

Food & Drink

Berry, Berry good Summertime welcomes back strawberries

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They're the sweetest sign that summer is here: Ontario strawberries, fresh from the fields in June and July.

Locally, residents are very lucky to have so many wonderful strawberry farms, so close to home, where they can pick or purchase our own berries. There is nothing quite like the look on a child's face as they select and pick a strawberry fresh from the field! And that excitement isn't shared only by children - it can be enjoyed by family members of all ages.

This strawberry season is going to be a busy and exciting one - Ontario Berry Growers have added new varieties to their patches for an extremely flavorful crop and an extended sea-

son. And with the cooler spring that we experienced this year, strawberry season and the end of school will coincide nicely - meaning those who go out and pick their own can get lots of help from the kids who will be available to pick strawberries when they are at their peak of ripeness.

A trip to a local farm is a wonderful way to spend a morning or afternoon outdoors - just don't forget the sunblock!

Many of the farms offer visitors an opportunity to pick or purchase a variety of fruits and vegetables, jams and assorted home-made goodies.

Some farms have different activities for the kids to try while you are there - you can check the paper to see what is going on and where!

The delicious flavor of Ontario strawberries can be enjoyed fresh out of hand or in home-made summer pies, cakes, desserts and salads.

Extending the enjoyment of strawberry season is easily achieved by making jam or by freezing the berries for later use.

Strawberries make a quick, delicious and nutritious snack anyway you eat them.

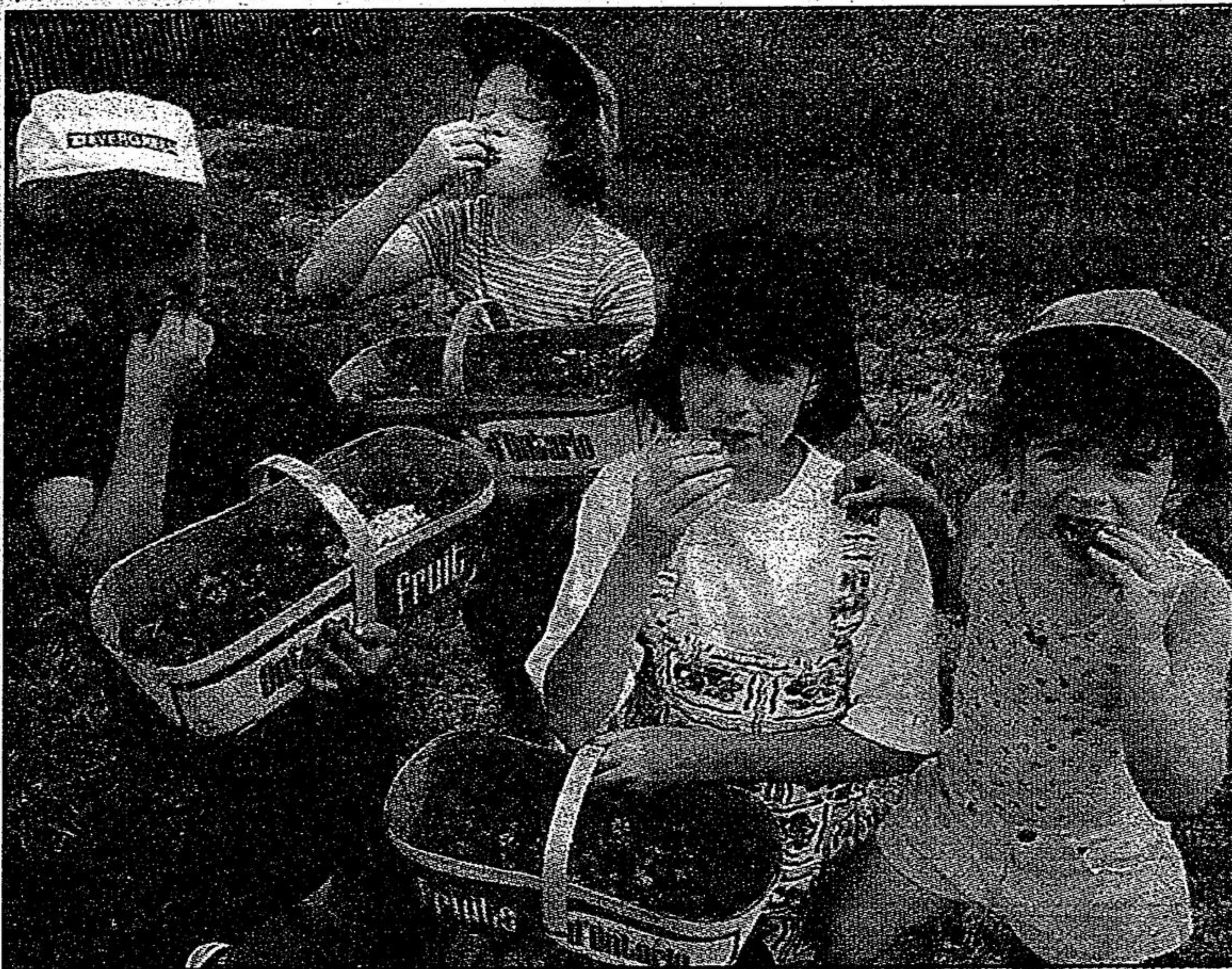
They are an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of folate, potassium and dietary fiber.

Choose Ontario strawberries that are plump, bright red and uniform in colour without white or greens spots.

Once picked, strawberries will not ripen any further as many other fruits do.

If you choose strawberries with the bright green hulls still attached, they will keep longer.

It is important to note that the size of the strawberry is not an indicator of its flavor, but rather, the flavor and size of the fruit depends on the variety and maturity of the strawberry.



Danielle Barbuzzi, Erin O'Halloran, Rosslyn Barbuzzi and Miranda Barbuzzi enjoyed some tasty field fresh strawberries during a visit to a local berry farm last summer. Though this year's strawberry crop is going to be a bit late, estimates are calling for berries to be available for picking within the next five to seven days, there are still plenty of opportunities to enjoy strawberries and strawberry recipes. For the latest information on availability of pick your own berries, call Foodland Ontario's Berry Hotline at 1-800-263-3262.

Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN



Food for Thought

Lisa Cartwright

Simple ingredients readily available

Strawberry shortcake

Finally - it is strawberry season. And what better way to eat strawberries than in a delicious strawberry shortcake.

Strawberry shortcake is inexpensive to make and easy to whip together.

All it takes is piles of sweet and juicy Ontario strawberries, some cool whipped cream and a pound cake - all which can be purchased at local grocery stores.

Take a light or regular pound cake and slice it into 12 pieces. (No Frills has pound cake for \$1.99 for 375 grams).

Crush four cups of strawberries (if you can't wait for the Ontario berries, California strawberries are on for \$2.49 for an one pound box at No Frills) and alternate them with the pound cake.

Top it off with whole or halved strawberries and a generous scoop or two of whipped cream.

Dominion, A&P and Ultra Food and Drug all have Nutriwhip on for \$2.29. Loblaw's has Cool Whip on for \$2.29 for a one litre tub or, (if you prefer real whipped cream) No Frills has a carton of whipping cream for \$2.39 and Village Grocer has it for \$1.99).

the strawberry you select will be passion for freshly-picked Ontario strawberries.

At the end of the day you will have discovered you have a new So pick early and pick often - the season is short, but sweet.

Once you have your strawberries at home, they should be sorted, separating any damaged berries as soon as possible.

These berries can be used in recipes where only flavor is a concern.

Place your strawberries in the refrigerator unwashed and uncovered. They will keep uncovered in the fridge for approximately three days.

For best flavor, allow strawberries to reach room temperature before serving.

If you have never picked a strawberry fresh from the vine, this is the year to do it.

The experience will not only be fun and fascinating, the taste of

Strawberry picking tips

Here a few tips from Foodland Ontario for a strawberry picking trip:

- Check with the farm you are going to before setting out to make sure that what you are after is available, and if you need any special equipment or containers for picking.
- Dress properly. Cool, loose and washable clothes are best and always take along a good hat and sunblock. Running shoes, work shoes or rubber boots are recommended.
- Cooler mornings and late afternoons are preferred by many pickers.
- Bring along an old towel, mat or section of newspaper to kneel on in the field.
- Remember to bring insect repellent.
- Bring along a lightweight flask of water or juice.
- Check some recipes before setting out so you'll know what to do with your harvest and how many strawberries you'll need to pick.

Strawberry Shortcake

RECIPE

BERRY SHORTCAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 light or regular 320 g (12 oz. approx) pound cake
- 1L (4 cups) crushed Ontario Strawberries
- 375 mL (1 1/2 cups) whipped cream
- 250 mL (1 cup) halved or whole fresh Ontario Strawberries

(Fresh or fresh frozen raspberries or blueberries may be substituted)

PREPARATION

- Slice cake into 12 slices
- Spoon 500 mL (2 cups) fresh Ontario strawberries over six slices
- Place remaining cake slices on top and spoon remaining crushed berries over all
- Top with whipped cream and halved or whole berries

Serve as is