



The onion

Vegetable plant of the liliaceae family, the onion has been cultivated for 5000 years in Central Asia. It arrived in France following the Christopher Columbus's second voyage of 1493. Today it is cultivated in China, Turkey, India, Russia and the United States.

In France, it is principally cultivated in the East and in Brittany.

The onion is both a vegetable and a condiment

Choice

Many varieties of onion exist : they differ in colour and in the shape of their bulb. White or spring onions are sold in bunches, Other onions can be yellow (available all the year round), red or pink (sold from June to March). A good onion is firm, shiny, without shoots or soft, damp patches, and should have a dry, crackly skin. Choose ones with the smallest 'collars'.

Consumption

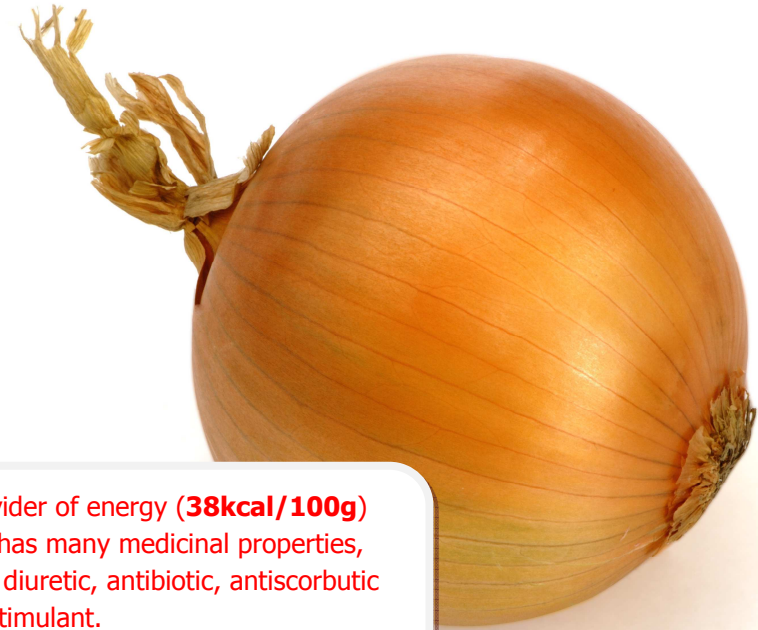
Onions can be eaten fresh, semi-dried or dried. White or spring onions are eaten in salads or on their own. Yellow onions can be eaten in different ways depending on their origin : spanish onions can be stuffed, button onions used for decorating, strong onions for making soups, tarts and purees or, studded with a clove, used to flavour stock. Red or pink onions are more often eaten raw in salads and have a sweeter flavour.

Conservation

Onions must be kept in a cool, dry well ventilated place otherwise they rapidly begin to rot. They will not keep more than a week in a refrigerator.



Particularly appreciated by the Egyptians, the onion was part of the offerings made to the Gods..and constituted the salary of the slaves who erected the pyramids.



A low provider of energy (**38kcal/100g**) the onion has many medicinal properties, however : diuretic, antibiotic, antiscorbutic and as a stimulant.



PREPARATION

So as not to cry when you are peeling onions, put them first in the freezer for about 10 mins or for an hour in the refrigerator or cut them up under water.



COOKING

Dried onions are eaten cooked : they are indigestible raw. Red onions often become less scented when cooked than yellow ones.



PRESENTATION

Remember to keep some of the green stem of spring onions for decoration.

RECIPE SUGGESTIONS

Mini beef brochettes with fresh ginger and red onions
Endive and spring onion tart tatin

Find these recipes on <http://www.atelierdeschefs.com/>