

# **The Super Fruit Avocado (*Persea americana* Mill.): World Production, Health Benefits and Uses**

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## **Abstract**

Avocado (*Persea americana* Mill.) is a member of the Lauraceae, originated in southern Mexico (Chiapas) and Guatemala-Honduras. The species can be divided into three geographic races: *P. americana* Mill. var. *americana* (West Indian or the Antillean race), *P. americana* Mill. var. *guatemalensis* L. Wans. (Guatemalan race), and *P. americana* Mill. var. *drymifolia* Blake (Mexican race). The three races increase in their tropical adaptation from Mexican (subtropical) to Guatemalan to West Indian race. Avocado production in 2016 ranks 10<sup>th</sup> after *Musa* (bananas and plantains), apples, citrus, grapes, mangos/mangosteens/guavas, pears, peaches/nectarines, papayas, and plums. The top ten avocado producer countries in the last ten years (2007-2016) are Mexico, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Peru, Columbia, USA, Chile, Brazil, Kenya and Rwanda with average total production are 3,271,776.7 tonnes/year or 74.2% of world production. Avocado pulp contains 67 to 78% moisture, 13.5 to 30 % lipids, 0.8 to 4.8% carbohydrate, 1.0 to 3.0% protein, 0.8 to 1.5% ash, 1.4 to 3.0% fiber. Avocado also contains substantial amounts of bioactive compounds such as phytosterols, especially  $\beta$ -sitosterol. Fatty acid in avocado is predominantly monounsaturated oleic acid that can maintain high levels of beneficial high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and reducing levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) in blood. Also, avocado fruit has other potential heart-protective benefits due to its high content of antioxidant vitamins A, C and E, high densities of other nutrients. How to enjoy avocados? Avocado can be eaten as main dishes, side dishes or as beverages and shakes. Avocado oil can be used for cooking oil or for an ingredient in cosmetics treatment.

**Keywords:** Lauraceae, phytosterol, monounsaturated fatty acid, main dishes, beverages .