and other northern California valleys. Cherries are very susceptible to damage from rain as they near harvest. For this reason, the volume of each year's crop can vary depending on spring weather in California growing areas.

Fresh cherries have an extremely short shelf life and must be handled carefully to reduce bruising, so use your cherries as soon as you can. This is why it's best to get cherries from the farmers' market. The flavor and nutrition are the best and you are buying from local farmers.

Once you bring your prized cherries home, try some of these delicious ways to use them:

1. **Fresh:** Eat fresh. For sweet cherries this is the most popular way, unadulterated and complete in and of itself.
2. **Jams:** Make cherry jam or preserves so you can enjoy the flavors later. Try our [Cherry Berry Jam](#).
3. **Dehydrated:** Dry them in a dehydrator or in the oven. Remove the pits, cut in halves, and dry until most of the moisture is removed. Use in baked goods.
4. **Pie or Crisp:** Make a sweet cherry pie or crisp/cobbler. Since the cherries are sweet to begin with, you won't need as much sugar! Try [Gotelli's Cherry Cobbler](#).
5. **Quick bread:** Take your favorite basic quick bread recipe and add a cup of pitted, chopped cherries to the mix. Delicious!
6. **Ice Cream:** Make cherry ice cream in your ice cream maker.
7. **Popcicles:** Run frozen pitted cherries through the blender with some lime juice and pour into popsicle molds. Cool down with these [Berry Pops](#).
8. **Salads:** Add chopped cherries to a chicken or turkey salad for a refreshing pop of flavor and sweetness.
9. **Sauce and Marinades:** A pound of pitted, chopped cherries, a bit of lemon juice, cornstarch, and sugar and you've got an amazing sauce for desserts or pork, or for dressings and marinades.
10. **Salsa:** Yes, [cherry salsa](#) is an unexpected and delicious way to use cherries. Pit and chop cherries, add chopped jalapeño pepper, chopped green onion, lemon juice, fresh cilantro, minced garlic, and you're ready to dip.

Cherries are a veritable feast for the eyes – and stomachs! We wish the season was longer, but that's the way Nature rolls. You'll find them from Gotelli Farms out of Stockton, Diaz Farms from Fowler, J&J Ramos Farms in Hughson, Allard Farms from Westley, Ken's Top Notch out of Fresno, Cipponeri Farms from Turlock, and others.

TAGS

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