

Sesame Seeds (Grain and Seeds)

Interesting facts: Sesame seeds are one of the oldest condiments known to man. Sesame seeds are highly valued for the oil which is resistant to rancidity. "Open sesame"—the famous phrase from the Arabian Nights—reflects the distinguishing feature of the sesame seed pod, which bursts open when it reaches maturity.

How to select: Sesame seeds are generally available in prepackaged containers as well as bulk bins. Just as with any other food that you can purchase in the bulk section, make sure that the bins containing the sesame seeds are covered and that the store has a good product turnover to ensure maximal freshness.

What to avoid: Whether purchasing sesame seeds in bulk or in a packaged container, make sure there is no evidence of moisture. Additionally, since they have a high oil content and can become rancid, smell those in bulk bins to ensure that they smell fresh.

How to store: Unhulled sesame seeds can be stored in an airtight container in a cool, dry, dark place. Once the seeds are hulled, they are more prone to rancidity, so they should then be stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

How to use sesame seeds: Tahini, one of the main ingredients of hummus, is made from roasted sesame seeds and vegetable oil ground into a thin paste. You can also make a light salad dressing out of tahini. Sesame seeds can also be roasted crushed and then sprinkled over salads. This will give you more variety and flavor than your typical salad. Add raw sesame seeds to any side dish to add crunch and flavor. For instance, you can add to vegetable or bean dishes. Sesame oil is a great option to try to incorporate in your cooking.

Recipe idea:

South Pacific Chicken: 1-2 pounds of chicken pieces, breasts and thighs, bone and skin on. Mix together: 1 teaspoon of powdered mustard ½ cup tamari (wheat free soy sauce), 2 tablespoons sesame seeds, 2-3 cloves minced garlic and pour over chicken pieces. Broil: 10-15 minutes basting frequently. Grate 1 tablespoon of fresh ginger and add 1 pound of apricots or peaches cut and quartered. Broil: another 10 minutes, basting as needed. Serve warm.