



Recipes  
Tips & Tricks  
Nutrition Info

# INSIDE ONIONS

## Consumer Newsletter



April 2026 | Issue No. 4 | National Onion Association



## April 2026

- Natural egg dying = fun and educational
- Keep your cutting board odor-free
- Quicker Caramelized Onions with Baking soda
- Recipe Box: French Onion Chicken
- Video Recipe: Caramelized Sweet Onion Hummus
- Onionista Blog: When you run out of onions? First, don't let it happen.
- Meet an onion grower: Kittleson Brothers farm of Iowa

## In Season

Storage onions will harvest this month and be available through May of next year. Storage onions are amazing in that they can last for months in cool storage.



### Available August-May

- Easy to recognize by their multiple layers of thick, darker colored skin
  - Commonly lower in water content, they have a longer shelf-life
  - Range in flavor from mild to pungent
- \* Best for savory dishes that require longer cooking times or more flavor

## Vidalias will be on shelves April 13

Sweet, mild, and unmistakably Southern—Vidalia onion season is almost here. Grown exclusively in a designated region of Georgia, these onions are prized for their unique sweetness, thanks to the area's low-sulfur soil and careful growing practices. Mark your calendar: fresh Vidalia onions arrive on store shelves April 13. Whether sliced raw for salads, layered onto sandwiches, or lightly sautéed to bring out their natural sugars, Vidalias signal the start of spring cooking. Don't miss your chance to enjoy this once-a-year favorite at its peak flavor and freshness.



Because of their limited growing region and strict regulations, authentic Vidalia onions are only available for a short window each year. Look for official labeling to ensure you're getting the real thing, and stock up while they last.



## The Onionista

Got a message for the Onionista? Write to  
[onionista@onions-usa.org](mailto:onionista@onions-usa.org)

# Inside Onions

## Message From The Onionista

---

Who is the Onionista?

Hi! I'm René Hardwick, Aka The Onionista. As The Director Of Public And Industry Relations For The National Onion Association, I Wanted A Fun Way To Connect With People On The Web. That Is How 'Onionista' Was Born. She Is A Fun And Informal Way For Me To Share My Passion For Onions, Food, And Agriculture With Consumers.

In this monthly newsletter, I hope to share with you not only great new recipes and recipe videos, but nutrition nuggets to help round out the menus you serve to your family.

The National Onion Association tells the story of the bulb onion, promoting the usage and visibility of the third most consumed fresh vegetable in the U.S. with active

media relations, recipe development, culinary education and more.

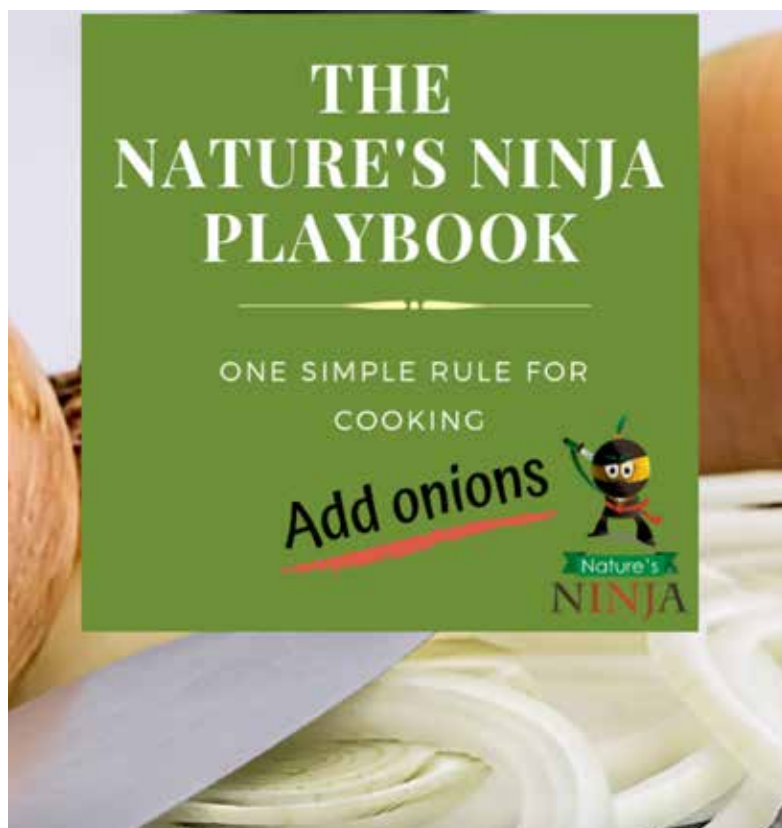
Members of NOA rely on the non-profit trade association for

up-to-date information, government representation, industry-wide networking, as well as consumer outreach. Visit [www.onions-usa.org](http://www.onions-usa.org) for more information.

## Need onion info?

The National Onion Association has released its ebook, Nature's Ninja Playbook, a guide for selecting, cutting, and cooking onions, along with handy tips and tasty recipes to include onions in every meal of the day.

The NOA has nicknamed the onion "Nature's Ninja" for the many qualities it possesses to stay fresh and — keep those who eat it healthy. It has 12 vitamins and minerals is naturally fat and cholesterol free.



# DIY Corner

## Got skins?

Show off your skills with organic egg coloring for Easter this year



Looking for a fun, natural way to decorate Easter eggs this year? Skip the artificial dyes and head to your kitchen. With a few everyday ingredients, you can create beautiful, earthy colors that feel just right for spring.

The process is simple and surprisingly rewarding. Start by choosing your coloring ingredient and simmering it with 2 cups of water for 15 to 30 minutes. Once the liquid has developed a rich color, strain it and let it cool before adding your hard-boiled eggs.

Different ingredients produce a range of shades depending on whether you use white or brown eggs. Shredded beets create a soft reddish pink on white eggs and a deeper maroon on brown ones.

Red onion skins yield reddish-orange tones on white eggs or a richer red on brown eggs, while yellow onion skins produce warm orange or rusty hues.

For brighter colors, ground turmeric delivers a vibrant yellow. If you're feeling creative, try layering colors—soaking eggs first in purple cabbage dye and then in turmeric can result in a natural green.

Purple cabbage alone creates blue tones on white eggs and green on brown eggs.

Blueberries also produce soft blue shades, while dried hibiscus flowers can create stunning lavender or deep indigo hues.

The longer you leave the eggs in the dye, the deeper the color becomes, so feel free to experiment.

This simple method turns everyday ingredients into a creative holiday tradition the whole family can enjoy.

Source: [TheKitchn.com](http://TheKitchn.com)

**Easter is  
April 5**



# Recipe box

CATEGORY:

Dinner

PREP TIME:

10 minutes

COOK TIME:

30 minutes



[Click photo for recipe directions](#)

## French Onion Chicken

2 large sweet onions, sliced  
4 tablespoons butter  
1 cup beef broth or stock  
4 chicken breasts, pounded to uniform thickness  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
1 1/2 tablespoons flour  
1/2 cup provolone cheese, shredded or sliced  
1/2 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded or sliced  
Salt and pepper, to taste

Servings: 4

## A surefire shortcut to caramelized onions

Nothing beats the rich, sweet flavor of caramelized onions—but getting there usually takes time. Traditional caramelized onions can take 45 minutes or more, with constant attention. So when we heard a shortcut—adding baking soda to speed things up—we had to try it.

Caramelization happens as onions release moisture, break down, and their natural sugars brown through heat. This includes both caramelization and the Maillard reaction, which gives onions their deep color and flavor. Adding baking soda raises the pH, speeding up this browning process and softening the onions faster.

To test it, we used:

- 1 pound sliced yellow onions
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/8 teaspoon baking soda

We cooked everything together over medium heat,

stirring often. The result? Fully softened, browned onions in about 13 minutes—far quicker than the usual method.

There were some trade-offs. The onions turned slightly orange before deepening to brown, and the texture became very soft—almost like a spread or jam. The flavor, however, was excellent. No off taste, just sweet and savory.

This method works especially well for dishes where onions are blended or spread, like dips or sandwiches. If you want onions with more structure—for pizza or toppings—the traditional method still wins.

One note: the pan got messy, with dark buildup on the sides, so a non-stick pan helps.

Will we use this method again? Absolutely—when time is short and texture isn't a concern.

# Did You Know?

## Spring is sweets season across the country

Sweet onions are a seasonal favorite that bring a mild, almost sugary flavor to kitchens across the country. Unlike pungent storage onions, sweet onions are grown in specific regions with low-sulfur soils, which gives them their signature taste and makes them easier on the eyes when slicing. Their high water content also creates a tender texture that works beautifully in fresh dishes and quick cooking.

Several well-known varieties highlight just how regional—and special—sweet onions can be. Vidalia onion from Georgia may be the most famous, but it's far from the only one.

The Texas 1015 onion offers an early-season option with a crisp bite, while Walla Walla Sweet onion is prized in the Pacific Northwest for its delicate flavor.

In the West, growers produce Sweetie Sweet onions



and Imperial Sweet onions, each bringing their own regional character. And from the islands, Maui onion adds a tropical twist to the category.

From coast to coast, these onions signal the arrival of spring and early summer—perfect for grilling, tossing into salads, or simply enjoying fresh.

## How to Keep Cutting Boards Fresh, Odor-Free

Spring is the perfect time to refresh your kitchen! Cutting boards, especially those used for onions, garlic, and other strong-smelling foods, can hold onto odors and stains if not cleaned properly. Here are some simple tips to make them look and smell like new:

1. **Use Lemon and Salt:** Sprinkle coarse salt on your cutting board and rub it with a cut lemon. The salt acts as a gentle abrasive while the lemon naturally deodorizes and disinfects. Rinse with warm water afterward.
2. **Baking Soda for Tough Odors:** Sprinkle baking soda on the board, scrub with a damp sponge, and rinse. Baking soda neutralizes lingering onion smells.
3. **Vinegar Rinse:** A quick wipe-down with white vinegar helps kill bacteria and remove odors. Let it sit for a few minutes, then rinse with water.
4. **Sunlight and Air:** When possible, let your cutting boards



dry in the sun. Natural sunlight helps kill germs and removes lingering odors.

5. **Oil Your Wooden Boards:** Once cleaned and dry, rub mineral oil into wooden boards to keep

them from cracking and absorbing future odors.

By giving your cutting boards a little spring cleaning, your kitchen will not only look cleaner but smell fresher too!

# Blog

## What? No onions? Don't find yourself in this position

There is a very specific kind of disappointment that only home cooks understand. It happens when you've already tasted the meal in your mind. The skillet is warming. The oil is shimmering. You grab your cutting board, open the fridge — and realize you're out of onions.

You stare into the crisper drawer anyway, hoping one might appear behind the lettuce. Nothing. Just the sinking feeling that dinner won't be what you imagined.

Being out of onions isn't like being out of parsley or even cheese. You can usually pivot when you're missing a garnish. You can substitute yogurt for sour cream. You can swap proteins. You can adjust spices.

### Why There's No True Substitute When You're Out of Onions

Onions are the starting point of flavor. They're the base layer in soups, sauces, casseroles, stir-fries, roasts, tacos, and pasta dishes. When they hit heat, they soften, sweeten, and release aroma that signals something good is happening.

Take onions out of chili, and it tastes flatter. Skip them in spaghetti sauce, and the depth disappears. Leave them out of a stir fry, and it feels unfinished.

When you're out of onions, you quickly realize how much they quietly carry a dish. They add sweetness without sugar. Body without heaviness. Aroma without overpowering the plate. There's simply no perfect replacement.

### The Emotional Side of Being Out of Onions

There's also something psychological about it. When you plan a meal around sautéed onions — that first sizzle, that familiar smell — and then discover you're out of onions, it feels like starting over.

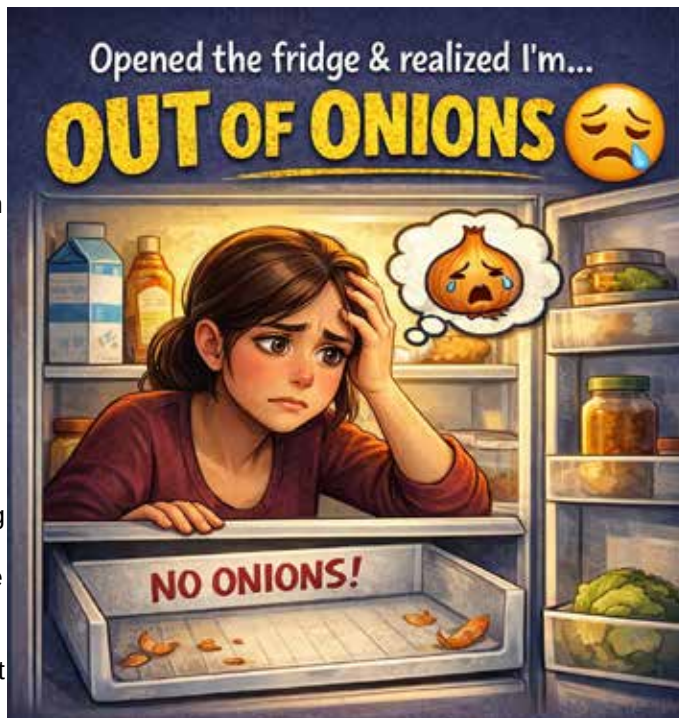
### Dinner shifts from exciting to "just okay."

That's why onions deserve to be treated differently than occasional ingredients. They're not optional. They're foundational.

### How to Make Sure You're Never Out of Onions Again

If you've ever found yourself out of onions at the worst possible moment, here are practical ways to prevent it from happening again.

### The Rule of Three



Never buy just the onions you need for the week. If a recipe calls for two, buy five. If it calls for five, buy a ten-pound bag. Onions are hardy; they are built for the long haul. As long as you keep them in a cool, dark, dry place (and away from your potatoes, which make them sprout faster), they will wait for you.

### The Emergency Backup (The Freezer)

On those rare occasions where you do run out, your past self should have your back. Next time you have a surplus of energy, dice three onions and freeze them in a single layer on a

baking sheet before transferring them to a bag. They will be perfect for soups, stews, and sauces — a literal lifesaver.

### Store Them Properly

Whole onions last weeks when stored in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place. Don't seal them in plastic bags, and don't store them next to potatoes. Read up on proper storage techniques here.

If you dice too many, refrigerate them in an airtight container and use within a few days. You can also freeze chopped onions for cooking later. They won't stay crisp for salads, but they work beautifully in soups and sauces.

### Make Flavor Insurance

Caramelize a large batch of onions and freeze them in small portions. That way, even if you're technically out of onions, you still have ready-to-use flavor in your freezer. Don't know how to caramelize? Try this tutorial here.

### The Bottom Line

Being out of onions teaches you something important: they are the quiet backbone of home cooking. They rarely take center stage, yet they support almost every meal you make.

If you want weeknight dinners that taste rich, balanced, and complete, the solution is simple.

Don't let yourself run out. Because once you've experienced that empty crisper drawer moment, you know — there's no real substitute for what onions bring to the table.

# New coloring book!

## Ollie & Olivia have a new kitchen adventure

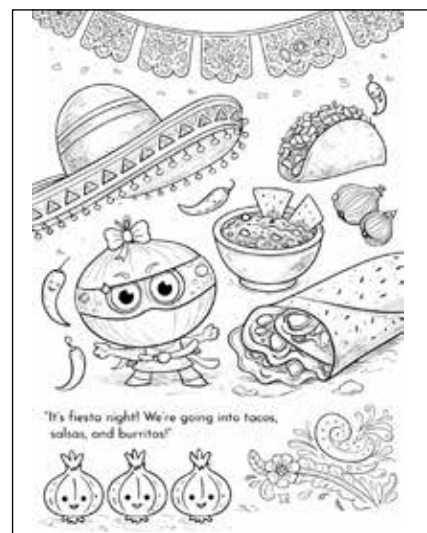
A new coloring book has arrived, and it's ready to bring the kitchen to life for young readers. This playful collection of pages follows friendly onions and their vegetable friends as they slice, sizzle, grill, and shine — sometimes even walking the runway in their tastiest forms.

Each page is designed to spark creativity while helping kids see how the foods they eat become part of everyday meals. It's a fun way to connect coloring time with curiosity about cooking, trying vegetables, and discovering just how exciting healthy foods can be.

The National Onion Association also offers the popular Onion Ninja Odyssey coloring book, where young readers follow the adventurous Onion Ninja on exciting missions in the kitchen.

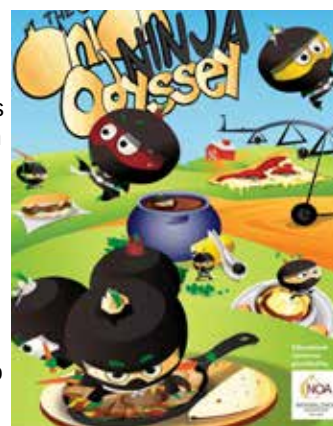
This set comes with an accompanying activity book full of puzzles, mazes, and games that reinforce learning while keeping kids entertained.

Together, the coloring and activity books provide hours of fun, combining creativity, problem-solving, and a playful introduction to the world of vegetables.



## Download activities book

The Onion Ninja Odyssey is a downloadable coloring book that teaches the nutrition basics of onions while taking readers through a fun journey of how The Onion – Nature's Ninja has come to be. From the field to your plate, the onion has a wonderful journey that spans the agricultural ages, resulting in a powerful ninja, whose skills keep those who eat it safe, while providing solid nutrition and disease-fighting properties.



# Video Recipe



## Caramelized Sweet Onion Hummus

**S**pring is the perfect time to lighten up your menu, and the National Onion Association's Caramelized Sweet Onion Hummus is a fresh way to do just that. As sweet onion season arrives, these mild, juicy onions bring a natural sweetness that transforms everyday dishes—including this creamy, flavorful dip.

Unlike traditional hummus, this recipe takes things up a notch by folding in deeply caramelized sweet onions. As they slowly cook, their sugars develop into rich, savory-sweet notes that pair beautifully with chickpeas,

tahini, and a touch of garlic. The result is a smooth, crowd-pleasing spread that feels both familiar and new.

Spring gatherings—whether it's Easter brunch, backyard get-togethers, or simple weeknight snacking—are ideal occasions to serve this dish. Pair it with crisp vegetables like carrots, cucumbers, and radishes, or spread it on sandwiches and wraps for an extra layer of flavor.

With sweet onions at their peak and fresh produce filling the market, this hummus is a simple way to celebrate the season. It's easy to make, easy to share, and a great reminder that a



single ingredient—like a perfectly caramelized onion—can completely change a dish.

### Ingredients

- 1 whole garlic head**
- 4 tablespoons + 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil, divided**
- 1 large sweet onion, thinly sliced**
- 1 15-ounce can of chickpeas**
- 1 tablespoons lemon juice (about 1/2 of a lemon)**
- 1/2 cup tahini**
- 1 teaspoon salt**

Per serving: 126 calories; 4.5 g protein; 13 g carbohydrate; 7 g fat; 1 mg cholesterol; 3.5 g fiber; 308 mg sodium.



### Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cut the top off of the head of garlic and place cut side down on a pan and drizzle with 1 tsp of olive oil. Bake for 20- 30 minutes or until garlic is soft. Let cool. Once cool, squeeze out the garlic from each clove. Next, cook onion in 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Stir the onion frequently until they begin to brown. Reduce the heat to low and continue to cook until the onions are soft and a medium brown color.

Rinse and drain chickpeas reserving 3 tablespoons chickpea liquid. To a food processor, add chickpeas, liquid, lemon juice, tahini, garlic, salt, 3 tablespoons olive oil, and onions. Blend together until everything is combined and hummus is smooth. Serve with pita bread, veggies, or crackers. Makes 12 one-third cup servings.



# Growing up as Iowa farmers of potatoes, onions

In north-central Iowa, farming isn't just a profession for the families behind Kittleson Brothers—it's a lifelong calling rooted in tradition, community, and a deep respect for the land. For more than 100 years, onions have been part of the farm's story, connecting generations of growers who share a simple goal: produce high-quality food for the people around them. Today, Kittleson Brothers is owned and operated by Steve and Beth Rachut alongside Adam and Rosalie Koch. Located in St. Ansgar, Iowa, the operation grows and packs onions and potatoes for customers across the region. The farm produces 45 acres of onions and 45 acres of potatoes, distributing fresh

vegetables to more than 30 grocery stores throughout Iowa. Twice each week, a delivery route carries their crops to local retailers, while additional onions move wholesale to repackers in Minnesota and Wisconsin. From October through May, customers can also buy directly from the farm at the warehouse store, where neighbors stop in daily to pick up locally grown produce.

All of the crops are grown near Fertile, Iowa, before being transported during harvest back to the packing and storage facility in St. Ansgar. It's a system built on efficiency, but more importantly, on trust with the customers who rely on them.

## Meet an Onion Grower

Steve Rachut grew up on a farm near Osage, Iowa, where his passion for agriculture started early. At age 12, he launched "Steve's Sweet Corn," selling produce he grew himself. In high school, he expanded into onions through his FFA project. Steve earned a degree in Agricultural Business from Iowa State University in 2004 and continued farming while supporting his family's operation. Onion production runs deep in his family—his grandfather began growing onions in the 1930s—making Steve a third-generation onion grower and sixth-generation American farmer.

Beth Rachut, raised on a farm near Guthrie Center, Iowa, holds a degree in Agricultural Communications from Iowa State. She built a career in conservation, manure management, and agricultural recruiting before joining Kittleson Brothers in 2019. Her expertise in marketing, billing, and customer service helped grow the business. In 2024, she transitioned to farming full time and is a seventh-generation American farmer.

Adam Koch also grew up near Osage on a livestock and row crop farm. He developed an interest in produce early and gained experience working for Steve's Sweet Corn. A 2021 Iowa State graduate in Agricultural Education, Adam



### Steve, Beth Rachut and Adam & Rosalie Koch

joined Kittleson Brothers full time after college and became a partner in 2023, representing the sixth generation of his family in farming.

**L**ooking ahead, the farm's future depends not only on the land, but also on the people who will care for it. Kittleson Brothers has begun working with local school districts to employ high school students interested in agriculture who may not otherwise have the opportunity to gain farm experience. These students work alongside the team, learning about everything from agronomy to marketing and

customer relations. It's a partnership that benefits everyone involved. Students gain practical experience and exposure to agricultural careers, while the farm helps cultivate the next generation of agricultural leaders. The operation also continues investing in updated facilities, improved food safety practices, and stronger branding to prepare for expanding markets.

