

CoosemansLosAngeles
Wholesale + Shipping
October Uncommon Report

Quince – Fall Fruit Magic

Growing on an attractive ornamental tree this unique lumpy golden fruit has white flesh with a hard, dry texture and an extremely tart, astringent taste. It is stated in literature that Roman suitors used to give quince to their lovers as a sign of commitment. Perhaps because when treated with love, this fruit changes from bitter to sweet; maybe because the fruit magically changes color from white to pink, like one's heart. For cooks with patience, imagination and a little skill, quince is the uncommon magical fruit everyone welcomes to their fall and winter table.



Quince is harvested from a small fruit tree that's botanically in the rose family. This makes quince also related to apples and pears. Common quince is native to Iran, Turkey, and perhaps Greece and the Crimea. Some scholars speculate that quince may have been the true forbidden fruit of Adam and Eve fame. It's not hard to imagine that the voluptuous apple shape, inviting golden skin, and alluring floral aroma of quince could easily have tempted Eve to take a bite.

The ripe, raw fruit has a strong and fragrant aroma with an astringent taste. When cooked, quince takes on a pink color and makes an excellent preserve. Quince contains so much pectin, that traditionally it was used as an added ingredient in jellies and jams that feature fruits such as strawberries and peaches. It is still commonly used in conserves and seasonal fall compotes,

condiments and stews. California is the only state in the U.S. that grows quince commercially, and there are only about 300 acres, mostly in the San Joaquin Valley. Harvested from mid-August to early

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November, the fruit stores well and is generally available through January. If the thought of spring without quince makes you wince, there are small shipments imported from Chile the months of March to May.

Those willing to take the time to prepare quince are rewarded with a floral aroma and an apple and pear flavor accented by a surprising attractive pink flesh. When quince is cooked, heat and acidity convert the compounds in the raw fruit to anthocyanins; this chemical reaction is what colors the flesh and diminishes the astringency of the raw fruit. Common cooking techniques include baking and poaching - featuring this fruit in pies, tarts and crumbles is common. When used in apple pie, quince is counted on to add a bit of a contrast with color and distinctive flavor. Try a [Vanilla Scented Pear and Quince Pie](#) for a unique dessert or [Quince Pancakes](#) for a special seasonal brunch. The flavor of quince plays especially well with cinnamon, vanilla, nutmeg and cloves.



The natural tartness of quince makes it a great companion to rich, savory foods such as foie gras. [Chef Alfred Portale of the Gotham Bar & Grill](#) in New York City created a dish with [sautéed Hudson Valley duck foie gras, quince wedges](#) and pomegranate. The quince is poached until tender in a light syrup of tangerine juice and peel, cloves, ginger, cinnamon and sugar and served on a reduction of pomegranate juice and red wine vinegar.

Quince can be a complement to buttery roasted chicken with chicken livers and onions. Be sure to blanch the quince for 50 seconds in boiling water first. In a nod to quince's role in Mid Eastern cuisine, make a stew or tagine of [Lamb, Okra and Quince](#) to celebrate this season of transition.

With its change of color and flavor, quince is truly one of the most uncommon items one can use in harvest menus. The bumpy outer yellow skin belies this fruit's culinary qualities of pink, pectin and pucker. Make the commitment to use some quince this fall.

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