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Though Simon and Garfunkel weren't thinking of avocados when they wrote "Slip Sliding Away," this phrase might describe our experience trying to peel and pit an avocado.

Here's the "how-to" from the California Avocado Commission to help get a handle on this slippery fruit. (Yes, that's right! Avocados are a fruit.)

1. Start with a ripe avocado and cut it lengthwise around the seed. (NOTE: Thoroughly wash the fruit before you peel it.)
2. Rotate the halves to separate.
3. Remove the seed by sliding the tip of a spoon gently underneath it and lifting it out. The other common seed-extraction method —striking the seed with a knife — is dangerous and not recommended.
4. Peel the fruit by placing the cut side down and removing the skin with a knife or your fingers, starting at the small end. Or simply scoop out the avocado meat with a spoon. Be sure to sprinkle all cut surfaces with lemon or lime juice or white vinegar to prevent discoloration.

**TIP:** To ripen avocados, place them in a plain brown paper bag and store at room temperature. It will take about two to five days until they're ready to eat. To hasten ripening, place an apple in the paper bag with them.

To store a cut avocado, the California Avocado Commission recommends you "sprinkle it with lemon or lime juice or white vinegar and place it in an air-tight covered container in your refrigerator. Eat within a day or two."

"If refrigerated guacamole turns brown during storage," the Commission recommends discarding the top, browned layer. To help keep guacamole from changing color, "Lay plastic wrap directly on the surface of the mixture before covering. Refrigerate up to two days." Using a guacamole recipe that contains lemon or lime juice or vinegar also helps prevent browning.

Though avocados are high in fat, most of the fat is heart-healthy monounsaturated fat. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Avocados are loaded with nutrients such as dietary fiber, vitamin B6, vitamin C, vitamin E, potassium,

magnesium, and folate.

The majority of domestically grown avocados in the United States come from California, followed by Florida. One-fifth of a California avocado (about 1 oz.) of a medium California avocado provides 50 calories.