

Food from the Field

Edamame is a special type of large-seeded soybean with a sweet, nutty flavor. Local farmers now grow this traditional Asian vegetable so you can take advantage of its great taste and health benefits.

Buying local produce not only gives you fresh, nutritious food, but also enhances your community by keeping small farmers in business, preserving farmland and protecting the environment.

If these things are important to you, visit a farmers' market weekly during the growing season and look for locally grown produce at your grocery store. Make a difference with your food dollars!

Selecting Edamame

The edible portions of this plant are the beans inside the pod.

- For best flavor, buy edamame pods attached to the plant.
- Select plants with pods that are completely green; avoid pods that are starting to yellow.
- Harvest time is mid-August through September.

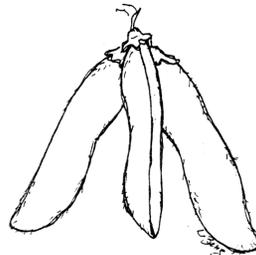
Storage

Edamame is best used within 24 hours of harvesting. If this is not possible, wrap entire plant in plastic bag and refrigerate immediately to preserve sweetness. Use within 7-14 days.

How to Use Edamame

When ready to prepare, remove the bean pods from the plant. Place in boiling water and cook 3 to 5 minutes. Drain and let cool for a few minutes. Remove beans from pods; discard pods. Edamame can also be steamed or microwaved. Edamame release a sweet, pleasant aroma when cooked.

- As a snack, use thumb and forefinger to squeeze beans from pod – you will soon be able to aim directly into your mouth!
- For a vegetable side dish, shell the beans, and then toss with a bit of olive oil and a sprinkle of salt.
- Use cooked beans to add texture and give a protein boost to salad or mixed vegetables.
- Edamame is a good addition to stir-fry dishes.
- Add to soups, such as minestrone or stew.
- For recipe cards, contact the Cooperative Extension office or Web site listed on the back panel.



How Nutritious is Edamame ?

Very! Their protein is abundant and high quality – approaching that of meat in their amino acid balance. A one-half cup serving of edamame contributes 11 grams of protein towards the average adult requirement of 46-63 grams per day.

Here are some nutrient highlights of what you will find in half a cup of these great tasting, versatile soybeans:

- *Calcium* not only builds strong bones and teeth, but also helps prevent heart disease and colon cancer: 130 mg, nearly as much as half a cup of milk.
- *Iron* carries oxygen throughout the body, so brain and muscles work optimally, preventing fatigue: 22% of a man's RDA for iron, and 15% of a woman's.
- *Potassium* makes for a regular heartbeat and normalizes blood pressure: 485 mg.
- *Folate* is a B-vitamin that helps fight heart disease and prevent certain birth defects: 25% of the adult RDA.
- *Phytoestrogens* are abundant – see the back panel for details.

Enjoying Edamame

Nothing is more satisfying on a hot summer day than a cool vegetable salad, crisp and full of the fresh flavors of summer. Try this salad as a delicious introduction to edamame – your family will ask for more!

Edamame and Corn Salad

1 cup cooked and shelled edamame
1 cup frozen sweet corn, thawed
2 medium tomatoes, diced
4 green onions, sliced
1-2 cloves of garlic, minced
1 tablespoon coarsely chopped fresh cilantro
(If fresh is not available, substitute fresh basil or parsley, not dried.)
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
2 tablespoons olive oil

Mix all ingredients in medium bowl. Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour for flavors to blend. Makes about 4 cups.

At lunch

Spoon generously over tossed salad. Serve with your favorite bread.

At dinner

Serve as a vegetable with any main dish such as pasta, fish or chicken, and a tossed salad.

Phytoestrogens

Edamame contain phytoestrogens, which are estrogens that plants produce. Three commonly researched ones are the isoflavones called genistein, daidzein and glycitein. Numerous research studies show that phytoestrogens play an important role in good health:

- Help fight heart disease by increasing “good” HDL cholesterol and lowering “bad” LDL cholesterol levels.
- Help prevent breast cancer in premenopausal women.
- Lower the risk of heart disease and osteoporosis in post-menopausal women without raising cancer risk.
- Promote prostate health, possibly preventing cancer.
- Act as an antioxidant, protecting cells from damage.

This research was supported with funds from the WSU IMPACT Center in cooperation with Washington State University Cooperative Extension. By Gayle Povia Alleman, M.S. R.D. and Carol Miles, Ph.D., with artwork by Leslie Zenz. 1999. For more information contact WSU Vancouver Research and Extension Unit (360) 576-6030, or visit our Web site <http://agsyst.wsu.edu>.

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Edamame

A delicious, fresh soybean,
also called vegetable
soybean or sweet beans.



Food from the Field Series