

Creative Vegetable Cookery

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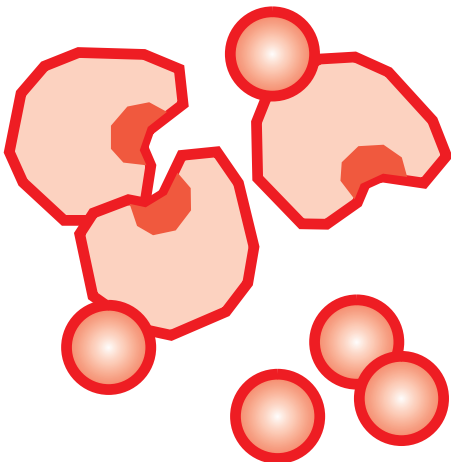
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Virtually every national report about diet and health recommends an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption to replace foods higher in calories and fat. Spurred by these nutritional considerations, fruit and vegetable consumption continues to increase. The consumer seeks fresh or fresh-like produce that is visually appealing, full-flavored, nutritious, convenient to prepare and serve, pesticide-free and available year round at a reasonable price.

The 1998 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend 3 - 5 servings of various vegetables daily. One cup of raw leafy greens or 1/2 cup of other vegetables is counted as a serving. When choosing your vegetables, keep the following points in mind:

- At least every other day, have dark-green leafy vegetables, such as leaf lettuce, romaine, spinach, or kale (not iceberg lettuce or green beans), and deep-yellow vegetables such as squash, carrots or sweet potatoes (not corn).
- Eat dry beans and peas often. Count 1/2 cup of cooked dry beans or peas as a serving of vegetables or as 1 ounce of the meat group.
- Include starchy vegetables, such as potatoes and corn.



Rate Your Vegetable Use:

- How many vegetables do I include daily in my diet?
- Four ways I prepare vegetables are:
- Six vegetables I frequently use in my home are:
- If there is liquid left on my cooked vegetables, I:

Why Eat Vegetables?

Vegetables are versatile, nutritious, colorful and flavorful. Vegetables are naturally low in calories, fat and sodium and are good sources of important vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber. Vegetables do not contain cholesterol. Increasing vegetable consumption can replace foods higher in calories and fat.

Vegetables are **rich sources of vitamins**, particularly A and C. The value of a vegetable as a source of a nutrient is affected both by the amount of the nutrient present and by the amount of the vegetable eaten. Thus, carrots, leafy green vegetables and sweet potatoes are good sources of vitamin A because they contain a large amount of vitamin A. Likewise, peppers and tomatoes are good sources of vitamin C because of high concentrations. On the other hand, potatoes, while lower in vitamin C, are also a good source of the nutrient

because large amounts of potatoes are eaten. Other vegetables are good sources of folic acid, niacin, thiamin and vitamin B-6. (See Table 1.)

Vegetables are **relatively high in mineral content**, particularly potassium, magnesium, iron and calcium. However, the amount of these minerals in vegetables is not always a good indicator of their nutritive value to the person who eats them, since some of the minerals present may not be available for the body to use. The so-called bioavailability of a nutrient depends on its form and also on the presence of other substances which may bind or hold the mineral, keeping it from being used by the body.

Vegetables are a **good source of total dietary fiber and rich in soluble fiber**. Soluble fiber has been generally considered responsible for many of the beneficial effects of vegetables in reducing cholesterol.

Table 1. What are the Good Sources?

	A (1)	C (1)	Folic Acid (1)	Niacin (1)	Thiamin (1)	B6 (1)	Magne- sium (1)	Iron (1)	Calcium (1)	Potas- sium (2)	Dietary Fiber (3)
Artichoke, globe (french)		+	+				+			+	+
Asparagus		+++	+							+	
Beans, dried cooked			+				+	+		++	+
Beans, green or yellow		+								+	+
Beets			+								+
Broccoli	+	+++	+				+		+		+
Brussels sprouts		+++	+								+
Cabbage, Chinese or green		++									+
Carrots	+++										+
Cauliflower		+++	+							+	
Chard	+	+					+			++	
Collards	+	+									
Corn			+		+					+	
Endive, chicory, romaine, escarole	+	+	+								
Kale	+++	+++									
Kohlrabi		+++									
Mushrooms				+						+	
Okra		+	+				+				+
Onion		+									
Peas		+	+		+					+	+
Peas, split, cooked			+		+		+	+		++	+
Peppers, sweet red	++	+++									
Peppers, sweet green		+++									
Plantain	+	+++				++	+			+++	
Potatoes, with skin		++		+		+				+++	+
Pumpkin	+	+								++	
Radishes, 6 large		+									
Rutabagas		++								+	
Snow peas		+++									
Spinach, cooked	+++	+	++			+	+	+	+	++	+
Spinach, raw	+	+	+								
Squash, summer, yellow		+									
Squash, winter		+								+++	+
Sweet potato	+++	+++				+				++	+
Tomatoes	+	++								+	
Turnip greens	+++	+	+						+		
Watercress		+									

(1) A selected serving contains (+) 10-24 percent of the U.S. RDA for adults and children over 4 years of age, (++) 25-39 percent of the U.S. RDA for adults and children over 4 years of age, (+++) 40 percent of the U.S. RDA for adults and children over 4 years of age.

(2) A selected serving contains at least + 200-349 milligrams.

(3) A single serving size contains at least 2 grams of dietary fiber.

Eating foods with a variety of fiber is important for proper bowel function and can reduce symptoms of chronic constipation, diverticular disease and hemorrhoids. Populations like ours, with diets low in dietary fiber and low in complex carbohydrates (starches), and high in fat (especially saturated fat), tend to have more heart disease, obesity and some cancers. Just how dietary fiber is involved is not yet clear.

Some of the benefit from a higher fiber diet may be from the food that provides the fiber, not from fiber alone. Also, some parts of the fiber may bind or hold onto minerals, making them less available for use (digestion and absorption). Therefore, it is important to get fiber from foods rather than from supplements, and to get adequate minerals so you can maintain a healthy balance.

Cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower and kohlrabi have been shown in studies with laboratory animals to be protective against certain forms of cancer. These vegetables contain substances called indoles which may act as antioxidants.

Antioxidants may prevent unwanted cell changes from occurring. Beta carotene (which the body converts to vitamin A) and vitamin C are two other antioxidant compounds which are abundant in vegetables.

Vegetables are low in protein and the protein they do contain is of less value than animal protein. This is of little concern when protein from animal sources is a normal part of the diet.

How To Increase Vegetables In Your Diet

Try one new vegetable a week.

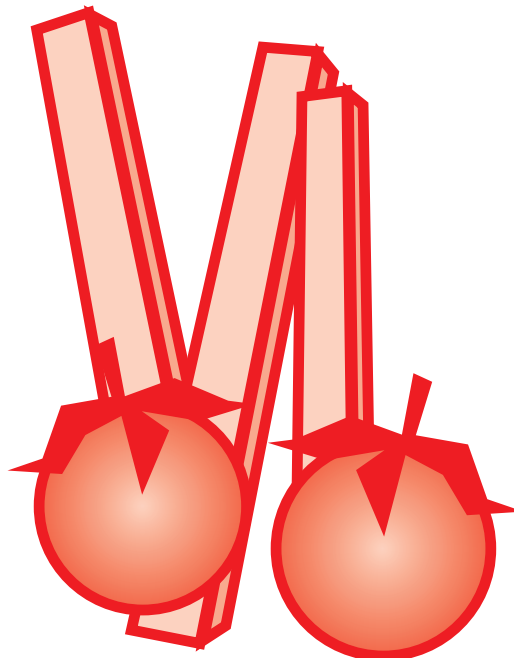
Even though people have become more conscious of nutrition, studies show that most do not eat even the minimum number of recommended servings. If you are among that group, you may need some ideas and a plan to help you gradually increase the vegetables in your diet.

Consider some of the following options:

- Keep washed, ready-to-eat vegetables on hand and easy to get at. How many times does someone in your family open the refrigerator door to see what there is to eat, and take one of the first foods they see? So let the cleaned vegetables be seen first. Also, set them out when meals and snacks are eaten.
- On the run? Take a bag of vegetables with you to munch on, or stop in the produce department to see if there are cut up vegetables ready to eat for a snack. Light colored vegetables like celery, iceberg lettuce or

zucchini make good low calorie snacks or fillers even though they offer few other nutritional benefits. Keep in mind, however, that even these small amounts of nutrients in a varied diet contribute to the total.

- Serve vegetables with other favorite foods. For instance, serve a mixed vegetable salad or raw vegetable plate with pizza or hamburgers.
- Add vegetables to other foods:
 - Put tomato slices, sprouts, and greens such as spinach or lettuce into a sandwich.
 - Mix pasta or rice with summer squash (like zucchini), red pepper strips or broccoli florets.
 - Add a layer of spinach to lasagna.
 - Grate zucchini or carrots into meat loaves and hamburgers.
- Add something to vegetables:
 - Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese or top with a melted low-fat cheese or white sauce made with low-fat milk. See recipe for white sauce on page 17.
 - Spread with a little cream cheese. Try the Mock Cream Cheese on page 19.
 - Make a dip by blending nonfat or low-fat cottage cheese (or reduced calorie mayonnaise) with a few tablespoons of lite salad dressing (or with dry salad dressing or soup mix).
 - Serve a tomato salsa that has plenty of additional vegetables in it.
- Try the different methods of cooking vegetables discussed in this circular.



Give some thought to what you choose to do with the vegetables you are serving. If you end up adding too much fat, sodium or calories, you may be defeating your purpose. The popular baked potato makes a good example. A large baked potato has 140 calories. Look at the chart on the right to see what happens to it as we dress it up.

At this point the potato is only 31 percent of the total calories with most of the remaining 69 percent coming from fat.

You started with a 140 calorie potato, a trace of fat and 8 milligrams of sodium. Depending on the type of margarine or butter you used, you may have raised the sodium of this vegetable from under 10 to over 400 milligrams. An alternative would be to top the baked potato with two tablespoons nonfat or low-fat cottage cheese mixed with chives, Worcestershire sauce and a little mustard for less than 25 calories, a trace of additional fat and about 115 milligrams sodium.

	POTATO	2 T butter or margarine	1 T sour cream	1 T. Grated cheddar cheese	1 T bacon bits	
CALORIES	140	210	25	30	35	= 440

Kids Who Won't Eat Vegetables?

Maybe you are fortunate enough to have a child or even children who love vegetables. But it is probably safe to say that for many people, getting children to eat vegetables is a perennial problem.

In her book *How to Get Your Kid to Eat...But Not Too Much*, Ellyn Satter, R.D., A.C.S.W., makes the following observations and suggestions.

Parents' attitudes regarding a food can be passed on to the child. Are you a parent who is not particularly fond of vegetables and is it showing? Children will generally learn to enjoy foods, even vegetables, that they see others enjoy in a pleasant mealtime atmosphere.

Offer vegetables again and again. If the child sees them often enough he will try them. However, refrain from pushing and prodding the child to try them. Just offer them at a later time.

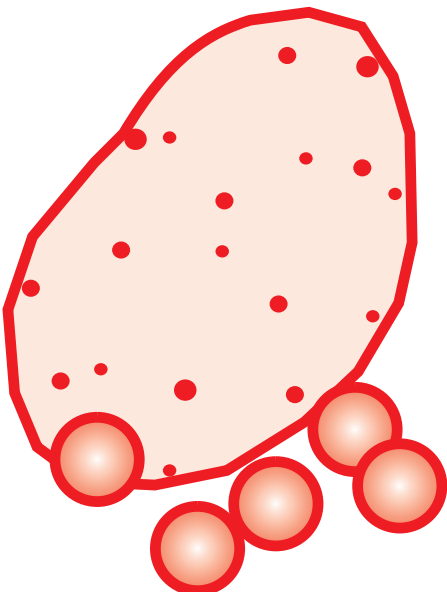
Parents can be overanxious. Take a look at your approach. Satter suggests the tactic of "simply matter-of-factly presenting vegetables (and all other foods) to children, eating the food yourself, and letting children approach them on their own. In that way, eventually they learn to like

them. If you try to force vegetables on your child, about the best you can hope for is that eventually he will grow up and eat his vegetables because he *should*, just like you do."

Until your child accepts a variety of vegetables in his diet, offer other sources of Vitamin A.

Keep in mind that serving sizes for a child are smaller than those for adults. A general guideline for a toddler and preschooler to be well-nourished is a serving size of about one tablespoon of vegetable per year of age. For example, two tablespoons of peas would be considered a serving for a two year old child. More specifically, for children a serving is 1/3 to 2/3 cup of juice, 2 to 4 tablespoons cooked vegetables, or 1/2 to 1 whole carrot or tomato.

Remember that children approach all new foods pretty much the same, including vegetables.



All Vegetables Not Born Equal

Raw vegetable products do not all contain the same nutrition. They vary according to variety, genetic potential, growing conditions, maturity at harvest, handling and storage conditions after harvest and amount of processing.

The Effect Of Processing

Consumers can buy at least 130 different canned vegetable products, from artichokes and asparagus to turnips and zucchini. A recent study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and National Food Processors Association noted that canned foods provide the same nutritional value as fresh grocery produce and their frozen counterparts when prepared for the table. The study compared six vegetables in three forms: home-cooked fresh, warmed canned and prepared frozen.

It was found that the levels of 13 minerals, eight vitamins and fiber in the foods were similar. In fact, in some cases the canned product contained higher levels of some vitamins than fresh produce. Some vitamins in fresh produce may be destroyed by light or by exposure to air.

Canning provides a product that can be stored at room temperature, but usually at the cost of color, flavor and texture. Better color, texture and flavor are obtained in frozen foods but maintaining them in a frozen state entails greater energy costs.

Cooking Tips

Three R's for cooking vegetables for best nutrition:

- **Reduce the amount of water used;**
- **Reduce the cooking time;**
- **Reduce the amount of exposed surface by limiting cutting, paring and shredding.**

Overcooking will destroy color, crispness (texture) and some nutrients of the vegetable. Do not add baking soda to retain color because this will destroy nutrients.

Cooking Methods

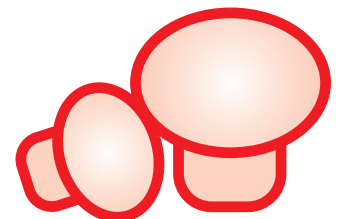
Microwave: Microwaving cooks foods faster than most other methods. You use little or no water for vegetables. Microwaving is an excellent way to retain vitamins and color in vegetables. Follow the manufacturer's directions for best results.

Steam: Steaming is a good method for cooking fresh or frozen vegetables. Try this method for vegetables such as asparagus, broccoli, carrots, spinach and summer squash. Use a vegetable steamer or colander to hold vegetables above the water. Place steamer in pot with a little boiling water and cover. Cook until the vegetables are just tender-crisp to preserve color and vitamins.

Steaming under pressure (pressure cooking) can be useful for cooking roots (beets, carrots, parsnips, rutabagas, turnips), tubers (white potatoes, sweet potatoes, jicama, Jerusalem artichokes) and dried legumes (peas and beans) that usually require a longer cooking time. Over-

cooking can easily occur so it is important to follow directions.

Stir-fry: Stir-frying is quick, easy and preserves the crisp texture and bright color of vegetables. Heat wok or heavy skillet, add just enough oil to lightly coat bottom of pan or use a small amount of some other liquid, such as a low sodium broth. Add small pieces of vegetables and stir constantly while cooking. Cook until the vegetables are bright, glossy and tender-crisp. Do not over-cook.



Pan: Panning is a method of cooking with very little water or with the steam formed by the vegetable's own juices. The vegetable is shredded or cut into small pieces and placed in a heavy pan with a small amount of cooking oil, that is, just enough to lightly coat the bottom of the pan. A tight-fitting lid is used to hold in the steam. Five to 8 minutes is all that is required to cook the vegetables tender-crisp.

Some vegetables suited for panning include shredded cabbage, carrots, sliced summer squash, thinly-sliced green beans and most leafy greens.

Bake: Baking is done in an oven with dry heat. This is an excellent method to keep vitamins, minerals and flavors in the vegetables. Some vegetables suited to this method include potatoes, sweet potatoes, winter squash and onions. Simply wash thoroughly, prick skins and place vegetables on a baking sheet in the oven.

Boil: Vegetables are cooked in a minimum amount of hot liquid, usually water. A general guideline is about one cup of liquid for four servings. The liquid left after cooking can be used as a sauce base, in soups or gravies.

Bring liquid to a full boil, add the prepared vegetables, cover and return to boiling. Reduce heat and complete cooking at a gentle boil. Vegetables cook as rapidly at a gentle boil as at a rapid boil because the temperature is 212 degrees Fahrenheit in both cases.

Additional Methods: Vegetables can be cooked by broiling, grilling, braising, pan-frying and deep-fat frying.

Safety

Several consumer studies have reported growing concern about the safety and healthfulness of the food supply. At the same time we have strong evidence that fruits and vegetables can lower the risk of some cancers and heart disease, as part of a high-fiber, low-fat diet. Perhaps some of the following information can help you put the information you receive into perspective.

Pesticide residues are monitored by the government. Studies of foods prepared for consumption have found no detectable residues in more than half of the samples tested. More than 99 percent of the samples tested had levels below the tolerance levels set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These tolerance levels have wide built in safety margins.

A National Research Council, 1989 report, which advocates the reduction of the use of externally applied chemicals, suggests that, "Based on the available data, pesticide residues in the average diet do not make a major contribution to the overall risk of cancer for humans."

Debate continues in the area of pesticide use, regulation and testing. However, while the debate goes on, you can do several things to minimize any potential risk and increase the added benefits of vegetables in your daily diet.

As you add vegetables to your diet, consider the following tips and decide what you can do that feels right for you.

- Eat a varied diet so no single food and its contents (whether natural or added) dominates.
- Buy produce in season and buy locally grown produce when possible. Locally grown and pick-your-own produce is less likely to have been treated to prevent spoilage during shipping and storage. This is not to say that these products are produced with no chemicals. You can ask the grower about the production.
- Buy organic produce. It may cost more, be less available and not as attractive as non-organic produce. Keep in mind that these also need thorough cleaning. North Dakota is one of only a few states that has legal standards to qualify a product to be labeled as organic. Regulations on a national level should be in place within the next couple of years.
- Grow your own vegetables and preserve at home.
- Remove outer leaves of leafy vegetables such as cabbage and lettuce.
- Thoroughly wash and rinse vegetables. Scrub with a brush if possible. Lift vegetables out of wash water rather than draining the water off of vegetables. **DO NOT USE SOAPS OR DETERGENTS.**
- Peel produce if appropriate, but realize that some pesticides are systemic and are found throughout all plant parts. Also, many nutrients are found in the skin of the vegetables.
- Cooking may further reduce the concern in some cases.

CAUTION: Vegetables are low acid foods and when they are canned they must be pressure processed at the recommended amount of pressure for the recommended amount of time if they are to be considered safe. This caution holds true for many mixtures of tomatoes with other vegetables. Contact your county extension office for current recommendations and tested recipes for these products.

Selection And Storage Of Vegetables

General Guidelines for Selection

Consider the intended use. For example, canned tomatoes may be less expensive, can be kept on hand, take less time and produce a better chili than fresh tomatoes.

Time of year is important. Produce that is in season will usually give you the best quality and best buy.

Consider the storage available. Buy only what you can store and use within the recommended time.

Handle produce gently.

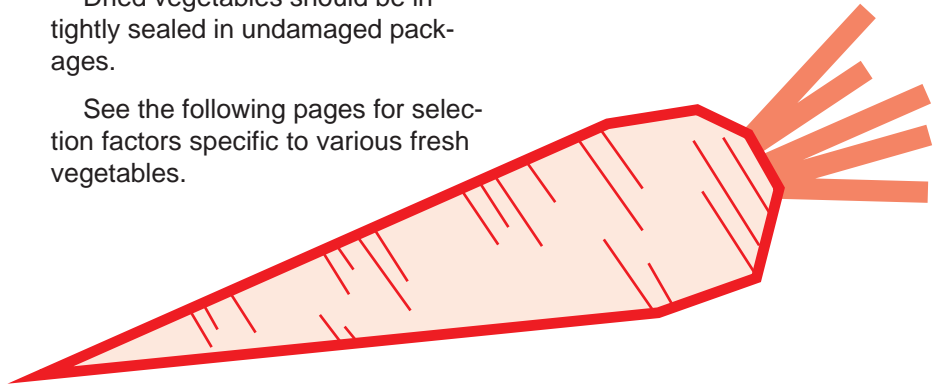
Poor quality vegetables usually have lower food value, less flavor and more waste.

Just before going to the grocery store check out counter, pick up frozen vegetables that are frozen solid and get them to the freezer as quickly as possible.

Buy canned vegetables in cans without any signs of damage.

Dried vegetables should be in tightly sealed in undamaged packages.

See the following pages for selection factors specific to various fresh vegetables.



General Guidelines for Storage

Proper storage is necessary to maintain food value, flavor, color and texture. Most fresh vegetables should be kept cold and humid. Keeping vegetables in a plastic bag or in the hydrator (crisper) compartment of the refrigerator, or both, is suggested for increasing storage humidity.

DO NOT REFRIGERATE potatoes, sweet potatoes and hard-shell (winter) squash. Cold temperatures convert the starch into sugar which affects the flavor. Store them at cool room temperatures—40 to 50 degrees Fahrenheit is best. Potatoes should be kept in a dark, dry place.

Sort vegetables before storing and remove any with bruises or soft spots.

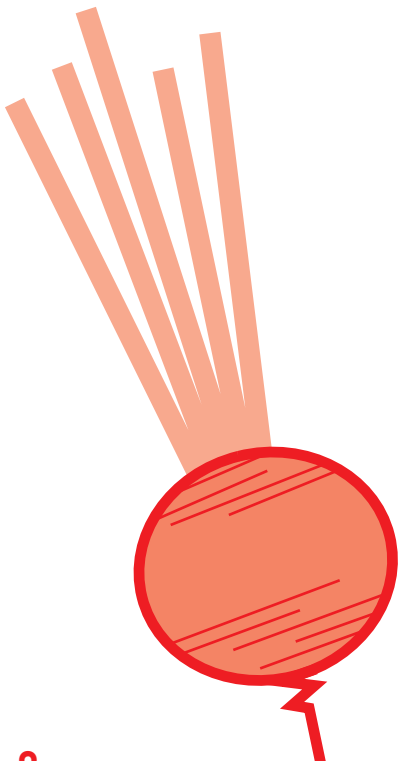
If you wash them before storing them, drain them well.

Frozen vegetables should be stored at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or lower, and can be stored for 8 to 12 months.

Canned vegetables should be stored in a cool, dry place and used within a year for top quality.

Dried vegetables need to be in an airtight container and stored in a cool, dry place. They are best if used within a few months.

See the following pages for storage tips specific to various fresh vegetables.



Vegetable	What To Look For	How To Store	How Long
ARTICHOKES	Choose compact, heavy plump globes with large fresh-looking, tightly clinging leaf scales of bright green in spring that may be bronzed in winter. Size does not affect quality.	Keep cold and humid until ready to use.	Few days.
ASPARAGUS	Closed, compact tips, smooth, round spears and a fresh appearance. A rich green color should cover most of the spear. Stalks should be tender almost as far down as the green extends. Size of stalk has no relationship to tenderness. AVOID: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stalks that are soaking in water. - Tips that are open and spread out, moldy or decayed. - Ribbed spears (with up-and-down ridges, or that are not approximately round). All the above are signs of aging, and mean toughness and poor flavor. - Avoid excessively sandy spears because sand grains can lodge beneath the scales or in the tips and are difficult to remove in washing. 	Refrigerate	Few days.
GREEN BEANS	Green, without scars, discoloration or strings. Pods should be firm, crisp and slender. When broken, they should snap.	Store whole in the refrigerator.	1 week
BEETS	Beets should be firm, round, with a slender tap root (the large main root); should be a rich, deep red color and smooth over most of the surface. If beets are bunched, you can judge their freshness fairly accurately by the condition of the tops. Badly wilted or decayed tops indicate a lack of freshness, but the roots may be satisfactory if they are firm. AVOID: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elongated beets with round, scaly areas around the top surface as these will be tough, fibrous and strong-flavored. - Wilted, flabby beets which have been exposed to the air too long. 	Refrigerate	Tops, as soon as possible. Roots, 1 week
BROCCOLI	A firm, compact cluster of small flower buds, with none opened enough to show the bright yellow flower. Bud clusters should be dark green or sage green or even green with a decidedly purplish cast. Stems should not be too thick or tough. AVOID: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broccoli with spread bud clusters, enlarged or open buds, yellowish green color or wilted condition, all of which are signs of overmaturity and overlong display. 	Refrigerate. Rinse and trim leaves and stalk ends just before using.	3 to 5 days

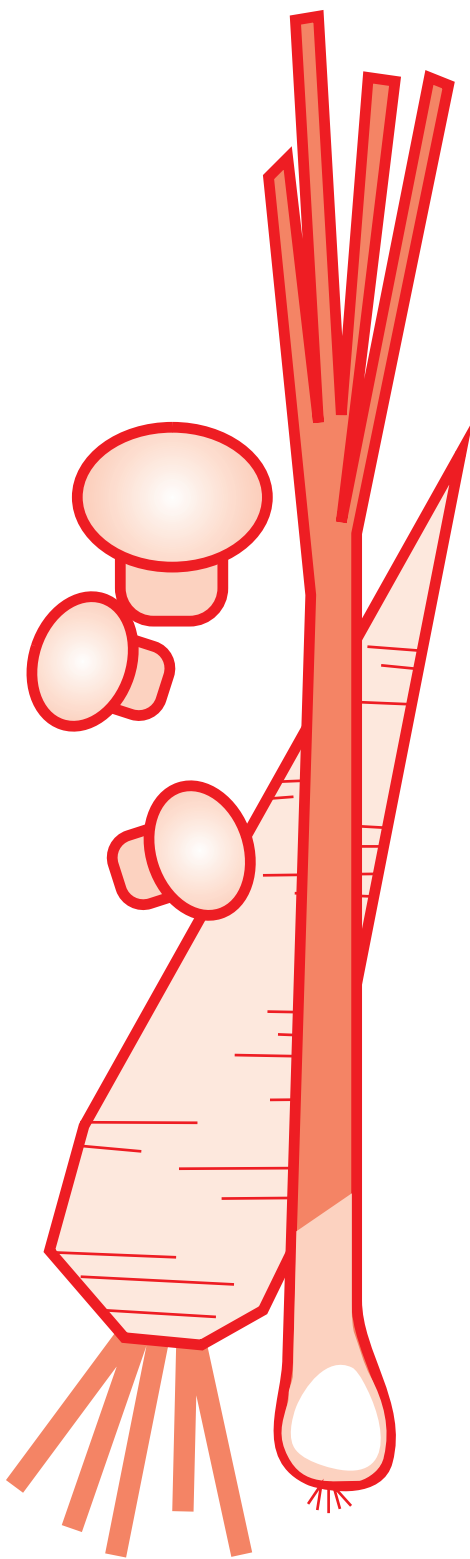
Vegetable	What To Look For	How To Store	How Long
BRUSSELS SPROUTS	Should be firm, compact and have bright leaves. AVOID: - Yellow, soft or loose leaves. - Small holes and ragged edges that may indicate worms.	Refrigerate.	3 to 5 days
CABBAGE	Heads should be reasonably solid and heavy in relation to size, with a good green or red color. AVOID: - Wilted or decayed outer leaves or those with leaves turning decidedly yellow or with worm damage. - Separation of the stems of leaves from the ventral stem at the base of the head, for this indicates age.	Refrigerate in plastic bag or film.	1 to 2 weeks
CARROTS	Well formed with smooth skins and good orange color. AVOID: - Wilted, flabby, rough or cracked carrots and those with green "sunburned" areas at the top, or spots of soft decay.	Refrigerate, cold and humid	2 to 3 weeks
CAULIFLOWER	White to creamy-white, compact, solid and clean curds. A slightly granular or "ricey" texture of the curd will not hurt the eating quality if the surface is compact. Ignore small green leaflets extending through the curd. If jacket leaves are attached, a good green color is a sign of freshness. AVOID: - A spreading of the curd, which is a sign of aging or over-maturity. - Also, severe wilting or many discolored spots on the curd. - A smudgy or speckled appearance of the curd, which is a sign of insect injury, mold growth or decay.	Refrigerate in crisper	1 week
CELERY	Stalks should have a solid feel and fresh-looking leaflets. Soft branches indicate possible pithiness. AVOID: - Wilted stalks. - Brown or black discoloration in central branches. You can freshen celery somewhat by placing the butt end in water, but badly wilted celery will never become really fresh again.	Refrigerate in crisper	1 to 2 weeks

Vegetable	What To Look For	How To Store	How Long
CORN	<p>Fresh, succulent husks with good green color, silk ends that are free from decay or worm injury, and stem ends (opposite from the silk) that are not too discolored or dried. Select ears that are well covered with plump, not-too-mature kernels.</p> <p>AVOID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ears with underdeveloped kernels which lack yellow color (in yellow varieties). - Old ears with very large kernels and ears with dark yellow kernels with depressed areas on the outer surface. - Ears with yellowed, wilted or dried husks or discolored and dried out stem ends. 	<p>Immediately shuck the corn, wrap in plastic and refrigerate. If corn must be stored a few days, soak the ears in cold water for 30 minutes, drain and refrigerate in plastic.</p>	<p>As soon as possible</p>
CUCUMBERS	<p>Good green color, firmness over entire length. Well-shaped and well-developed, but not be too large in diameter. Good cucumbers typically have many small lumps on their surfaces. They may have some white or greenish-white color and still be of top quality. The edible wax coating is to prevent moisture loss.</p> <p>AVOID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Puffy or overgrown cucumbers which are large in diameter and have a dull color, turning yellowish. - Withered or shriveled ends, for these are signs of toughness and bitter flavor. 	<p>Cool and humid</p>	<p>1 week</p>
EGGPLANT	<p>Firm and heavy with smooth, dark purple or purple-black skin that is free of scars and cuts.</p> <p>AVOID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wilted, shriveled or soft eggplants as they are usually bitter. 	<p>Cool and humid: provide enough space to protect delicate skin.</p>	<p>1 week</p>
ENDIVE/ ESCAROLE/ CHICORY	<p>Should be fresh, clean, crisp and cold.</p> <p>AVOID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dry, yellowing or wilted leaves or those showing reddish discoloration of the hearts. 	<p>Cold and moist</p>	<p>As soon as possible - within 1 week</p>
LEEKs	<p>Fresh green tops with necks branched two or three inches from the root. No more than 1-1/2 inches in diameter.</p> <p>AVOID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wilted or damaged tops which are a sign of aging and tough, fibrous roots. 	<p>Refrigerate</p>	<p>1 week</p>

Vegetable	What To Look For	How To Store	How Long
LETTUCE	<p>Solid head type, iceberg, should be fairly firm with crisp, medium-green outer leaves. Butterhead, romaine, bibb and leaf should have good color without wilted leaves, insects or dirt.</p> <p>AVOID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heads of iceberg type which are very hard and which lack green color (signs of overmaturity). Such heads sometimes develop discoloration in the center of the leaves (the mid-ribs) and may have a less attractive flavor. - Irregular shapes and hard bumps on top that may indicate the presence of overgrown central stems. 	Refrigerate in tightly closed plastic bag	1 week
MUSHROOMS	<p>Young mushrooms that are small to medium in size. Clean caps which are either closed around the stem or moderately open with pink or light tan gills. The surface of the cap should be white or creamy or light brown. Those with open veils, caused by water loss as they mature, are fine for cooking purposes but should be used promptly.</p> <p>AVOID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overripe mushrooms (shown by wide-open caps and dark, discolored gills underneath). - Those with pitted or seriously discolored caps. 	Refrigerate in a paper bag or in the cardboard or plastic container in which they were purchased, but only if the overwrap has holes in it for ventilation. Mushrooms stored in plastic bags will become slimy. Or saute lightly in fat and freeze.	As soon as possible, fresh, young up to 1 week.
OKRA	<p>Pods should be young and tender, preferably 2 to 4 inches long.</p> <p>AVOID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dull, dry or shriveled pods. 	Refrigerate	3 to 5 days
ONIONS, DRY	<p>Hard, firm, dry with papery skin and small necks. Moisture at the neck indicates decay.</p> <p>AVOID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Those with thick, hollow centers in the neck or with fresh sprouts. 	Keep at room temperature in a well ventilated area or refrigerate, but always keep them dry.	3 to 4 months
ONIONS, GREEN	<p>Fresh, crisp green tops.</p> <p>AVOID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bunches with wilted or discolored leaves. 	Refrigerate in plastic.	A few days.
ONIONS, SWEET	<p>Shiny with tissue-thin skin and tight, dry necks. Skin color, although usually yellow, may be red or white as well. Shape varies from flat to round.</p> <p>AVOID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spongy onions. 	A cool, dry well-ventilated area in a single layer.	1 month

Vegetable	What To Look For	How To Store	How Long
PARSNIPS	Smooth, firm, well-shaped of small to medium size. Discoloration may be an indication of freezing. AVOID: - Roots that are badly wilted or flabby. development before use. They will be tough when cooked.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag. Some recommend some time at room temperature for full flavor	2 to 4 weeks
PEPPERS, SWEET	Fresh-looking, firm, thick-fleshed and of bright color, depending on stage of maturity. Red sweet peppers are green peppers which have matured and changed color. Golden and purple also available. AVOID: - Peppers which are soft or dull looking or have soft, watery spots.	Cool and humid	A few days to 1 week
POTATOES	Smooth, clean, fairly well shaped, uncut, unbruised and without sprouts. Should not show any green.	Store in cool, well-ventilated dark area. Do not refrigerate. Store in cool (45 to 50 degrees), well-ventilated dark area. Do not refrigerate. If stored at too cool a temperature, potatoes may turn dark during cooking.	Several months.
SQUASH, SUMMER	Small to medium size for the most tender and tasty. Fresh looking, of good shape and color for the variety. Completely edible.	Refrigerate in perforated plastic bag. Wash just before using.	Use as soon as possible (3 to 5 days)
SQUASH, WINTER	Shell should be intact with no soft spots or cracks. Should feel heavy for their size.	A cool, dry, well-ventilated place. Do not refrigerate.	Several months.
SWEET POTATOES	Firm, well-shaped with clean, smooth skin. AVOID: - Soft spots or bruises.	Dry, well-ventilated place. Do not refrigerate.	3 to 4 months
TOMATOES	Smooth, firm and plump with good color. Good weight for size. Green tomatoes will ripen but not have the flavor quality of vine-ripened. Do not bruise while handling.	Cool room temperature away from direct sunlight until ripe, then refrigerate.	Few days to 1 week.

Ideas For Serving And Recipes*



As the baked potato illustration on page 5 showed, how you prepare or serve your vegetables affects what they offer to your diet. If, in addition to simply increasing the amount and kinds of vegetables in your diet, you want to decrease the sodium, calories and fat, keep the following points in mind.

To decrease fat and calories:

- Decrease the amount of ingredients that are sources of fat. For example, use only half the butter or margarine called for.
- Remove or omit ingredients that are sources of fat, for example, do not serve the cheese sauce.
- Replace high-fat ingredients with low-fat ingredients. For example, use low-fat yogurt in place of sour cream.

Create Your Own Delights:

- Think thin when the urge to snack strikes - munch on raw fresh vegetables like cucumber spears, green and red pepper rounds, radishes, broccoli florets, cauliflower-erets, green beans, carrots and celery. Prepare a low-fat dip for vegetable dippers using a base of plain yogurt or cottage cheese. Season with herbs and a squeeze of lemon or lime juice.
- The main-dish salad is famous diet fare. Use a variety of crisp and crunchy fresh vegetables to vary your favorite salad and create some special combinations. Take advantage of the wide selection of lettuces, greens and other fresh salad

vegetables.

- Make your own low-calorie dressing. This may be as simple as mixing fresh lemon or lime juice with freshly snipped parsley or chives.
- For a low-calorie sandwich, wrap your favorite sandwich fillings with crisp lettuce leaves. Or fill lettuce leaves with seasoned cottage cheese, drizzle with a low-calorie salad dressing and enjoy a light lunch.
- Turn a salad into a sandwich. Place fresh cut vegetables, mixed lightly in dressing, into pita bread for an easy carry-along salad.
- Stuff parboiled (partially cooked) or lightly steamed green peppers with other chopped fresh vegetables tossed with bread crumbs. Sprinkle with grated cheese and bake for a diet-wise dinner.
- For a party, offer a platter of colorful fresh vegetables to dip. Many guests will appreciate this option.

*These suggestions are from the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association

Recipes

Summer Salad

(Makes 8 to 9 servings)

2 quarts salad greens - combine 2 or 3. Try romaine lettuce, red leaf lettuce, fresh spinach or curly endive

6 green onions with tops, thinly sliced

6 large fresh mushrooms, thinly sliced

1/4 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped

3/4 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped

3/4 cup Tangy Dressing

Wash and dry greens. Tear into bite-sized pieces and place in large salad bowl.

Add onion, mushrooms, walnuts and parsley. Just before serving, toss with dressing.

Nutrient analysis: 1 cup serving

Calories:	95
Sodium:	22 milligrams
Fat:	3.4 grams*
Cholesterol:	0

*The fat comes primarily from the walnuts which could be omitted if desired.

Tangy Dressing

(About 1 1/4 cups)

1/2 cup evaporated skim milk

1 6-ounce can frozen orange/pineapple juice concentrate, thawed

pinch of ground nutmeg

Mix milk, concentrate and nutmeg. Shake well before using.

Nutrient analysis: 1 tablespoon

Calories:	20
Sodium:	6 milligrams
Fat:	0
Cholesterol:	0

Tangy Dressing keeps several days in the refrigerator.

Options: Use other frozen juice concentrates. Use on fresh fruit for a salad.

Panned Cabbage

(Makes 4 servings)

1 1/2 teaspoons butter or margarine

1 quart finely shredded cabbage

1/8 teaspoon salt

pepper, to taste

2 tablespoons water

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1. Melt butter or margarine in a heavy saucepan or skillet.
2. Add cabbage and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Add water.
3. Cover pan with a tight-fitting lid to hold in steam.
4. Cook over low heat until cabbage is tender (6 to 8 minutes), stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.
5. Add lemon juice and serve.

Nutrient analysis: 1/2 cup serving

Calories:	26
Sodium:	99 milligrams
Fat:	1.5 grams
Cholesterol:	0

For variety: Cook a small amount of finely chopped onion or green pepper with the cabbage. Or, when the cabbage is nearly done, add crisp bacon bits or a sprinkling of parsley or chives.

These vegetables are also good panned: Carrots, sliced summer squash, thinly sliced green beans and most leafy greens.

Microwaved Cauliflower & Peas in Cream Sauce

(Makes 6 Servings)

2 cups fresh cauliflower OR 1 (10-ounce) package frozen cauliflower
1 cup fresh or frozen peas
2 tablespoons water

Sauce:

1/4 cup chopped onion
1 1/2 teaspoon butter or margarine
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1/2 cup skim milk
1 tablespoon chopped pimiento (optional)
1/2 teaspoon parsley flakes
1/2 teaspoon instant chicken bouillon granules
1/8 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper

Combine cauliflower, peas and water in a 1-quart casserole. Cover. Microwave at High 6 to 8 minutes, or until fork tender, stirring after half the time. Let stand, covered.

Place onion and butter or margarine in 2-cup measure. Microwave at High 1 to 1 1/2 minutes, or until onion is tender. Stir in flour. Microwave a few seconds until flour mixture starts to bubble. Add remaining ingredients. Microwave at High 1 1/2 to 2 minutes, or until thickened, stirring every minute. Drain vegetables. (Freeze drained liquid for use in soups later.) Pour sauce over vegetables and stir to coat.

Options: Vegetables may be boiled or steamed and sauce prepared on top of a range if a microwave is not available.

Variations: Use other combinations of vegetables, such as green beans and cauliflower; broccoli and carrots; or peas and carrots.

Nutrient Analysis: 1/2 cup serving
Calories: 53
Sodium: 203 milligrams
Fat: 1.1 grams
Cholesterol: 0

Oriental Vegetable Stir Fry

(Makes 8 servings)

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 cup thinly sliced fresh carrots
1 cup fresh broccoli pieces
1 cup thin strips of unpeeled raw potato
1 cup thinly sliced celery
3 tablespoons Teriyaki marinade
4 cups shredded fresh lettuce, one small head
2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds*

In large skillet or wok, heat oil: add carrots, broccoli, potatoes and celery. Cook over medium to medium high heat, stirring quickly until vegetables are crisp-tender, about 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in marinade. Cover, reduce heat and let steam 3 minutes. Add lettuce and sesame seeds. Stir 1 minute longer.

* To toast seeds, place in a shallow baking pan and place in a 350-degree oven until they start to turn a golden color (about 15 minutes). Stir frequently.

Nutrient analysis: 1/2 cup serving
Calories: 64
Sodium: 287 milligrams
Fat: 3.1 grams
Cholesterol: 0

Variations: Stir-fry can be prepared without the lettuce or cabbage could be substituted for lettuce. Cabbage takes longer to cook and could be added at the same time as the marinade. Combination of vegetables can be altered to fit what is available or individual tastes: for example, green beans or cauliflower in place of broccoli, green peppers in place of celery.

Oriental Vegetable Stir Fry was adapted from United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association

Hearty Vegetable Beef Soup

(Makes 4 servings)

10 1/2 ounce can unsalted chicken broth*
1/2 cup water
2 cups frozen mixed vegetables for soup
16 ounce can tomatoes, broken up
1 cup beef, cooked, diced
1 teaspoon thyme leaves, crushed
Dash pepper
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 bay leaf
2 ounces (about 1 1/4 cups) narrow-width noodles, uncooked

*Reduced sodium broth may be used and the salt omitted

1. Heat broth and water. Add vegetables, meat and seasonings. Bring to boil, reduce heat and boil gently, uncovered, for 15 minutes.
2. Add noodles. Cook until noodles are tender, about 10 minutes.
3. Remove bay leaf.

Nutrient analysis: 1 cup
Calories: 200
Sodium: 391 milligrams
Fat: 4 grams
Cholesterol: 42 milligrams

Menu suggestion: Serve with peach halves filled with a scoop of nonfat or low-fat cottage cheese on leaf lettuce and hard rolls.

Soup Substitutes

Many vegetable recipes call for canned soups, which are often high in sodium. You may want to try these substitutes.

Medium White Sauce Base

(May be made on top of the stove or in a microwave.)

1 tablespoon margarine
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup skim milk
1/8 teaspoon pepper

Herbs or spices may be mixed with the flour for added taste and interest. Start with 1/8 teaspoon and then let your taste be your guide.

On top the stove:

Melt margarine in a saucepan. Add flour. Stir constantly, heat until the mixture bubbles. Continue to cook and stir an additional minute. Do not allow to brown. Add skim milk and continue stirring until mixture comes to a boil and thickens. Add pepper.

In microwave:

Melt margarine in a 4-cup measure on high for 30 to 50 seconds. Stir in flour. Microwave until the mixture bubbles and continue to cook for 30 seconds. Stir in skim milk and microwave 6 to 8 minutes, until mixture thickens, stirring every couple of minutes. Add pepper.

For CREAM OF CELERY SOUP add 1/4 cup chopped celery.

For CREAM OF MUSHROOM SOUP add 1 cup chopped fresh mushrooms or 1/2 cup canned mushrooms

For CREAM OF CHICKEN SOUP replace 1/2 of the skim milk in the white sauce with a low sodium chicken broth.

Lo-Cal Dip

(Makes 1 1/3 cup)

1 cup nonfat or low-fat cottage cheese
1/4 cup lite mayonnaise
2 tablespoons skim milk
1 teaspoon lemon juice

Season to taste - some options:

- 1 teaspoon each of dill weed and minced dried onion
- 2 to 3 teaspoons of a seasoned salt
- Packaged dip mixes
- Packaged dry soup mixes

For a smooth (like sour cream) dip place cottage cheese in a blender and process until smooth, adding milk as you process. Stir in lemon juice and mayonnaise. Mix in seasoning chosen.

Place in a covered container and refrigerate for several hours before use.

Dip will keep longer if you take from the refrigerator only portions to be used, and do not return unused dip to the original container.

Nutrient analysis: 1 tablespoon
Using low-fat cottage cheese + 1 teaspoon each
dill weed and dried onion

Calories:	19
Sodium:	61 milligrams
Fat:	1.1 grams
Cholesterol:	2 milligrams

Variation: Dip may be made without a blender for a "cottage cheese textured" dip.

Mock Sour Cream

(Makes 1 1/4 cup)

1 cup low-fat or nonfat cottage cheese
2 tablespoons skim milk
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Combine all in the blender and blend until smooth. A nutritional comparison for 2 tablespoons real and mock sour cream (using low-fat cottage cheese) appears in the chart below.

	Mock Sour Cream	Real Sour Cream
Tablespoons	2	2
Total fat, grams	0.28	5.0
Saturated fat, grams	0.18	3.2
% calories from fat	12.6	83
Calories	20	54
Sodium	93 milligrams	12 milligrams

Plain low-fat or nonfat yogurt makes a healthful substitute for sour cream in cooked foods, but it often separates and becomes watery. To prevent this problem, stir some flour into the yogurt before cooking or, when possible, add the yogurt to dishes after removing them from the heat.

Andrea's Original Dream Cheese

Cream Cheese Substitute
(Makes 1 cup)

1 cup plain low-fat yogurt
3 tablespoons part-skim ricotta cheese
2 teaspoons powdered sugar

Combine all ingredients well. Place in sieve lined with 3 thicknesses of cheesecloth or plain paper toweling and let drain in refrigerator for 24 hours. Remove carefully and blend again before using. Consistency should be very thick and resemble cream cheese in texture.

Note: Good on bagels, in frostings, dips, etc.

Nutrient analysis: 1 tablespoon

	Dream Cheese:	Cream Cheese:	Lite Cream Cheese:
Calories:	14	50	40
Sodium:	14 milligrams	45 milligrams	57.5 milligrams
Fat:	.4 grams	5 grams	3.5 grams
Cholesterol:	2 milligrams	15.5 milligrams	12.5 milligrams

From: A Chef's Guide to Low Fat, High Pleasure Eating, Frances Stern Nutrition Center-New England Medical Center Hospitals, Boston, MA.



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