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Consumer Newsletter



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In Season

Sweet onion season is here, bringing a mild, crisp flavor that makes them perfect for salads, grilling, and fresh summer dishes. Sweet, also known as spring/summer onions, tend to have a higher water content compared to Fall/Winter varieties. Water content makes them more susceptible to bruising and reduces their shelf life. To extend their shelf life, wrap onions in paper towels or newspaper, then place in the refrigerator.



National Salad Month

May is recognized as National Salad Month, and there's really no better time to reset your eating habits in a simple, realistic way. As the weather warms up and fresh produce becomes more available, salads naturally become more appealing—not as a side dish, but as a satisfying, flexible meal.

Eating healthier doesn't have to mean strict diets or complicated recipes. A salad can be as easy as tossing together a few fresh ingredients you already enjoy. Start with a base of leafy greens, then add color and texture with vegetables like tomatoes, cucumbers, or even thinly sliced onions for a little extra flavor. From there, you can build it into a full meal with grilled chicken, beans, eggs, or nuts.

National Salad Month is a reminder that eating better doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes it's as simple as choosing fresh ingredients, mixing them together, and enjoying food that makes you feel good.





The Onionista

Got a message for the Onionista? Write to
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.

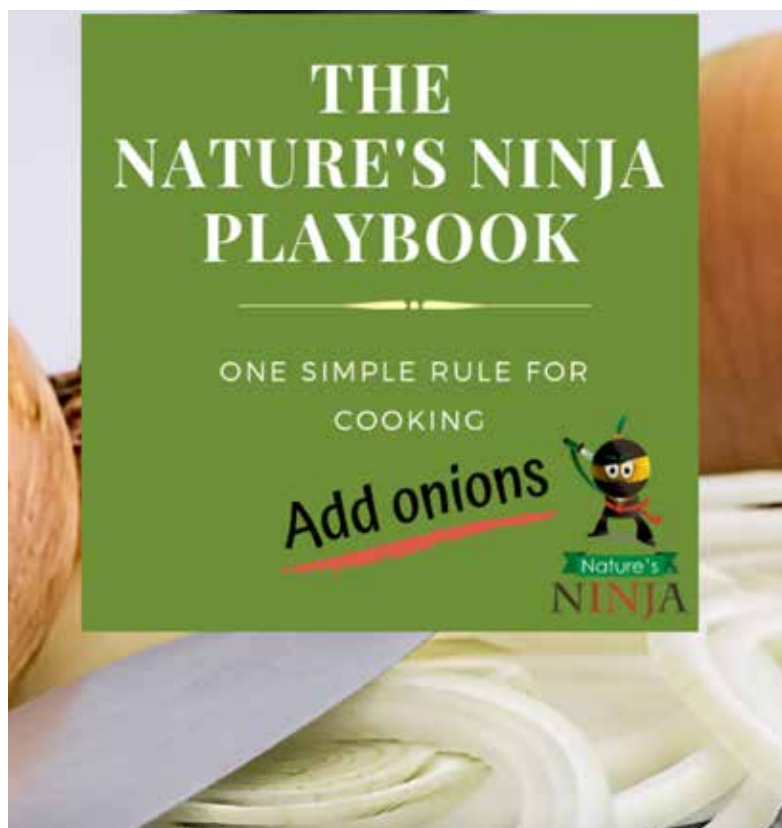
Members of NOA rely on the non-profit trade association for

up-to-date information, government representation, industry-wide networking, as well as consumer outreach. Visit www.onions-usa.org 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.



Grad-party food ideas

Easy, crowd-pleasing dishes

Graduation season is here, and that means it's time to celebrate with family, friends, and—of course—great food. Whether you're hosting a backyard gathering or a casual open house, the key to a successful grad party menu is keeping things simple, flexible, and easy to serve. The goal? Foods guests can grab, enjoy, and get back to celebrating.

Build a Menu Around Easy-to-Eat Favorites

Think finger foods, small bites, and make-ahead dishes. Sliders, wraps, pasta salads, and snack boards all work well because they don't require formal seating or complicated serving.

A slider bar is always a hit—offer pulled pork, chicken, or burgers with a variety of toppings like cheese, pickles, and thinly sliced onions for a little extra crunch and flavor. It lets guests customize without adding extra work for you.

You can get fancy, too, with these [Maibock Mushroom, Caramelized Onion and Goat Cheese Sliders](#).



Go Big on Make-Ahead Dishes

Graduation day can be busy, so choose foods you can prep in advance. Pasta salads, potato salads, and layered dips can all be made the night before and pulled out when guests arrive.

Try a simple pasta salad with fresh vegetables, a light dressing, and a handful of diced red onion for brightness. It adds flavor without overpowering the dish and holds up well in the fridge. Or, try this [Sweet Onion Pasta Salad with Creamy Herb Dressing](#).



Keep It Fresh and Seasonal

May and early summer bring plenty of fresh produce that's perfect for party spreads. Fruit trays, veggie platters, and crisp salads help balance out heavier foods and keep things feeling light.

A fresh veggie tray with dips is an easy win. Pair carrots, cucumbers, and peppers with ranch or hummus—and include a few mild onion slices for guests who want a little extra bite. This [Caramelized Sweet Onion Hummus](#) recipe is super inexpensive and easy to make,

with great taste and a perfect accompaniment for your veggie trays!



Don't Forget the Grill

If you're hosting outdoors, the grill can do a lot of the work for you. Kabobs are especially party-friendly—thread chicken or steak with vegetables like peppers and onions for a colorful, easy-to-serve option. These [Teriyaki Grilled Skewers with Mango Dipping Sauce](#) will go fast.



For a healthier option, try these [Turkey and Onion Meatball Kabobs](#).

Grilled foods not only taste great, but they also keep your kitchen from getting crowded.

Add a Simple "Signature" Touch

You don't need a complicated menu to make your party feel special. One standout item—like a homemade dip, a unique slider topping, or a flavorful spread—can elevate the whole table.

Caramelized onions, for example, can be made ahead and added to burgers, flatbreads, or even a simple cheese board for a richer, slightly sweet flavor. Pickled onions also provide a generous tang and crunch to any offering. You can make them a week ahead and pull them out when you're ready.

Keep It Low-Stress

At the end of the day, graduation parties are about celebrating a milestone—not spending hours in the kitchen. Choose recipes you're comfortable with, prep what you can ahead of time, and don't be afraid to keep things simple.

Good food, good company, and a relaxed host make the best combination.



Recipe box

CATEGORY: Toppings

PREP TIME: 30 minutes

COOK TIME:
3 minutes

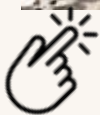


Easy Pickled Onions

1 red onion
2 TBSP brown sugar
1 cup Red Wine Vinegar

Directions

Add the vinegar and brown sugar to a microwave-safe bowl and heat for about 3 minutes, until the sugar dissolves. Pour the warm mixture over your sliced red onions and let them soak for at least 30 minutes.



Click photo for video recipe

Click photos below for recipes



**Pickled Onion
Turkey Burger**



**Chinese Style Bao
Buns w/Pickled Red
Onions**



**Wine and Brine
Pickled Onion Rings**



**Pickled Ginger
Onion Relish**

5 simple ways to eat better without overthinking it

Here are five realistic Ways to Eat Better that you can actually stick with:

1. Add One Extra Vegetable to Every Meal

You don't need to overhaul your plate—just build on what you're already eating. Toss spinach into eggs, add sliced tomatoes to sandwiches, or throw an extra veggie into pasta or stir-fry. It's one of the easiest Ways to Eat Better without changing your routine.

2. Drink More Water (Without Overthinking It)

Skip complicated hydration goals. Just keep a water bottle nearby and take a few extra sips throughout the day. Pair it with something you already do—like drinking

water before your morning coffee or with every meal.

3. Plan Only 2–3 Meals Ahead

Instead of mapping out an entire week (and feeling overwhelmed), try planning just a couple of meals at a time. This flexible approach is one of the most practical Ways to Eat Better, especially for busy families juggling changing schedules.

4. Keep Simple Ingredients on Hand

Stock your kitchen with go-to basics you can mix and match—things like eggs, rice, pasta, fresh vegetables, and proteins. When you have easy options ready, it's much simpler to make better choices without extra effort.

5. Don't Aim for Perfect—Aim for Better

Healthy eating doesn't have to be all or nothing. If you add one

more vegetable, drink a little more water, or cook one extra meal at home this week—you're already moving in the right direction. The most sustainable Ways to Eat Better are the ones that don't feel like a burden.

A May reset isn't about doing everything at once. It's about choosing one small habit and building from there.



Consumption of onions may prevent gastric ulcers by inhibiting the growth of ulcer-forming micro-organism *Helicobacter pylori*. This is significant because good “gut health” is strongly associated with prevention of chronic diseases and healthy aging.

Did You Know?

Fresh bulb onions come in several varieties, each with unique flavor profiles and culinary uses. **Red onions** have a deep purple-red skin and a mild, slightly sweet flavor, making them ideal for raw applications such as salads, sandwiches, and pickling. **White onions** feature a papery white skin and a sharper, more pungent taste, which mellows when cooked; they are often used in Mexican cuisine, salsas, and stir-fries.

Yellow onions are the most common, with a golden-brown skin and a balanced, robust flavor that becomes sweet when caramelized, making them perfect for soups, stews, and roasts.

Sweet onions, such as Vidalia, Walla Walla, Texas 1015s or Sweetie Sweets have a pale skin and very high sugar content, resulting in a milder, almost sugary taste; they are best enjoyed raw in salads or lightly cooked to preserve their sweetness. Choosing the right onion enhances a dish, balancing flavor, aroma, and texture.

Blog

The \$5 Meal Comeback: Simple Dinners That Still Work in 2026

If you've ever had to make a little go a long way, none of this is new. Planning meals around what's already in the pantry, stretching ingredients across a few dinners, and keeping grocery trips focused—it's a rhythm many households have relied on before. And lately, more families are finding themselves back in that mindset to find cheap meals on a budget.

The idea of the \$5 meal hasn't disappeared. It's just shifted. It's less about hitting a strict number and more about using what you have, keeping waste low, and building meals that actually hold people over.

The idea of a \$5 meal isn't just about saving money — it's rooted in how many of us were raised. Families before us knew how to make do with what they had, especially during the Great Depression and World War II, when stretching food wasn't optional. Those lessons — using every ingredients, wasting nothing, and making meals from scratch — were passed down through the years. Even now, they still hold up, reminding us that simple meals can carry a lot of value.

Here are a few cheap meals on a budget that still make sense right now.

Cabbage and Sausage Skillet

Cabbage still does what it has always done — feed a lot of people for very little. Slice it up, add a small amount of sausage for flavor, and cook it down with onions. This is the kind of meal that stretches further than it looks and reheats well the next day.

Egg and Potato Hash

Potatoes and eggs are steady, reliable, and easy to keep on hand. Dice the potatoes, cook them with onions until they're crisp, then top with eggs. It works for dinner just as well as breakfast, and you can adjust portions depending on what you've got left. We found a good tutorial from [Chef Buck here](#).



Rice and Beans with Seasoning

This one hasn't changed for a reason. Rice and beans are still one of the most affordable, filling combinations out there. The difference comes from how you build flavor—broth, spices, and sautéed onions turn it from basic to something you'll actually want to eat again.

Tomato Soup and Grilled Cheese

A fallback meal that still holds up. Use pantry tomato soup and stretch your cheese across sandwiches instead of overloading them. It's simple, familiar, and works when you need something quick that doesn't cost much. Have some leftover bacon or ham? Try this [Uptown Grilled Cheese with Sweet Onion Jam recipe](#).

How to Keep Costs Low (Without Starting Over)

If you already know how to budget, this is just a return to what works:

- Stretch meat instead of centering meals around it
- Build meals from what's already in your pantry first
- Use onions, potatoes, rice, and other staples to carry dishes further.
- Watch for sales, but don't buy more than you'll actually use

Budget cooking in 2026 isn't about learning something new — it's about getting back to habits that have worked before. Meals like these aren't flashy, but they're dependable, and they still get food on the table without adding more pressure to the grocery bill.

Ready for some fun kids activities?

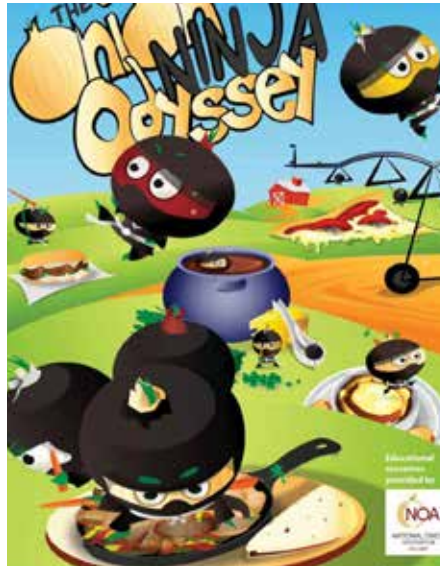
There are bound to be times when the little ones need something to do so you can get everything else done!

Nature's Ninja to the rescue. The NOA has created these one-of-a-kind, downloadable coloring books, filled with fun pictures and an educational stories. 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.

[Ollie and Olivia's Kitchen Adventure](#) is filled with artwork that enforces the uses of onions in all of our meals, from spaghetti sauce, burgers and Mexican foods.

The NOA also has a downloadable activities book. But like all action heroes, our ninja has to grow and train to become Nature's Ninja.

[Click here to download activities for pre-schoolers.](#)



Busy Hands

Did you know writing by hand makes kids smarter?

The use of pen and paper gives the brain more 'hooks' to hang your memories on. Writing by hand creates much more activity in the sensorimotor parts of the brain. A lot of senses are activated by pressing the pen on paper, seeing the letters you write and hearing the sound you make while writing. These sense experiences create contact between different parts of the brain and open the brain up for learning. We both learn better and remember better," says professor Audrey Van der Meer at NTNU.

She believes children being should be challenged to draw and write at an early age. Today's digital reality is that typing, tapping and screen time are a big part of children's and adolescents' everyday lives.

"Given the development of the last several years, we risk having one or more generations lose the ability to write by hand. Our research and that of others show that this would be a very unfortunate consequence" of increased digital activity, says Meer.

Read more about the benefits of coloring books at scholastic.com.



Video Recipe



Caramelized Onion & Corn Soup

Caramelized Onion and Corn Soup is one of those recipes that feels a little special without asking much from you.

It starts with sweet onions cooked low and slow until they turn golden and rich, building a deep flavor that carries the whole dish. A quick splash of lemon juice lifts everything, while corn adds a subtle sweetness that balances the savory notes.

Once simmered and blended,

the soup becomes smooth and creamy—without needing any heavy ingredients. Even better, it's incredibly budget-friendly at roughly \$1 per serving, making it a smart option for families looking to stretch their grocery dollars without sacrificing flavor.

It's just as good served warm on a cool evening as it is chilled for a lighter option. A swirl of yogurt and a drizzle of olive oil on top give it a simple finish that looks polished but takes seconds.



Ingredients

Serves: 4.

Prep time: 45-50 minutes.

3 tablespoons olive oil

3 medium sweet onions

1 1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt

1 tablespoons lemon juice

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

2 cups water

1 cup corn kernels (frozen or fresh)

Yogurt, optional (garnish)



Directions

Slice the tops and root-ends off the onions, and peel away the outer layer. Then slice the onions in half from top to root-end. And then finally, slice the onion into thin half moons. Heat a large soup pot over medium-high heat. Add in the olive oil and reduce the heat to medium-low. Add in the onions and stir so all of the onions are coated in the oil.

Continue to sauté for 10 minutes. Then add in sea salt, stir and continue to sauté for 10 more minutes. Turn the heat up to medium-high. Then pour in the lemon juice to deglaze the pan by stirring any brown bits from the bottom of the pan into the onions. Add in the black pepper and stir. Then add in the water and corn, and bring to a gentle boil.

Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer uncovered for 15 minutes (or until at least half of the liquid has reduced). Remove the soup from the heat and cool slightly. Transfer to a blender and process until completely smooth. Enjoy warm or chilled with a swirl of yogurt and more olive oil and black pepper on top.



Per serving: 199 calories; 3 grams protein; 25 grams carbohydrates; 11 grams fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 970 mg sodium; 3.2 grams fiber.

How one Wisconsin family grows better onions

Farming in southeastern Wisconsin's rich, dark soil sounds ideal—and in many ways, it is. But for the Kincaid family, it's also a constant balancing act of weather, changing markets, and new technology.

The farm grows several varieties of onions, each chosen for flavor, quality, and how well they perform in the field. They're also constantly testing new types, looking for better ways to bring high-quality onions to market.

One of the biggest changes on the farm is the use of new technology. Tools like laser weeders and smart sprayers help reduce the need for chemicals while improving efficiency. The result? Healthier crops, less waste, and better onions for con-

sumers. In fact, these advances have helped boost yields and improve the size and quality of the onions you see in stores.

Much of the land sits on "muck soil," which is rich in nutrients but slowly breaks down over time. The Kincaids are working to adapt by improving drainage, testing new soil types, and fine-tuning how they manage nutrients—steps that help protect both the land and the food it produces.

Sustainability is a big focus, too. The farm uses practices like soil testing, targeted fertilizer use, and cover crops to reduce environmental impact. They also give back, donating thousands of pounds of onions each year to help feed families in need.

Meet an Onion Grower

Dean Kincaid Inc., based in Palmyra, Wisconsin, has been growing crops for three generations. What started in 1950 has grown into a modern family farm run by Corey and Stacey Kincaid, along with their extended family. Today, they farm about 2,500 acres across several counties, focusing mainly on onions.

While the farm was once much larger, the Kincaids made a deliberate shift toward long-term environmental stewardship. Portions of their land have been transitioned into solar energy production and restored wetlands, supporting habitat conservation, improving soil and water health, and reducing their overall environmental footprint.



The Kincaid Family

When people think of Wisconsin, cheese

usually comes to mind—but but the state's farms produce so much more. Agriculture is a major part of everyday life in Wisconsin, supplying food for families across the country and around the world.

Each year, Wisconsin farmers grow a wide range of crops that end up in grocery stores, restaurants, and home kitchens. Dairy remains the state's biggest agricultural product, with millions of cows producing milk used for cheese, butter, and yogurt. But beyond dairy, Wisconsin fields are busy growing corn and

soybeans, two staple crops used in everything from cooking oils to livestock feed.

Potatoes are another standout. Wisconsin consistently ranks among the top potato-producing states, known for high-quality spuds used for fries, chips, and fresh meals. The state is also a major producer of snap beans, especially for canning and freezing—those green beans on your dinner plate may very well come from Wisconsin.

Fresh vegetables are a growing part of the story, too. Sweet corn, carrots, peas, and onions are widely grown during the warmer months, offering seasonal



flavor and nutrition. Wisconsin's rich soils, including its unique muck soils, help produce vegetables with strong flavor and quality.

Fruit production also plays a role, with cranberries leading the way. In fact, Wisconsin is the top cranberry-producing state in the country, supplying more than half of the U.S. crop each year.

What makes Wisconsin agriculture special is its diversity. Large and small farms alike contribute to a steady supply of food, while many families have been farming the same land for generations.

Next time you're shopping or cooking, there's a good chance something in your cart started on a Wisconsin farm—proof that the state's agricultural impact goes far beyond cheese.