

Fun Onion Facts

*Everybody who has ever had to cut up a lot of strong onions knows what happens. It is literally a job that makes all of us cry. That is because onions contain sulfur, and when you cut the onion sulfur is released into the air. This air-borne sulfur reacts with the moisture in your eyes and creates a mild form of sulfuric acid! Your eyes tear up to flush this substance from your eyes.

*Native Americans ate wild onions and the Pilgrims brought onions with them on the Mayflower. Onions were eaten at the first Thanksgiving dinner.

*After slicing onions, wash your hands in cold water, then rub them with salt or vinegar. The salt or vinegar will remove onion smells from your hands.

*If you need only half of an onion, use the top half. The root will stay fresh longer in the refrigerator.

*Our word "onion" comes from the Latin "unio" meaning one or unity, because an onion grows as a single bulb.

*In ancient Egypt, the onion was a symbol of eternity because it is a circle-within-a-circle. The Pharaoh Cheops paid workers who built the Great Pyramid in onions, garlic, and parsley and onions were painted on the walls of the pyramids. Mummies were even buried with onions.

*Onions are a good source of Vitamin C and fiber. They are low in fat and calories. The antioxidants found in onions help prevent high blood pressure and some forms of cancer.

*Onions are a popular vegetable. Worldwide we grow about 50 million tons of onions a year! The average person eats about 13.7 pounds of onions a year. In the United States we chomp down about 18.6 pounds each per year, while in Libya, the average person eats 66.8 pounds of onions in a year!

Why do Onions Make You Cry??

A very old question indeed!

Exactly why is it that chopping and peeling onions makes our eyes water furiously???

Apparently during the process of slicing up these literal tear jerkers, an enzyme known as allinase and another compound called isothiocyanate get together and create a type of sulphuric vapour which gets into the eyes and irritates them no end.

There have been a lot of ideas over the years on how to not cry while chopping onions such as refrigerate them etc, but the only thing I can honestly say ever worked 100% for me was wearing ski goggles while I diced and sliced.

It does make you look a little strange....especially if you have people over, but hey, my friends will tell you I'm pretty strange anyway!

12 Interesting Ways to Use an Onion

1. Use an onion to clean your grill. That's your barbecue grill, incidentally: I don't think that rubbing onion on your own grill will do much for your oral hygiene. From Lifehacker via Apartment Therapy, is this tip to use your onion as a grill cleaner. Start by heating your grill very hot to burn off all of the extra grit and grime. Then, when the grill is off but still warm, rub the grill with a half-onion to loosen any detritus left on the metal. Here's my question, though: does Lifehacker write any of its own posts anymore? Or is it all just summaries of other people's posts with links and attributions?

2. Store your onion in old nylons and they will last for six months. If you take a (clean) stocking and put your onion in it, tying a knot after each onion so that it is isolated from the others, your onions will last much longer than otherwise. This apparently works best with yellow onions, but will also work with other types. Tip can be found on the packaging for onions at Trader Joe's!

3. Use goggles or hold a slice of bread in your mouth to avoid crying while cutting onions. This really never happens to me, anymore, but I do remember tearing up while slicing onions when I was younger. I wonder if wearing contacts has anything to do with it? Anyway, they now make goggles to combat tears while slicing onions, but my grandmother also showed me that if you put a piece of bread in your mouth—sticking out from your mouth at a 90 degree angle, it will absorb the onion fumes enough to keep you from crying.

3. Clean off oniony smell from hands with dry salt. Lemon juice is optional. This is a tip from an old cookbook: if your hands smell of onion, you can use salt as an exfoliating scrub to remove the smell. If you want, you can mix in a little lemon juice as well. Then your hands will smell like a margarita instead of an onion, so you know, win-win.

4. Clean off oniony smell from dishes with baking soda. From Tip-nut, oniony smell from dishes by mixing in a teaspoon of baking soda to the dishwasher.

5. "May help remove a wart." This cryptic claim comes to us from a user on clip marks without any kind of explanation. Luckily, Lifehackery offers a little bit more explanation for this claim:

6. Mix onion slices with crushed aspirin and a little water. Apply the solution to the wart. The onion's chemical content and the aspirin's active ingredients will gradually soothe the wart and make it subside. To maximize the solution's effect, apply some to a piece of duct tape. Stick the tape on the wart. After several hours, the lesion will be nothing more than a distant memory.

7. Soothe your insect bites. If you get stung by a bee or bitten by a mosquito this summer during your time in the Hamptons [cough], impress your friends by whipping out the cocktail

onion from your martini and rubbing it on your arm! According to Lifehackery, rubbing a half-onion onto an insect bite will ease the pain because of anti-inflammatory properties in the onion's enzymes.

8. Soothe a burn. This is along the same lines as the above tip, citing the magical anti-inflammatory qualities of onion "enzymes." I'm willing to try this one the next time I get a burn, though, since I've never been able to find anything that works to soothe a burn other than holding your hand under a faucet for an hour and a half, or that silver cream that you can only get in hospitals. Yes, I have an extensive burn history. Some day I'll tell you about it.

9. Insect repellent. Apparently, insects don't like onions. Which is interesting, because neither do humans—you know, when it's rubbed all over your body. I think I'm going to stick with DEET.

10. Remove the odor of paint. Another delightfully vague and mysterious tip from the bowels of the inter-webs. What paint? Why is paint such a problem? Why would you want to replace the smell with onion? This tip raises more questions than it answers.

11. To polish brass and other metals. Mix several crushed onion slices with water and apply to a dull metal object. Lifehackery admits that "the results may not come as quickly as commercial polishers," but insists that this "onion-based polish is good enough to be a worthy substitute." Right. Until you use it on your grandmother's silverware, and she comes over to dinner and wants to know why the silverware smells like it's already been used.

12. Acne treatment. This one is rich: those magical onion enzymes are also effective for "removing acne," simply mix crushed onion slices with water and apply this mixture to your face. If your face is made of metal, it should also give you a nice polish. Perhaps a pair of goggles would be a good idea in this case, since I don't think that a slice of bread is going to do you much good.