

Sunflower Seeds (Grain and Seeds)

Interesting facts: Sunflower seeds grow from the center of the flowers. Each sunflower head can contain as many as 1000 to 2000 seeds. Sunflower seeds are an excellent source of vitamin E, the body's primary fat-soluble antioxidant.

How to select: Sunflower seeds are sold either shelled or unshelled and are generally available in prepackaged containers as well as bulk bins. Just as with any other food that you may purchase in the bulk section, make sure that the bins containing the sunflower seeds are covered and that the store has a good product turnover to ensure the seeds' maximal freshness.

What to avoid: Make sure that the shells are not broken or dirty. Additionally, they should be firm and not have a limp texture. When purchasing shelled seeds, avoid those that appear yellowish in color as they have probably gone rancid; In addition, if you are purchasing sunflower seeds from a bulk bin, smell them to ensure that they are still fresh and have not spoiled.

How to store: Since sunflower seeds have a high fat content and are prone to rancidity, it is best to store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator. They can also be stored in the freezer since the cold temperature will not greatly affect their texture or flavor.

How to use sunflower seeds: Add sunflower seeds to your favorite tuna, chicken or turkey salad recipe. Garnish mixed green salads with sunflower seeds. Adding sunflower seeds to scrambled eggs will give them a unique taste and texture. Use fine ground sunflower seeds to dust your meats with in place of flour. Sprinkle sunflower seeds onto hot and cold cereals.