

Three Simple Ways to Ripen Avocados

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Avocados have been very cheap lately, and in abundance, just in time for summer and salads and smoothies and guacamole and all those other avocado filled goodies we all enjoy.

When you buy avocados, it can be a bit hit and miss, choosing the fruit that is at peak ripeness, ready to enjoy. Sometimes they look good, and end up being rock hard. Other times look perfect, ready to eat, and they're soft and mushy. So here is the way to choose the perfect fruit every time.

- Turn the avocado to the thinner end and carefully remove the short stem (not all avocados in the stores will have the stem, but if it does....).
 - If the colour is green where the stem was, the avocado will be ripe and green inside.
 - If the colour is brown where the stem was, the avocado will be too ripe on the inside.
 - If the stem is not easily removed, the avocado isn't ripe yet.

How to ripen avocados in a paper bag.

1. Place avocado in a brown paper bag with two bananas or two apples (they release ethylene gas naturally, which will help with the ripening).
2. Seal the brown bag, making sure there are no gaps or holes. Fold the top over a few times to make sure it is closed. I use a bag clip to keep it closed, a clothes peg will do the same thing.
3. Leave it untouched, checking on the avocado once daily for ripeness.

How to ripen avocados in the microwave oven.

This is a quick method, but use it only in an avocado emergency. Too long in the microwave and the skin burns and smells terrible, and the fruit ends up warm and mushy.

1. Prick the skin of the avocado with a fork to vent the heat.
2. Place the avocado in the microwave and heat on a low setting for 30 seconds.
3. Remove the avocado from the microwave and test firmness with your finger.
4. Continue microwaving in 30-second intervals until the avocado is reasonably soft.

How to ripen avocados in the oven.

This is my least favourite method, for a few reasons, including the risk of cooking rather than ripening the fruit.

1. Heat oven to 100 degrees Celsius (you will need to pre-heat the oven for this to work)
2. Wrap the avocado in foil. This will create a container for the ethylene that will be released, that in turn will help with the ripening.
3. Place the avocado in a shallow dish and put it in the oven for 10-minute intervals, checking for ripeness each time. You'll need to watch the avocado ripens and not cook.