



Nutrition Education Kit



Keeping it Safe: Cleaning and Storing Fresh Produce

Purchasing and preparing fresh produce from a farmer, or even from a grocery store, often involves a little more work than buying highly-processed produce. If not washed and stored properly, fresh produce can be contaminated and potentially lead to illnesses. Here are some general food safety tips when preparing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Washing:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with warm, soapy water before handling food. Remember to have children wash their hands in this manner as well if they will be helping in food preparation.
- Inspect produce before preparing. Bacteria can thrive in bruised areas, so handle produce gently and remove or throw away bruised or damaged portions of fruits and vegetables.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables with cool running tap water right before using or eating (do not wash berries until right before eating). Remember to also wash foods with skins and rinds that are not eaten, such as onions, winter squash, and melons.
- Rub firm-skinned fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing. Dry with a clean cloth towel or in a salad spinner.
- Do not use dish soap or detergent to wash produce.
- When purchasing local produce directly from a farmer, foods may contain more dirt than when purchasing from a grocery store. While it is best to wait until you are about to use a food to wash, it may be necessary to remove some dirt off of produce before storing to prevent contamination in your refrigerator. Before storing unwashed produce, brush off as much dirt and debris as possible and wipe clean with a paper towel. Store in plastic bags or containers to prevent contamination.

Storage:

- Refrigerate most produce in the crisper drawer of refrigerator at 40° F or lower.
- Produce that does not need refrigeration includes onions, potatoes, and tomatoes. Store these foods in a cool, dry place separate from any pests or cleaning chemicals.
- Produce that has been cooked or cut should be refrigerated and used within a few days.

Preparing:

- Avoid cross-contamination. Use clean utensils and cutting boards when peeling or cutting produce. Wash and sanitize utensils and cutting boards between uses.
- Separate fresh produce from raw meat, poultry, and seafood in your refrigerator. Also, do not use the same cutting board or utensils for raw meats and produce without thoroughly cleaning and sanitizing first.



Source: Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D. *Keeping Fruits and Vegetables Fresh and Safe from Plant to Palate (FN-690)*. NDSU Extension Service. Available from <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn690.pdf>.

Long-term Storage: Freezing Vegetables

When purchasing produce from a local farmer, it can be a challenge to know exactly how much to purchase. Occasionally, you may find yourself with extra on your hands, but there's no need to waste any fresh produce; you can almost always freeze it and serve it later!

Most fruits freeze very well, but some vegetables do not, including cabbage, green onions, lettuce, radishes, cucumbers, tomatoes, and uncooked potatoes. Once you learn how to freeze produce, you will see that freezing is one of the easiest methods of preserving foods. You may actually want to start purchasing an extra amount of produce so you can freeze it and eat local foods during the winter when many fruits and veggies are out of season.

Blanching

Blanching, or the scalding of vegetables in water or steam for a short period of time, is an essential step to effectively freezing vegetables. Proper blanching acts to brighten the color of vegetables and prevents the loss of nutrients. Blanching can be done in boiling water, steam, or in the microwave. All vegetables should be blanched prior to freezing, but blanching times vary depending on the size and kind of vegetable. After blanching, vegetables should be cooled quickly by adding vegetables to cold water to halt the cooking process. For more specific details about blanching and freezing vegetables, refer to "Freezing Vegetables" (FN-187) from NDSU Extension Service, available at www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/landing-pages/food-and-nutrition/freezing-vegetables-fn-187.

Selected Blanching Times

Vegetables	Preparation	Blanching time (in boiling water)
Snap Beans (green or wax)	Wash & remove ends. Leave whole, slice, or cut into 1- to 1 ½-inch lengths.	3 minutes
Broccoli	Wash and trim. Split lengthwise in pieces less than 1 ½ inches across.	3 minutes (5 min in steam)
Carrots	Remove tops. Wash and peel. Leave small carrots whole. Cut others into cubes or strips.	Diced or sliced: 2 minutes
Sweet Corn	Husk ears, remove silk and wash. Cut corn off cob and 2/3 the depth of kernels.	4 minutes
Eggplant	Wash, peel, and slice into 1/3-inch thick slices. Blanch 4 minutes in 1 gallon of boiling water containing ½ up of lemon juice, then cool and drain.	4 minutes
Greens (kale, spinach, etc)	Wash and remove stems. Blanch, cool, and drain.	2 minutes
Peppers (sweet or hot)	Wash, cut off stems, remove seeds. Water blanch. Leave ½-inch head space, seal and freeze.	Halves- 3 minutes
Zucchini	Wash and cut into ½-inch slices.	3 minutes
Pumpkin and Winter Squash	Use mature squash. Wash, remove seeds and cut into small pieces. Cook until soft in boiling water or 350 F oven. Mash, cool, package, and freeze.	Cook until tender

Source: Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D. Freezing Vegetables (FN-187). NDSU Extension Service. Available from <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/landing-pages/food-nutrition/freezing-vegetables-fn-187>.

Freezing Vegetables, continued

Freezing Containers & Packing

Plastic freezer bags and rigid freezer containers that are moisture-vapor resistant are appropriate for freezing. If using rigid containers, leave ½-inch head space. If using freezer bags, press air out of the unfilled part of the bag, seal and freeze. Vegetables can be packed in a variety of ways, including solid, loose, and dry packs. In a loose pack, you may pour out as much as you want when it is time to use the vegetable. To use a loose pack, spread the drained vegetables (after blanching) in a single layer on a tray and freeze. As soon as they are frozen, pour into freezer container, seal, and return to freezer (works very well with snap beans).

How to Use Frozen Vegetables

Most frozen vegetables could be cooked without thawing first. Be careful not to overcook your frozen vegetables. Because these items have been partially cooked through blanching, less cooking time may be required than for fresh veggies.

Kids in the Kitchen

A “picky eater” may be encouraged to try new foods if allowed to help out in the kitchen. Children are more likely to try a new food if they help to prepare it. Kitchen duties also encourage children's growing independence and allow them to take ownership of a task.

Kitchen skills will vary by age and development level. Refer to the chart below for suggested age-appropriate activities. Make sure all children wash their hands before helping.

2 Year Olds <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rinse vegetables or fruits• Tear lettuce or other greens• Snap fresh green beans• Wipe tables, chairs or counters• Place things in the trash• Make "faces" out of pieces of fruits and vegetables	3 Year Olds <p>All the 2-year-old activities plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add ingredients• Scoop or mash potatoes• Stir mixes or batters (example: pancake batter)• Spread peanut butter or other spreads• Help assemble foods (example: pizza)• Name and count foods
4 Year Olds <p>All the 2 and 3-year-old activities plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set the table• Mash soft fruits, vegetables, and beans• Help measure dry ingredients (flour, salt, etc)• Help make sandwiches and tossed salads• Peel eggs and some fruits	5 Year Olds <p>All the 2 to 4-year-old activities plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measure liquids• Cut soft fruits with a dull knife• Crack eggs• Read some recipes out loud

Source: ChooseMyPlate “Kitchen Activities.” Available at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/picky-eaters/kitchen-activities.html>.

Conducting a Taste Test in Early Childhood

Children are often more willing to try a new food after repeated, non-threatening exposures to the food. These exposures can be more fun and non-threatening if there are minimal expectations on the child to actually *eat* the food, but rather to *taste* and explore the food instead. One way to introduce a new food to children in a fun way is by conducting a “taste test” of the food before serving it as part of a meal or snack.

Consider some of the following ideas for conducting a Taste Test:

- **Wash Hands.** Even if children may not be eating the food, it is still beneficial for children (and adults) to get into the habit of washing their hands.
- **Review Manners.** You may want to have a brief talk about manners when eating foods, such as avoiding making faces or saying unpleasant things about new foods. If a child says “gross!” or “ewww!” in reference to a food, ask them to describe what they mean instead. For example: “When you said that, do you mean that this food is different than any food you’ve ever seen? Or it looks really squishy?”
- **Try “Sensory Exploration.”** This is allowing children to interact with a new food and asking them to use their senses to tell you about it: Is it small? Big? Wet? Dry? Juicy? Round? Bumpy? How does it smell? Next, you might cut into the food (if applicable) and ask children how it looks different on the inside. Are there seeds? Is it a different color? Do we eat the inside or outside? Or both? You may even have some cooked veggies and some raw veggies, and ask children to tell you the differences.
- **Taste the New Food.** After exploring the food, taste it all together as a group. Offer only very small portions, and try only one new food at a time. *Do not force* any child to taste the food in order to keep their overall experience positive and non-threatening. Praise a child for even touching a food if that is more than the child has done before.
- **Breaking the “I Don’t Like It” Habit.** After children taste the new food, try to avoid asking “Do you like it?” Instead, try asking them to tell you what it tastes like (this will likely lead to teaching/learning some new words!). Is it sweet? Sour? Crunchy? Mushy? Soft? Hard? Does it make a loud sound when you bite, or no sound? Is it salty? If a child decides that they like or don’t like the food, encourage them to tell you *why*: because it’s sweet, crunchy, soft, etc.

Reflection Page: Conducting a Taste Test

Please answer the following questions for at least one taste test conducted during the 2015 Farm-to-Child Care program. The food used during the taste test should be new (or relatively new) to most of the children in your care. Submit completed reflection page to your Child Care Aware consultant.

1. What new food was introduced? What steps did you take to introduce this food to children in a fun, interactive way? (examples: sensory exploration, children participated in recipe prep, etc)
2. What was the children's response to the introduction to this food? Did they look at it, touch it, taste it? What comments were made?
3. What did you find that worked well when introducing the new food to the children?
4. What didn't work so well? What would you do differently if you were to try another taste test?
5. Are you considering offering this food again to children, or making it a regular part of your menu?

Resources and References

Information from the following resources was used in the development of this Nutrition Education Kit. These resources also include valuable information that would be helpful for early childhood professionals providers in various settings as they participate in the Farm-to-Child Care program.

Choose My Plate

www.choosemyplate.gov

Farm to Preschool

farmtopreschool.org

Farm to Preschool Harvest of the Month Curriculum

<http://farmtopreschool.org/documents/F2P%20Curriculum.pdf>

Fruits and Veggies More Matters

www.Fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

USDA Team Nutrition Resources (including Grow it, Try it, Like it! and recipes:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition>

Harvest of the Month

<http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/index.asp>

NDSU Extension Services Nutrition Publications

www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/food-nutrition

NDSU Extension Services Foodwise Recipes:

<http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise/recipes>

University of Minnesota Extension

<http://www1.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/toolkit/>

Food Photos:

All sections of this kit (except for Zucchini, Melons, Squash, and Kale) contain pictures from: www.pachd.com



Nutrition Education Kit

Featured Produce

Spinach/salad greens

Sugar snap peas

Broccoli

Zucchini

Sweet corn

Carrots

Beets

Snap Beans

Peppers

Melons

Winter Squash

Kale

Adding Flavor

Aromatics (onions, garlic, etc)

Herbs



Spinach & Salad Greens

Nutrition Benefits

Like most fruits and veggies, spinach and lettuce are low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and calories.

Spinach provides:

- Fiber
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Iron
- Folate
- Magnesium



Prepping and Washing

To wash: Remove stems. Place spinach in a colander and gently spray with kitchen sink sprayer. If no sink sprayer is available, place spinach in a colander and then place in a bowl of cold water. Move colander in and out of the water several times (do not soak). Continue until water remains clear, changing water as needed. **Thoroughly dry** with clean paper towels or in a salad spinner before using or storing.

Veggie Bites

Popeye was a big fan of spinach for a reason; it is packed with valuable nutrients and is low in calories. Spinach is a great source of iron and fiber, two nutrients that are often low in children's diets.



Spinach can be consumed in a variety of ways, including raw in salads, or cooked as a side dish or in a delicious dip (like spinach artichoke dip). Spinach can even be used to replace iceberg lettuce in a sandwich or wrap to provide additional crunch and nutrients.

Mixed salad greens also offer a variety of nutrition benefits. Whether eating spinach or other salad greens, remember to eat dark-colored greens more often, which contain more nutrients than lighter green veggies.

Storing Spinach & Salad

Short Term Storage

Refrigerate in plastic zipper bag and use within 2-5 days. If available, store in the crisper of your refrigerator. For best results, use spinach and other delicate greens as soon as possible after washing.



Long Term Storage: Freezing

If you have too much spinach or lettuce on your hands, you can always freeze it and save it for later. In fact, you may even want to buy an extra amount so you can have fresh spinach during the winter! Frozen spinach can be prepared without thawing; just steam or cook in a small amount of water. For best quality, use frozen spinach within 12 months. For specific freezing directions, refer to the "Freezing Vegetables" section in the introduction of this kit.

Suggested Activities

Sing “Old MacDonald Had a Spinach Farm”

Lyrics:

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO
On this farm, he grew some spinach, EIEIO
Plant seeds here and plant seeds there,
Here seeds, there seeds, everywhere spinach seeds!
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO!

To get active, act out all of the actions in the song (i.e., bend over to plant seeds, pretend to hold a watering can, bite spinach, etc.)

Suggested lyrics for 3rd line in following verses:

- *Water* spinach here, *wa-ter* spinach there..
- *Pick* spinach here and *pick* spinach there...
- With a *bite*, *bite* here, and a *bite*, *bite* there....

The Spinach Stretch

Ask children to give themselves plenty of space. Ask children to watch you show them a special spinach stretch, then ask them to join along. Squat to the ground and wrap arms around knees, creating a ball shape with your body (explain that this is how spinach starts, as a little seed). Slowly extend your legs (touching toes), then stand up extending your arms above your head. Repeat stretch several times, reminding children how this stretch is like spinach growing on a farm.

Source: Grow It, Try It, Like It! Preschool Fun with Fruits and Vegetables Curriculum.
Available at teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/growit.html.

Suggested Tasting Activities

The more comfortable children are with a new food, the more likely they are to try it.

If spinach is a relatively new food for many of the children in your care, you may consider setting apart a special time for children to “explore” fresh spinach using their senses. Give each child a small portion of washed spinach. Encourage children to smell, feel, and taste spinach, asking them to describe what they are experiencing along the way. Ask them to name different ways they could eat spinach.

Also, try reading one of the suggested books or try one of the suggested activities before introducing spinach in a meal or snack.

Try offering spinach in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- Fresh, clean spinach leaves with low-fat ranch dressing for dip
- Chopped and added to a soup
- Spinach Leaf Rolls (spread a little low fat cream cheese, peanut butter, or deli meat and roll)
- Sunrise Smoothie (recipe on next page. Encourage children to help you make the smoothie!)
- Add fresh spinach to mini pizzas made with English muffins.



Suggested Books:

*A Harvest of Color:
Growing a Vegetable
Garden* by Melaine
Eclare

Farmer’s Market by
Paul Brett Johnson

*Eating the Alphabet
Fruits and Vegetables
from A to Z* by Lois Eh-
lert

*The Very Hungry
Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

*Mention of these materials is not
an endorsement over other availa-
ble materials on this subject



Sunrise Smoothie

Ingredients

- 1 c. blackberries, fresh or frozen
- 1 c. strawberries, fresh or frozen
- 1 c. orange juice
- 1 c. vanilla nonfat yogurt
- 1/2 c. fresh spinach

Directions

Place all ingredients in a blender. Cover and blend until smooth. Pour into glasses and serve immediately (you may also pour into popsicle molds and freeze to enjoy as a frozen treat). Makes 4 servings.

Recipe & Photo Source: North Dakota State University Extension Service. Available at <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise>



Spinach Wrap

Ingredients

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 c. shredded carrot | ¾ c. ripe tomato, diced |
| 1 c. bell pepper, sliced thin | 3 Tbsp reduced fat Ranch or blue cheese dressing |
| 1 c. fresh spinach, shredded | 4, 10-inch whole wheat tortillas |

Directions

Combine all vegetables together. Add ranch or blue cheese dressing and mix well. Lay tortilla flat and place a cup of vegetable mixture at bottom of tortilla. Fold tortilla once to cover vegetable blend, fold in each side and finish rolling. Repeat. (Tip: add drained/rinsed canned beans, deli turkey, or cooked chicken to add protein. Use smaller tortilla for younger children). Makes 12 child-size servings (1/2 cup each)

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters. Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Spinach-Strawberry-Cantaloupe Salad

Ingredients

- 4 c. fresh spinach leaves
- 1 c. bite-size pieces of fresh strawberries
- 1 c. bite-size pieces of fresh cantaloupe
- Poppy seed salad dressing or raspberry vinaigrette

Directions

Tear spinach and cut fruit into bite-size pieces. Toss spinach and fruit pieces together in a large bowl. Dress lightly with dressing of choice. Serve immediately. Refrigerate any leftovers.

Source: Grow It, Try It, Like It! Preschool Fun with Fruits and Vegetables Curriculum: Spinach Lane. Available at teamnnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/growit.html.



Spinach and Salad Greens

Veggie Bites

Popeye was a big fan of spinach for a reason; it is packed with valuable nutrients but is low in calories. Spinach is a great source of iron and fiber, two nutrients that are often low in children's diets.

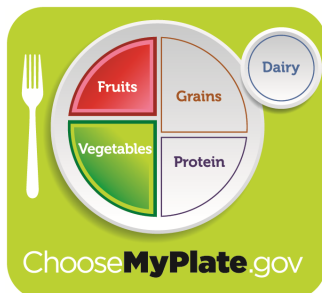


Spinach can be consumed in a variety of ways, including raw in salads, or cooked as a side dish or in a delicious dip. Spinach can even be used to replace iceberg lettuce in a sandwich or wrap to provide additional crunch and nutrients.

Mixed salad greens also offer a variety of nutrition benefits. Whether eating spinach or other salad greens, remember to eat dark-colored greens more often, which contain more nutrients than lighter green veggies.

How Much Do We Need?

Young children (2-8 years old) need about 1-to-2 cups of vegetables every day, and adults need 2 1/2-to-3 cups each day. Because of the volume of raw spinach (or other leafy greens), it actually takes 2 cups of *raw* spinach to equal a 1 cup vegetable serving. 1 cup of *cooked* spinach is equal to a 1 cup vegetable serving.



Remember to make
half of your plate
fruits and veggies!!

Going Green with Spinach!

Top 5 Ways to Enjoy Spinach

- 1) **Smoothie:** Mix it in with fruits, you will barely notice it's there!
- 2) **Spinach Dip:** Cook spinach with artichokes for a tasty dip
- 3) **Stir-Fry:** Cook with bell peppers, onions, and broccoli in a little olive oil on high heat
- 4) **Omelets:** Spinach and cheese is a delicious filling for omelets
- 5) **Wrap:** Replace lettuce with spinach for more nutrients

Sunrise Smoothie

Ingredients

- 1 c. blackberries, fresh or frozen
- 1 c. strawberries, fresh or frozen
- 1 c. orange juice
- 1 c. vanilla nonfat yogurt
- 1/2 c. fresh spinach

Directions

Place all ingredients in a blender. Cover and blend until smooth. Pour into glasses and serve immediately (you may also pour into popsicle molds and freeze to enjoy as a frozen treat). Makes 4 servings.

Recipe Source: North Dakota State University Extension Service. Available at www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise

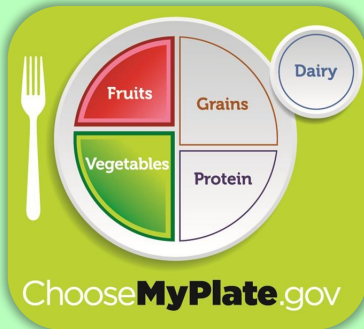
Sugar Snap Peas

Nutrition Benefits

Like most fruits and veggies, sugar snap peas are low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and calories.

Sugar Snap Peas provide:

- Fiber
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin K



**Make Half Your Plate
Fruits and Veggies!!**

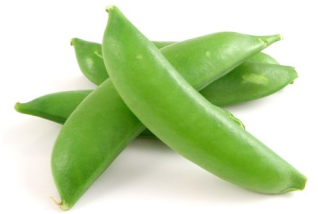
Prepping and Washing

Sugar snap peas usually must be trimmed prior to eating or cooking. Snap off the stem from the end of the pod and pull downwards towards the inner edge of the pod to remove the string in one motion.

To wash: Wash sugar snap peas by placing them in a colander under cool, running tap water. Place washed peas on a paper towel and pat dry.

Veggie Bites

Sugar snap peas are a delicious, crispy, and bright green vegetable. Peas are actually members of the legume family (like beans) and are either of the green or edible-pod variety. Green peas come in an inedible pod, so only the sweet, full-sized seeds are eaten. However, sugar snap peas grow in an *edible* pod, so both the pod and the pea can be eaten at once.



Whether eaten fresh or cooked, this veggie is delicious and fun to eat. Kids will love hearing the sound of raw sugar snap pea pods snapping, revealing the peas inside!

Fun Fact: California is the top producer of sugar snap peas in the United States. Only 5% of peas are sold fresh!

Storing Sugar Snap Peas

Short Term Storage

All peas begin to lose sugar soon after harvest, so it is best to eat them as soon as possible after you pick them up from your farmer (or grocery store). However, to store for a short period of time, it is best to refrigerate them in a perforated plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator.

Long Term Storage: Freezing

Even though sugar snap peas are best when eaten very soon after harvest, it is ok if your program is not able to use all of the sugar snap peas right away because this veggie freezes very well. Frozen sugar snap peas can be kept for up to 12 months, and are very easy to prepare. For specific freezing directions, refer to the section titled "Freezing Vegetables" in the introduction of this kit.



Suggested Activities

***The Pea Blossom* Finger Play/Song**

Teach the children this song using your fingers. Try adding motion for every action. (bird eating, frog eating, etc).

5 little peas and not one more
A bird ate one and then there were 4.
4 little peas as quiet as can be
A frog ate one and then there were 3.
3 little peas that grew in the sun
An emperor ate two and there was 1.
1 little pea did not stay still
Flew through the air onto a child's windowsill
There he grew into a beautiful pea plant
The child became healthy and he was happy and content

This activity may be done after reading the book *The Pea Blossom*. Simply explain how pea pods grow after seeds have been planted and watered. Remember to make the song active!

Suggested Books:

Eat Your Peas, Louise!
by Pegreen Snow

The Pea Blossom by
Paul Brett Johnson

Pick, Pull, Snap! By Lola
Schaefer

*The Very Smart Pea
and the Princess-to-be*
by Mini Grey

*The Very Hungry
Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement over other available materials on this subject.

Simple Math Activities

Count the number of peas in a pod of sugar snap peas.

Use sugar snap peas to "measure" the length of a table, chair, etc.

Guess how many pods (or peas) fit in a cup, bowl, jar, or other container.

Source: Farm to Preschool Harvest of the Month Activity Packet: Peas and Green Beans. Network for a Healthy California-Merced County Office of Education. Available at: ourcommunityourkids.org/domains--committees/early-childhood/farm-to-preschool-.aspx.

Suggested Tasting Activities

***The more comfortable children are with a new food,
the more likely they are to try it.***

If sugar snap peas are a relatively new food for many of the children in your care, you may consider setting apart a special time for children to "explore" this new food using their senses. Give each child a few washed, whole sugar snap peas. Encourage children to smell and feel the peas, and even to snap them in half with their fingers. Ask them what it sounded like and felt like when the peas snapped in half. Ask them what they see on the inside of the pod. Also, try reading one of the suggested books or try one of the activities before introducing sugar snap peas in a meal or snack.

Try offering sugar snap peas in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- Fresh, washed, and trimmed sugar snap peas with fat-free cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, or low-fat ranch dressing for dip
- Remove peas from pod and stuff pods with low fat cream cheese or cottage cheese
- Lightly steamed or sautéed for softer texture (might be helpful for younger children learning how to chew)
- Cook with sliced vegetables and chicken strips for a quick stir-fry



Delicious Dips

"Ranch-Style" Dip

Ingredients

1 c. cottage cheese
1 Tbsp. onion, chopped very fine
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4-1/2 tsp garlic powder
2 tsp. parsley flakes

Directions

Put cottage cheese in blender. Blend until cottage cheese is smooth. Add other ingredients and mix. Add nonfat milk if you desire dip to be thinner. Store dip in the refrigerator to let flavors blend. Serve with fresh veggies.

Peanut Butter/Yogurt Dip

Ingredients

1 c. vanilla yogurt
1/4 c. peanut butter
2 Tbsp. orange juice

Directions

Mix all ingredients together in a small bowl. Use as a dip for any fruit or vegetable. Makes about 8 servings.

Recipes Adapted from: Now Serving: Tasty and Healthful Meals on a Budget"
Available at: www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/food-nutrition
North Dakota State University Extension Service, www.ndsu.edu/eatsmart



Sugar Snap Pea Salad

Ingredients

3 Tbsp. soy sauce
1 1/2 Tbsp. water
1 1/2 Tbsp. vinegar

3 Tbsp. sugar
3 c. sugar snap peas, trimmed and washed
1 1/2 tsp. sesame seeds (optional)

Directions

Measure and pour the soy sauce, water, and vinegar into a mixing bowl. Add the sugar and stir until the sugar dissolves. Pour the dressing over the pea pods and stir until they are evenly coated with dressing. Place in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour to let the flavors blend. Just before serving, stir salad and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Serve along side a meal, or alone as a snack. Makes about 6 servings.

Source: LANA'S Favorite Recipes; LANA Preschool Program. Minnesota Department of Health. Available at: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdrn/nutrition/nutritioneducation/ana/tastingActivities.html

Stuffed Pea Pods

Ingredients

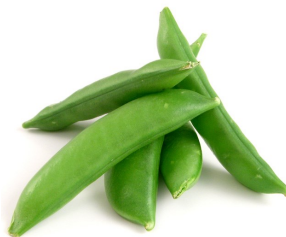
1/2 cup sugar snap peas, washed and trimmed
1/4 cup softened low fat cream cheese

Directions

Cut or break open pea pods to expose the peas inside. Spread cream cheese inside of pea pod using dull knife or spoon. Repeat with each pea pod. Eat and enjoy!

Tip: This is a great first tasting activity with young children. Encourage children to open the peas and spread the cream cheese themselves! Using a flavored cream cheese (or one of the dips above) may make this snack even tastier.

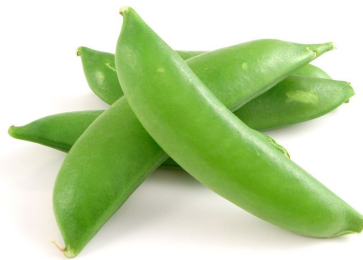
Source: LANA'S Favorite Recipes; LANA Preschool Program. Minnesota Department of Health. Available at www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdrn/nutrition/nutritioneducation/ana/tastingActivities.html



Sugar Snap Peas

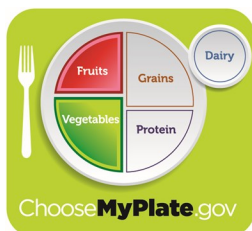
Veggie Bites

Sugar snap peas are a delicious, crispy, bright green vegetable, rich in vitamin C and vitamin K. Peas are actually members of the legume family (like beans) and are either of a green or edible-pod variety. Green peas come in inedible pods, so only the sweet, full-sized seeds are eaten. However, sugar snap peas grow in an edible pod, so both the pod and the pea can be eaten at once. Whether eaten fresh or cooked, this veggie is delicious and fun to eat. Kids will love hearing the sound of raw pea pods snapping, revealing the peas inside!



How Much Do We Need?

Depending on age and activity level, young children (2-8 years old) need 1-to-2 cups of vegetables every day, and adults need 2 1/2-to-3 cups each day. While fresh vegetables (including sugar snap peas) are better for us and often have better flavor, all forms of veggies count in a healthy, balanced diet.



**Remember to make half
of your plate fruits and
veggies!!**

“Snap” to It!

Eating Sugar Snap Peas

- 1) **Raw:** Dip in low fat salad dressing or other veggie dip
- 2) **Stir-Fry:** Cook with sliced vegetables and chicken strips
- 3) **Sautee:** Heat in frying pan with dash of salt and olive oil
- 4) **Salad or Pasta:** Mix fresh peas with pasta or salad dish
- 5) **Smoothie:** Blend peas into a smoothie for extra nutrients

Sugar Snap Pea Salad

Ingredients

- 3 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. water
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. vinegar
- 3 Tbsp. sugar
- 3 cups sugar snap peas
- 1 1/2 tsp. sesame seeds (optional)

Directions

Measure and pour the soy sauce, water, and vinegar into a mixing bowl. Add the sugar and stir until the sugar dissolves. Pour the dressing over the pea pods and stir until they are evenly coated with dressing. Place in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour to let the flavors blend. Just before serving, stir salad and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Makes about 6 servings.

Source: LANA'S Favorite Recipes; LANA Preschool Program. Minnesota Department of Health. health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdrn/nutrition/nutritioneducation/lanas/

Broccoli

Nutrition Benefits

Like most fruits and veggies, broccoli is low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and calories.

Broccoli provides:

- Vitamin C
- Vitamin B6
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin K
- Fiber
- Potassium
- Folate

Prepping and Washing

Prior to washing, remove tough stalk and stems from broccoli. If you plan to just use the florets (or the top, flowered portion), cut off each floret using a sharp knife, cutting around the top, or crown, of the stalk.

To wash: Wash broccoli by placing in a colander under cool, running tap water, making sure to remove any dirt or grit in the florets. Dry with a paper towel or in a salad spinner.

Tip: After you remove the florets, you will be left with the large, thick stalk. You can save this and use it to flavor a soup, or slice it thinly and mix it in a salad to add some crunch. Peel outer layer of stalk before using.

Veggie Bites

Often referred to by children as “little trees,” broccoli is a fun and delicious vegetable that tastes even better when fresh and locally-grown. Broccoli is literally jam-packed with nutrients, including fiber, vitamin C, and folate. Broccoli even contains small amounts of calcium and protein, nutrients not typically found in vegetables.



Part of the cabbage family and related to cauliflower, kale, and brussels sprouts, broccoli is delicious when eaten either raw or cooked. When cooked, some nutrients may be reduced, especially folate. Serve uncooked when possible, or cook lightly for maximum nutritional value. Regardless, eating cooked broccoli is better than no broccoli at all!

Fun Fact: Due to its high concentration of nutrients, Broccoli is occasionally referred to as the “Crown Jewel of Nutrition.”

Storing Broccoli

Short Term Storage

Broccoli should be refrigerated in an air-tight bag for up to 7 days. Heads of broccoli should be dark green with compact, firm clusters of flower buds that are unopened.



Long Term Storage: Freezing

If you have too much broccoli on your hands, or even if you would like to have local broccoli year-round, freezing is a great and easy option. Frozen broccoli can be kept for up to 12 months, and is very easy to prepare. For specific freezing directions, refer to the “Freezing Vegetables” section in the introduction of this kit.



Suggested Activities

Actively Learning Plant Parts

Briefly teach children parts of a plant: roots, stems, leaves, flowers, seeds. Use a picture of a flower (or broccoli plant) to help explain this. Emphasize that broccoli is the flower of a plant that we can eat. Then, show how the parts of a plant may be like the parts of our body:

Roots: Feet

Stems: Body

Leaves: Arms and Shoulders

Flower: Head

Lyrics:

(To the tune of *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes*):

Flowers, leaves, stems,
and roots,

Stems and roots,

Flowers leaves, stems
and roots,

Stems and roots...

To the tune of “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” interactively sing and dance to “Flowers, Leaves, Stems, and Roots” while touching your head for “flowers,” touching your shoulders for “leaves,” touching your legs for “stems” and touching your toes for “roots.” Suggestion: Vary this activity by singing it faster, slower, with loud voices, or soft voices.

Source: Farm to Preschool Harvest of the Month Activity Packet: Cruciferous Vegetables, adapted from Eating Healthy from Farm to Fork curriculum. Available at: http://www.ourcommunityourkids.org/media/2976/Farm%20to%20PreK_Mar10_Crucifers.pdf

Suggested Tasting Activities

***The more comfortable children are with a new food,
the more likely they are to try it.***

If broccoli is a relatively new food for many of the children in your care, you may consider setting apart a special time for children to “explore” this new food using their senses. Give each child a few washed and trimmed broccoli florets. Show them what a whole stalk looks like. Encourage children to smell and feel the broccoli, and describe what it looks like. Ask them about the color and texture. You may even try steaming/sautéing some broccoli and allowing children to see the color and texture difference between raw broccoli and cooked broccoli.

Try offering broccoli in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- Fresh, washed, and trimmed broccoli florets with fat-free cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, or low-fat ranch dressing for dip
- Make a broccoli forest: stand broccoli florets up in a small bowl full of a thick dip, such as cottage cheese or French onion dip. Encourage children to help make a forest, and then taste it!
- Wrap it up—add chopped broccoli to a wrap made with flour tortillas or flatbread. Wraps are fun for children to make themselves—and if children help make something, it is more likely they will taste it!



Suggested Books:

Broccoli Bob and the Organic Outlaws by Karyn Drum

Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli by Barbara Jean Hicks

Broccoli Dreams by Josephine Tam Ho

Eating the Alphabet from A to Z by Lois Eh-lert

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement over other available materials on this subject.



"Ranch" Dip with Veggies

Ingredients

- 1 c. cottage cheese
- 1 Tbsp. onion, chopped very fine
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4-1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 2 tsp parsley flakes



Directions

Put cottage cheese in blender. Blend until cottage cheese is smooth. Add other ingredients and mix. Add nonfat milk if you desire dip to be thinner. Store dip in the refrigerator to let flavors blend. Serve with fresh veggies.

Recipe Adapted from: Now Serving: Tasty and Healthful Meals on a Budget" Available at: www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/food-nutrition. North Dakota State University Extension Service, www.ndsu.edu/eatsmart

Broccoli Pinwheels

Ingredients

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 2 Tbsp. cream cheese, reduced-fat | 1/2 c. shredded carrots |
| 2 Tbsp. light Ranch dressing | 1/2 c. finely diced broccoli (Tip: wash and dice the night before. Refrigerate until ready to use) |
| 2, 7- to 8-inch tortillas | 4 Tbsp. black beans (drained/rinsed if canned) |

Directions

Mix cream cheese and ranch dressing until well blended; spread onto tortillas. Top with vegetables and black beans. Roll up tortillas tightly and cut each roll into six pieces (or as desired). Makes about 4 servings. **Tip:** Refrigerate or freeze leftover black beans and add to salsa or soup. May also add more beans to this recipe to serve as meat alternate (or add deli meat of choice, such as turkey or chicken).

Source: North Dakota State University Extension Service. Available at: www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise/recipes/vegetables

Crazy Curly Broccoli Bake

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups whole wheat corkscrew pasta, dry
- 3 cups chopped, cooked broccoli (for quick cooking, microwave fresh broccoli in a small amount of water in a covered bowl for 3-4 minutes on high)
- 1 10.5-oz. can low-fat condensed cream of broccoli soup
- ½ cup skim milk
- 2 tablespoons plain bread crumbs

Directions

Preheat oven to 350° F. Cook pasta according to package directions. Mix soup with skim milk, and add to chopped, cooked broccoli. Add cooked pasta and mix. Top with bread crumbs and a seasoning blend of choice (if desired). Bake in oven for 10-15 minutes until heated through. (**Tip:** add cooked chicken to transform this recipe from a side dish to a main dish!)

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters. Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Broccoli

Veggie Bites



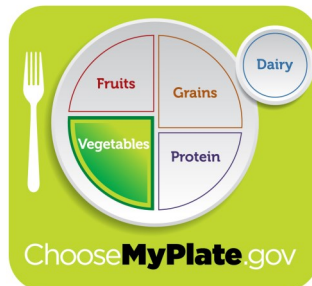
Often referred to by children as “little trees,” broccoli is a fun and delicious vegetable that tastes even better when fresh and locally-grown. Broccoli is literally jam-packed with nutrients, including fiber, vitamin C, and folate. Broccoli even contains

small amounts of calcium and protein, nutrients not typically found in vegetables.

Broccoli is delicious when eaten either raw or cooked. When cooked, some nutrients may be reduced, especially folate. Serve raw or lightly cooked for maximum nutritional value, but even eating cooked broccoli is better than no broccoli at all!

How Much Do We Need?

Depending on age and activity level, young children (2-8 years old) need 1-to-2 cups of vegetables every day, and adults need 2 1/2-to-3 cups each day. About three, 5” long spears or 1 cup of broccoli florets counts as 1 cup of vegetables for the day.



Rockin’ Broccoli

Top 5 Ways to Eat Broccoli

- 1) **Raw:** Dip in low fat salad dressing or other veggie dip
- 2) **Stir-Fry:** Cook with sliced vegetables and chicken strips
- 3) **Pizza:** Top a home-made pizza with chopped florets
- 4) **Salad or Pasta:** Mix in lightly cooked broccoli florets
- 5) **Eggs:** Add a handful of chopped broccoli to an omelet or scrambled eggs

Broccoli Pinwheels

Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp. cream cheese, reduced-fat
- 2 Tbsp. light Ranch dressing
- 2, 7- to 8-inch tortillas
- 1/2 c. shredded carrots
- 1/2 c. finely diced broccoli
- 4 Tbsp. black beans

Directions

Mix cream cheese and ranch dressing until well blended; spread onto tortillas. Top with vegetables and black beans. Roll up tortillas tightly and cut each roll into six pieces (or as desired). Makes about 4 servings.

Source: North Dakota State University Extension Service. Available at: www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise/recipes/vegetables

Zucchini

Nutrition Benefits

Like most fruits and veggies, zucchini is low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and calories.

Zucchini is provides:

- Vitamin C, an important antioxidant that helps children and adults to heal and stay healthy



Prepping and Washing

To wash: Rinse whole zucchini under running tap water and scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing. Dry with a clean cloth towel or paper towels. Cut and prepare after washing. There is usually no need to peel zucchini, just cut off the ends and enjoy!

Veggie Bites

A famous summer squash, zucchini is from the same family as melons, pumpkins, cucumbers, and gourds. Zucchini and other summer squashes are eaten while still immature, meaning they are relatively small and have a soft, edible skin. In fact, all of the zucchini is safe for eating, including the skin, seeds, and flesh.



When it comes to cooking, zucchini is a delicious and versatile vegetable that can be eaten either raw or cooked. It provides us with lots of vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C, vitamin B6, and manganese (mineral involved in bone **formation**). However, when looking at the parts of a plant, a zucchini is actually considered to be a fruit on the zucchini plant. Don't let this confuse you; when looking at the nutritional value of zucchini, this summer squash is all veggie!

Storing Zucchini

Short Term Storage

Zucchini should be deep green and have firm skin that is free of cuts and bruises. Smaller zucchini tend to be more tender. Zucchini can be refrigerated for 4-5 days in a plastic bag. Cooked zucchini can also be refrigerated, but should be eaten or thrown away after 2 days.



Long Term Storage: Freezing

If you have too much zucchini on your hands, or even if you would like to have local zucchini year-round, freezing is a great and easy option. Frozen zucchini can be kept for up to 12 months, and is very easy to prepare. For specific freezing directions, refer to the "Freezing Vegetables" section in the introduction of this kit.

Suggested Activities

Squash, Squash, Zucchini!

Sit in a circle in a small group. Play “Duck, Duck, Goose” using the traditional rules, but instead, say the words “Squash, Squash, Zucchini.” Before playing this game, explain to children that zucchini is a kind of vegetable that is grown in the summer and is a part of the squash family.

Possible Variations:

Say “Veggie, Veggie, Zucchini,” explaining that zucchini is a kind of vegetable
Say “Green, Green, Yellow,” explaining that some squash is green, and some is yellow.

“Z” is for Zucchini

Explain to children that Zucchini begins with the last letter of the alphabet, the letter Z (consider reading *Eating the Alphabet Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z* by Lois Ehlert before this activity). Encourage children to participate in an activity that emphasizes the letter Z.

Examples:

Draw or color the letter Z next to a zucchini picture

Make a Z using arms or other body parts

Make a Z using whole zucchinis (may use this activity before tasting or preparing a recipe)

Suggested Tasting Activities

***The more comfortable children are with a new food,
the more likely they are to try it.***

If zucchini is a relatively new food for many of the children in your care, you may consider setting apart a special time for children to “explore” fresh zucchini using their senses. Show children what a whole zucchini looks like. Try slicing zucchini and giving each child a few slices. Encourage children to smell, feel, and taste zucchini, asking them to describe what they are experiencing along the way. Consider cooking some zucchini and encouraging children to compare the differences between raw and cooked zucchini (color, texture, taste, etc.). If some children seem more resistant to feeling the zucchini, ask them to draw a picture of what a zucchini looks like.

Try offering zucchini in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- Make zucchini “boats” by topping a whole zucchini sliced lengthwise with cooked ground beef and cheese
- Chop and add to pasta for extra texture
- Puree zucchini and add to 3/4 jar of pre-made spaghetti sauce. This will decrease sodium slightly and add more nutrients!
- Add zucchini to casserole or lasagna
- Make oven chips out of zucchini (recipe on back)



Suggested Books:

*I Heard it from Alice
Zucchini: Poems About
the Garden* by Juanita
Havill

The Ugly Vegetables by
Grace Lin

*Eating the Alphabet
Fruits and Vegetables
from A to Z* by Lois Eh-
lert

*The Very Hungry
Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

*Mention of these materials is not
an endorsement over other availa-
ble materials on this subject.



Zucchini Oven Chips

Ingredients

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1/4 c. dry bread crumbs | 1/8 tsp. ground black pepper |
| 1/4 c. grated Parmesan cheese | 2 Tbsp. fat free milk |
| 1/4 tsp. seasoned salt | 2 1/2 c. sliced zucchini (1/4" thick slices. Tip: |
| 1/4 tsp. garlic powder | wash and slice the night or morning before) |

Directions

Preheat oven to 425°F. Whisk bread crumbs, grated parmesan, seasoning salt, garlic powder, and black pepper in a medium bowl. Place milk in a shallow bowl. Dip zucchini slices in milk and then dredge in bread crumb mixture (place zucchini slice in bread crumbs, covering both sides). Place coated slices on an oven-proof wire rack coated with cooking spray. Place wire rack on a baking sheet. Bake for 30 minutes or until browned and crisp. Serves 4.

Source: Garden Heroes Activities by Heidi Douglas.. Available at Learning Zone Express: www.learningzoneexpress.com

Fresh Vegetable Pita Pizza

Ingredients

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 lb tomatoes | 2 c. shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese |
| 4 (7-inch) pita breads | 1 zucchini cut in half lengthwise and thinly |
| 1 Tbsp olive oil | sliced (about 2 cups) |
| 2 Tbsp grated Parmesan cheese | ½ large green bell pepper, sliced (about 1 cup) |
| 1 1/2 tsp Italian seasoning | ¼ cup thinly sliced onion |

Directions

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Core and slice tomatoes; cut each slice in half. Place pitas on 2 baking sheets; brush with oil. Arrange tomato slices on each pita, dividing evenly. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and half of the Italian seasoning. Bake until tomatoes are heated and pitas begin to crisp, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle tomatoes with half of the mozzarella cheese. Top with zucchini, green pepper and onion. Sprinkle with remaining mozzarella and Italian seasoning. Bake until cheese is melted and vegetables are crisp-tender, about 10 minutes. Serves 4.

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters. Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Skillet Lasagna

Ingredients

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Tbsp olive oil | 4 oz. uncooked lasagna noodles |
| ½ c. onion, finely chopped | 1 c. canned low-sodium tomato sauce |
| 1 medium zucchini, halved lengthwise | 1 c. canned diced tomatoes |
| then sliced | ½ tsp pepper |
| 1 c. sliced mushrooms | 1 tsp oregano |
| 1 c. fat-free ricotta or cottage cheese | 3 Tbsp grated Parmesan cheese |
| ½ c. shredded part skim mozzarella | |

Directions

Sauté onion, mushrooms and zucchini in olive oil (Tip: do this step the night before and refrigerate. Reheat the next day before cooking). Mix ricotta, mozzarella, and 2 tablespoons of the Parmesan cheese in a small bowl. Spread mixture evenly over vegetables. Evenly distribute uncooked noodles on top of cheese. Mix tomatoes, water, and oregano and pour over noodles. Cover tightly and simmer on medium heat for 20-25 minutes. Sprinkle top with 1 Tbsp Parmesan cheese. Serves 4.

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters. Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Zucchini

Veggie Bites

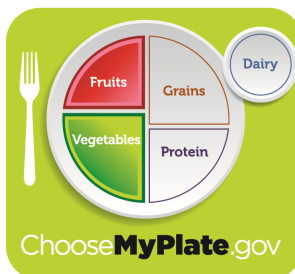
A famous summer squash, zucchini is from the same family as melons, pumpkins, cucumbers, and gourds. Zucchini and other summer squash are eaten while still immature, meaning they are relatively small and have a soft, edible skin. In fact, all of a zucchini is safe for eating, including the skin, seeds, and flesh.



Image courtesy of Grant Cochrane at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

When it comes to cooking, zucchini is a delicious and versatile vegetable that can be eaten either raw or cooked. It provides us with lots of vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C, vitamin B6, and manganese (mineral involved in bone formation). However, when looking at the parts of a plant, a zucchini is actually considered to be a fruit on the zucchini plant. Don't let this confuse you; when looking at the nutritional value of zucchini, this summer squash is all veggie!

Remember that children need 1-2 cups of veggies a day, and adults need more than 2 1/2 cups! Whether eaten raw or cooked, 1 cup of zucchini is a delicious and nutritious way to eat more veggies.



Super Zucchini

Top 5 Ways to Enjoy Zucchini

- 1) **Grilled:** Slice, drizzle with olive oil and salt, and grill zucchini.
- 2) **Pasta:** Slice and dice zucchini and cook in pasta dishes
- 3) **Stir-Fry:** Cook in skillet with olive oil until fork-tender
- 4) **Stuffed:** Cut zucchini, scoop out seeds, and stuff with desired foods (cheese, meat, veggies).
- 5) **Casseroles:** Add cooked zucchini to lasagna or other casseroles

Zucchini Oven Chips

Ingredients

- 1/4 c. dry bread crumbs
- 1/4 c. grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 tsp. seasoned salt
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 2 c. shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 zucchini sliced (about 2 cups)
- 1/2 large green bell pepper, sliced
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced onion

Directions

Preheat oven to 425°F. Whisk bread crumbs, grated parmesan, seasoning salt, garlic powder, and black pepper in a medium bowl. Place milk in a shallow bowl. Dip zucchini slices in milk and then dredge in bread crumb mixture (place zucchini slice in bread crumbs, covering both sides). Place coated slices on an oven-proof wire rack coated with cooking spray. Place wire rack on a baking sheet. Bake for 30 minutes or until browned and crisp. Serves 4.

Source: Garden Heroes Activities by Heidi Douglas.. Available at learningzoneexpress.com

Sweet Corn

Nutrition Benefits

Like most fruits and veggies, sweet corn is low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium.

Sweet Corn provides:

- Vitamin C
- Folate
- Thiamin (Vitamin B1)
- Magnesium
- Beta Carotene (in yellow corn)



Prepping and Washing

Corn Anatomy: One whole unit of corn is called an ear. The husk is the green covering around the kernels, and the silk is the thread-like material that protrudes from the ear.

To wash: Remove the husk and the silks (run hand down ears to remove extra silk) and wash under cool, running tap water. Rub with a vegetable brush, if available. Dry with paper towels. Wash immediately before using. Sweet corn may be eaten off the cob, or kernels can be removed and eaten separately.

Veggie Bites

Sweet Corn has long been a favorite vegetable among both children and adults. In fact, sweet corn has been around for about 200 years (corn, in general, has as existed for more than 7,000 years!). As the name would suggest, sweet corn is sweeter and more tender than field corn, which is used for cattle feed and also processed into cereal and other foods.



Sometimes corn is referred to as a “starchy” vegetable. This is because corn has more carbohydrates than most other veggies. The longer sweet corn sits at room temperature after harvest, the more sweet sugars are converted to the not-so-sweet starchy carbohydrates. Even when refrigerated, sweet corn will gradually lose sugar content, changing the flavor of this vegetable. This is one reason why fresh, local sweet corn tastes better than anything that has been shipped in from far away states or countries.

Storing Sweet Corn

Short Term Storage

Sweet corn should have green husks, fresh silks, and tight rows of kernels. To preserve optimal flavor, refrigerate sweet corn with husks for use within 1-2 days. Ideally, sweet corn should be eaten as soon as possible after harvest. When cut from the cob, 2 ears equals about 1 cup of corn kernels.



Long Term Storage: Freezing

If you purchase a lot of sweet corn, there's no need to feel pressured to eat it all within 2 days. Instead, you can freeze it and save it for later! Freezing sweet corn is easy to do, and even easier to prepare. By learning how to freeze, you can have local, delicious sweet

corn year-round! For more specific details about freezing sweet corn, refer to the “Freezing Vegetables” section in the introduction of this kit.

Suggested Activities

Active “Corny” Songs

Following songs to the tune: *I’m a Little Teapot*

I’m A Little Cornstalk

I’m a little cornstalk tall and stout, see me grow and watch me sprout. When I’m brown, you can shuck me down. Boil me up and I’m the best in town!🎵

See the Little Kernel

See the little kernel in the pot, Turn on the heat and watch it hop. When it gets all warmed up, it will pop.🎵Mmmm, it tastes good when it is hot!

I’m A Stalk of Corn

I’m a stalk of corn growing high, here are my husks oh so dry. When you pull them back, you will find ...Juicy kernels sweet as pie!

Popcorn Popping (act out actions in parentheses)

One little kernel (*Hold up one finger*)

Sleeping in the pot (*Curl up and pretend to sleep*)🎵

Turn on the heat, and watch it pop! (*Jump into the air*)

Popping, hopping popcorn (*Hop around*)🎵

A munchy, crunchy treat. (*Pretend to eat*)

Pour on the butter (*Pretend to pour on butter*)🎵

And let me eat! (*Pretend to eat*)

Source: Child Care Lounge. Available at: childcarelounge.com/season-theme/corn.php

Suggestion:

For a healthy alternative, instead of singing “pour on the butter,” sing pour on the garlic, herbs, cheese, or other favorite topping.

Suggested Tasting Activities

***The more comfortable children are with a new food,
the more likely they are to try it.***

It is very likely that the majority of the children in your care are familiar with corn. However, they may have only eaten corn from a can or frozen, so they may not be familiar with the *whole* ear of corn. Consider giving children an opportunity to explore a whole ear of corn using their senses. Show them how the kernels of corn hide underneath the husks, as if under a blanket. When it comes time to prepare the corn, allow children to help remove the husks. When children help prepare a meal, they feel a sense of ownership and are more likely to try the food.

Try offering sweet corn in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- On the cob. Children usually enjoy holding on to corn and taking big bites from the cob.
- Add to dips or salsas to add extra texture and nutrients.
- Mix in with soups to add variety and texture.
- Mix a few kernels in with cornbread batter.
- Personalize your cob. Butter and salt are traditional toppings, but are not the most nutritious. Encourage children to sprinkle parmesan cheese, chili powder, sweet paprika, or other herbs and spices to their corn on the cob.



Suggested Books:

Carlos and the Corn-field by Jan Romero Stevens

Corn is Maize: The Gift of the Indians by Alik

Corn (What’s for Lunch) by Pam Robson

A Harvest of Color: Growing a Vegetable Garden by Melaine Eclare

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement over other available materials on this subject



Simple Corn on the Cob

Ingredients

10 medium ears of corn
2 gallons of water



Directions

Put water in a large covered pot and bring to a boil over high heat. Husk the corn. If needed, run your hand down each ear to remove extra silk. Carefully add ears of corn to boiling water. Return to a boil and turn down heat to low. Cover pot and cook for 5 to 10 minutes or until corn kernels are just tender. Serve with parmesan cheese, seasoning salt, pepper, or other dried herbs and spices for flavor, if desired.

Source: University of Minnesota Extension Service. Available at www1.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/

Roasted Corn Salsa

Ingredients

4 ears corn on the cob	1 Tbsp olive oil
1/4 c. finely chopped cilantro	1 Tbsp lime juice
1/2 c. diced tomato	1/2 tsp ground cumin
1/2 c. chopped onion (or to taste)	1/8 tsp salt (pepper to taste)

Child Care Tip:

This recipe refrigerates well, and is great to make a day or two in advance!

Directions

Remove a few outer leaves from corn and as much silk as possible without completely removing husk. Wash and place on baking sheet, partially covered with aluminum foil, and bake on the middle rack in a preheated 375° F oven for 45 to 55 minutes. After roasting, allow to cool. Peel ears, removing all silk. (If desired, cook corn over grill instead). Cool completely and cut kernels from ear. Corn should measure at least 2 1/2 cups. Combine corn with chopped onion, tomato, and cilantro. Add olive oil and mix well. Add lime juice and cumin to taste and then stir in salt and ground pepper. Cover and chill, allowing the flavors to blend for at least 15 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

Source: North Dakota State University Extension Service. Available at: www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise/recipes/vegetables

Quick Corn in the Microwave

Ingredients

Ears of corn (as many as needed/desired)

Directions

Open husk but do not remove leaves. Remove silk and wash the corn kernels. Close leaves around corn and microwave for 1-2 minutes until cooked.

Tip: Consider topping with a flavored butter. If children are used to having butter on fresh corn, you may be able to decrease the amount used if you add flavor to the butter. For example, try making a Chili-Lime Butter by mixing 4 Tbsp softened butter/margarine, 1 Tbsp lime juice, and 1 tsp. chili powder. Keep refrigerated and use as needed. You could also use lemon juice, garlic, chives, rosemary, or any other fresh or dried herb/seasoning.

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters. Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

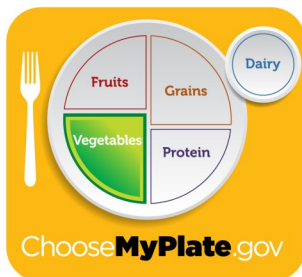
Sweet Corn

Veggie Bites

Sweet corn has long been a favorite vegetable among both children and adults. In fact, sweet corn has been around for about 200 years (corn, in general, has as existed for more than 7,000 years!). As the name would suggest, sweet corn is sweeter and more tender than field corn, which is typically used for cattle feed and also processed into cereal and other foods.



Sometimes corn is referred to as a “starchy” vegetable. This is because corn has more carbohydrates than most other veggies. The longer corn sits at room temperature after harvest, the more sweet sugars are converted to the not-so-sweet, starchy carbohydrates. Even when refrigerated, sweet corn will gradually lose sugar content, changing the flavor of this vegetable. This is one reason why fresh, local sweet corn tastes better than anything that has been shipped in from far away states or countries.



Most young children need about 1-2 cups of veggies per day, and adults need at least 2 1/2 cups daily. 1 small ear of corn (about 6” long) equals about 1/2 cup of veggies.

Corn Crazy

Top 5 Ways to Enjoy Corn

- 1) **On The Cob:** Grilled, boiled, or oven-roasted
- 2) **Dips and Salsas:** Add corn to salsas or make a corn salsa
- 3) **Tacos:** Add roasted corn to tacos, quesadillas or taco salad
- 4) **Cornbread:** Add fresh corn kernels to cornbread batter for a blast of fresh flavor
- 5) **Sauté:** Cook fresh kernels in hot skillet with a little oil, green chilies, and onions

Simple Corn on the Cob

Ingredients

10 medium ears of corn
2 gallons of water
Optional Chili Lime Butter:
4 Tbsp softened butter/margarine
1 Tbsp lime juice
1 tsp Chili powder

Directions

Put water in a large covered pot and bring to a boil over high heat. Husk the corn. If needed, run your hand down each ear to remove extra silk. Carefully add ears of corn to boiling water. Return to a boil and turn down heat to low. Cover pot and cook for 5 to 10 minutes or until corn kernels are just tender. *For butter:* Mix all ingredients. Refrigerate to let flavors blend, and serve on corn as desired.

Sources: www1.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/Fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Carrots

Nutrition Benefits

Like most fruits and veggies, carrots are low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and calories.

Carrots provide:

- Vitamin A (beta-carotene)
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin K
- Fiber
- Potassium



Prepping and Washing

Remove any leafy tops or stems prior to washing.

To wash: Rinse under cool, running water and scrub thoroughly with a clean vegetable brush. Peel outer layer of carrots using a vegetable peeler or small paring knife. Carrots can then be chopped, sliced, shredded or eaten whole. **Remember:** small, raw carrots can be a choking hazard for very young children.

Veggie Bites

Carrots are the ultimate natural source of vitamin A, providing more than any other vegetable. Vitamin A is needed for proper development and functioning of our eyes, skin, and many other body parts. This vitamin also acts as an antioxidant, helping our immune system to work better and our bodies to stay healthy. Carrots are planted as seeds that grow into plants; however, it is the root portion of this plant that we eat.



This popular root vegetable is mostly known by its orange color; however, it can come in yellow, white, or even purple varieties. These different colors are caused by different plant pigments in each carrot. A plant pigment called beta-carotene gives orange carrots their characteristic color. Beta-carotene can also be converted to Vitamin A in our bodies.

Storing Carrots

Short Term Storage

Carrots should be smooth, firm, and bright in color. Refrigerate in a plastic bag with tops removed for up to 2 weeks.

Long Term Storage: Freezing

Relatively speaking, carrots can stay fresh in the refrigerator for a long period of time. However, if you would like to have local carrots on hand year-round, consider freezing the extra carrots that you do not use in your child care program. They are easy to prepare from frozen, and will taste better and contain more nutrients than store-bought frozen or canned carrots. For more details about freezing carrots, refer to the “Freezing Vegetables” section in the introduction of this kit.



Suggested Activities

The Carrot Seed Dance

After reading *The Carrot Seed* out loud, act out the story as a “dance” to an up-beat music selection. Act out what is in parentheses:

1. Dig a hole and plant a carrot seed (bend down and pretend to dig, sprinkle imaginary carrot seeds in hole)
2. Water seeds (pretend to water)
3. Seeds need rain to grow, so pretend it is raining! (run and jump in puddles, and run inside to get out of “rain.” Then run back when rain has “stopped”)
4. Weed around the carrot seed (bend down to “weed” around the seeds)
5. Stop music, and ask children if they think their seed will grow (similar to the story). Encourage them to shout “YES IT WILL!”)
6. Turn music back on, count slowly to 3, and pretend a huge carrot grows from the ground (pull a huge carrot out of the ground, and carry it around)
7. Finish with a free dance!

Adapted from *Dance, Turn, Hop, Learn! Enriching Movement Activities for Preschoolers* (Redleaf Press, 2006) by Connie Bergstein Dow

Healthy Food March

After explaining how eating lots of fruits and vegetables make us healthy and strong, do a “healthy food march” while calling out the names of different healthy foods. Have each child call out the name of a favorite healthy food. This simple activity can be done either outside or inside.

Suggested Tasting Activities

***The more comfortable children are with a new food,
the more likely they are to try it.***

Many very young children have eaten carrots at some point in their lives, as it is a very commonly-accepted first food for infants. However, not as many children may be familiar with a *whole* carrot. Before serving carrots for children to eat, consider giving them the opportunity to explore a whole (washed) carrot using their senses. Ask them about the color, shape, texture, and even sound of snapping or biting into a carrot. Consider showing children a raw carrot, cooked carrot, and canned carrots, emphasizing the differences among these varieties.

Try offering carrots in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- Washed and cut carrots dipped in a low-fat dressing, veggie dip, cottage cheese, or vanilla yogurt with a dash of cinnamon.
- Shredded and used to make muffins, cookies, or cake (recipe on next page)
- Lightly steamed or sautéed for softer texture (might be helpful for younger children learning how to chew)
- Cook with sliced vegetables and chicken strips for a quick stir-fry
- In a hearty vegetable soup or slow-cooker stew



Suggested Books:

Mommy, What Do Carrots Do? by Judy Tenzyk

The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss

Carrot Soup by John Segal

The Perfect Carrot (Curious George) By Marcy Goldberg Sacks

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement over other available materials on this subject.



Carrots with Honey Glaze

Ingredients

5-6 medium carrots, washed, peeled, and cut into 1/2" diameter sticks
2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
2 Tbsp. honey
1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest



Directions

Place carrots in a single layer in a frying pan; add enough water to come half way up the sides of carrots. Add butter, honey, and lemon zest; bring water to a boil. Partially cover pan and reduce heat to medium. Boil until carrots can be easily pierced with a fork (about 10 minutes). Uncover and continue cooking until liquid evaporates and carrots begin to caramelize (4 minutes). Serve immediately.

Source: Garden Heroes Activities by Heidi Douglas. Available at Learning Zone Express: www.learningzoneexpress.com

Carrot Cake

Ingredients

3/4 c. all-purpose flour	1 1/2 tsp. nonfat dry milk
3/4 c. sugar	2 eggs
2 1/8 tsp. baking powder	1/3 c. canola oil
1/4 tsp. salt & 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon	1 3/4 c. grated raw carrots
1/8 tsp. ground cloves	2 cups drained crushed pineapple

Child Care Tip:
Try this cake to celebrate a birthday!

Directions

Blend flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and dry milk in large mixer bowl. Add eggs and oil to dry ingredients. Blend for 30 seconds in mixer on low speed. Beat for 6 minutes on medium speed. Add carrots and pineapple. Beat for 2 minutes on medium speed. Pour batter into a 9" x 13" pan which has been lightly coated with non-stick spray and dusted with flour. Bake at 350°F for 35-45 minutes until lightly browned. Serves 12.

Source: University of Minnesota Extension Service. Available at www1.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/

Baked Carrots

Ingredients

1 quart of sliced fresh, raw carrots	2 Tbsp. sugar
1/2 c. water	1 tsp. ground nutmeg
1/4 c. butter (optional)	1 tsp. salt

Directions

Steam carrot slices for about 4 minutes, until tender but not mushy (may steam in small amount of water in covered dish in microwave, or on stove-top in a steamer). Grease a casserole dish or glass 8" x 8" baking dish. Mix sugar, nutmeg, salt, and water in the dish. Add carrots to the dish and dot with pieces of the butter (if desired). Bake at 350°F for 10 minutes, stirring after 5 minutes. Serve hot.

Source: University of Minnesota Extension Service. Available at www1.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/

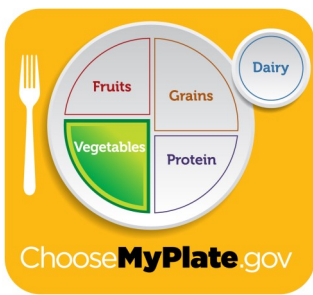
Carrots

Veggie Bites

Carrots are the ultimate natural source of vitamin A, providing more than any other vegetable. Vitamin A is needed for proper development and functioning of our eyes, skin, and many other body parts. This vitamin also acts as an antioxidant, helping our immune system to work better and our bodies to stay healthy. Carrots are planted as seeds that grow into plants; however, it is the root portion of this plant that we eat.



This popular root vegetable is mostly known by its orange color; however, it can come in yellow, white, or even purple varieties. These different colors are caused by different plant pigments in each carrot. A plant pigment called beta-carotene gives orange carrots their characteristic color. Beta-carotene can also be converted to Vitamin A in our bodies.



Remember, most children need about 1-2 cups of veggies per day, and adults need at least 2 1/2 cups daily. 2 medium carrots or 12 baby carrots equals about a 1 cup serving of vegetables.

Crunchin' on Carrots

Top 5 Ways to Enjoy Carrots

- 1) **Dipped:** Eat carrots dipped in yogurt, cottage cheese, or peanut butter
- 2) **Stir-Fry:** Cook with vegetables, soy sauce, and brown rice
- 3) **Glazed:** Add a sweet glaze for a blast of flavor (recipe below)
- 4) **Salad:** Top any salad with shredded carrots
- 5) **Slow Cooked:** Toss in a soup, stew, or roast for extra nutrients

Honey-Glazed Carrots

Ingredients

5-6 medium carrots, washed, peeled, and cut into 1/2" diameter sticks
2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
2 Tbsp. honey
1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest

Directions

Place carrots in a single layer in a frying pan; add enough water to come half way up the sides of carrots. Add butter, honey, and lemon zest; bring water to a boil. Partially cover pan and reduce heat to medium. Boil until carrots can be easily pierced with a fork (about 10 minutes). Uncover and continue cooking until liquid evaporates and carrots begin to caramelize (4 minutes). Serve immediately.

Source: Garden Heroes Activities by Heidi Douglas.. Available at Learning Zone Express: www.learningzoneexpress.com

Eggplant

Nutrition Benefits

Like most fruits and veggies, eggplants are low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and calories.

Eggplants provide:

- Fiber
- Several vitamins/minerals
- Antioxidants (cancer-fighting compounds)



Prepping and Washing

Cut off the green stem before washing.

To wash: Rinse under cool, running water and scrub thoroughly with a clean vegetable brush. Skin may be removed, but is an important source of many nutrients, especially fiber.

When raw, eggplants may taste bitter, but develop a rich, complex flavor when cooked. Eggplant may be prepared in a variety of ways, including baked, broiled, or stir-fried.

Veggie Bites

Once you try eggplant, it's hard to resist the delicious texture and deep, purple color. There are lots of nutrients beneath the deeply colored exterior. Like most veggies, eggplant is rich in vitamins and minerals; however, eggplant also provides lots of other compounds that can reduce cancer risk and possibly lower cholesterol.



Related to tomatoes and potatoes, eggplants are incredibly versatile. They may be diced and added to pizza, soups, or pasta, or sliced lengthwise and used to replace noodles in a lasagna dish. Due to their bulk and texture, eggplants are often used as meat substitutes in vegetarian dishes. Although considered to be a vegetable because of its low calories and high vitamin and mineral content, eggplants are actually berries that grow on a bush-like plants.

Storing Eggplant

Short Term Storage

Eggplants should be firm and heavy with smooth, shiny skin. Refrigerate in crisper drawer for up to seven days.

Long Term Storage: Freezing

Relatively speaking, eggplants can stay fresh in the refrigerator for a long period of time. However, if you would like to have local eggplant on hand year-round, consider freezing the extra eggplant that you do not use in your child care program. Freezing eggplant takes a little bit of preparation, including peeling, cutting, and blanching, but it will allow you to have fresh, local produce even when it's not growing season. For more details about freezing eggplants, refer to the "Freezing Vegetables" section in the introduction of this kit.



Suggested Activities

Veggie Scavenger Hunt

Print out pictures of different vegetables (try to focus on those that you have tried recently or are purchasing from the farm) and hide them around an outside play area (or inside, if weather is poor). Give each child a veggie to find and a basket. When children find their veggies, they will put it in their basket.

Eat a Rainbow

Explain to children how fruits and veggies come in all different colors. Ask children to name fruits or veggies for each color of the rainbow: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, and Purple (eggplant is one of the few purple fruits or veggies). Consider having children draw, color, or paste colored fruits and veggies into the corresponding color of the rainbow on a piece of construction paper or poster board.

Build Your Own Veggie Story

Fill a paper bag with random objects or pictures of objects/foods (any fruit or vegetable, pencil, car, comb, keys). Have the children sit in a circle and show them an eggplant or picture of an eggplant. Tell the children that you are going to make up a story about an eggplant. Starting with yourself, go around the circle and each child will add something to the story. When it is your turn to add to the story, pull out something from the bag and use it in the story.

Suggested Tasting Activities

*The more comfortable children are with a new food,
the more likely they are to try it.*

It is very likely that eggplant will be a new vegetable to the children in your program, but eggplant can be very FUN to introduce to children because it comes in various shapes, sizes, and colors! Consider setting apart a specific time for children to explore an eggplant using their senses. Give each child whole eggplants (or pass around one eggplant, depending on how many children). Ask them about the color, shape, texture, and size of eggplant. Consider allowing older children to cut into an eggplant so they may explore the inside, describing how the outside is different from the inside.

Try offering eggplants in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- Breaded and baked into eggplant chips or crackers
- Roasted and cubed and mixed in with spaghetti sauce, served over pasta
- Roasted, cubed, and spread over mini pizzas on pita bread or English muffins
- Cut lengthwise and use as noodles in a lasagna dish (may try this after children have already tasted and been exposed to eggplant)
- Add to a kabob with other veggies or fruits and grill, broil, or roast in the oven.



Suggested Books:

Eating the Alphabet by
Lois Ehlert

*The ABCs of Fruits and
Vegetables and Beyond*
by Steve Charney

Round the Garden by
Omri Glaser

Muncha! Muncha!
Muncha! by Candace
Fleming

*Mention of these materials is not an
endorsement over other available
materials on this subject.



Easy Eggplant Stir-Fry

Ingredients

2 eggplants, peeled and cubed	3 Tbsp. Italian dressing, low fat
1 zucchini, thinly sliced	2 c. cherry tomatoes
1 c. green bell pepper, cut into strips	2 c. brown rice, cooked
2 onions, sliced thin or diced	

Directions

Cook brown rice according to directions on package. Place eggplant, zucchini, green bell pepper, onions and salad dressing into a skillet. Cook until tender. Stir in cherry tomatoes and cook for 3-5 minutes. Serve over brown rice as a vegetable-rich side dish.

Time-Saving Tip:

Wash and chop the veggies the night before, and refrigerate overnight until ready to cook.

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters via Connecticut Food Policy Council. Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Roasted Veggie Wrap

Ingredients

1 red pepper, cut into 1" wide slivers	4 teaspoons olive oil
1 zucchini, cut into ¼" slices lengthwise	Dried herbs, such as basil, thyme, parsley, etc.
1 small eggplant, cut into ½" round slices	4 oz. part skim mozzarella cheese, grated
2 medium plum tomatoes, halved	4 whole wheat tortillas
1 medium onion, quartered	

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F. Line a roasting pan with foil and brush with olive oil or spray with nonstick cooking spray. Place vegetables in a single layer on roasting pan and brush with olive oil. Sprinkle on desired herbs. Shake the vegetables about the pan to make sure they are coated with oil. Bake until vegetables are lightly browned and tender, about 20 minutes. Divide vegetables among the tortillas, sprinkle with grated mozzarella cheese, wrap, and enjoy. Tip: Add beans for a meat alternate. Serves 4+ (depending on portion size for children).

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters via Produce for Better Health Foundation. Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Eggplant and Pepper Dip

Ingredients

1 eggplant, peeled and cubed (1" cubes)	2 Tbsp vegetable oil
2 red peppers, chopped	1 tsp oregano
1 onion, chopped	1 tsp basil
1/4 tsp garlic powder	1/4 tsp salt

Directions

Put all the ingredients in a large bowl. Stir together. Spread the ingredients on a baking tray. Bake at 400°F for 45 minutes. While veggies are baking, stir a few times. When the eggplant is lightly browned and soft, take the veggies out of the oven. Let the veggies cool for at least 10 minutes. Put veggies in the blender. Blend until smooth. Serve the dip cold or at room temperature with whole wheat crackers, chips, or toasted pita bread..

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters via Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Program. Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Child Care Tip:

This dip may be a good choice for a first introduction to tasting eggplant. Encourage children to help stir!

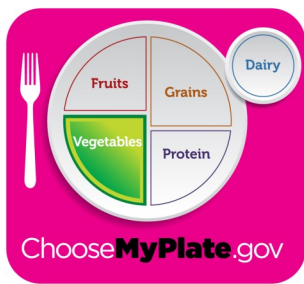
Eggplant

Veggie Bites

Once you try eggplant, it's hard to resist the delicious texture and deep, purple color. There are lots of nutrients beneath the deeply colored exterior. Like most veggies, eggplant is rich in vitamins and minerals; however, eggplant also provides lots of other compounds that can reduce cancer risk and possibly lower cholesterol.



Related to tomatoes and potatoes, eggplants are incredibly versatile. They may be diced and added to pizza, soups, or pasta, or sliced lengthwise and used to replace noodles in a lasagna dish. Due to their bulk and texture, eggplants are often used as meat substitutes in vegetarian dishes. Although considered to be a vegetable because of its low calories and high vitamin and mineral content, eggplants are actually berries that grow on bush-like plants.



Remember, most children need about 1-2 cups of veggies per day, and adults need at least 2 1/2 cups daily. 1 cup of chopped, cooked or raw eggplant equals 1 cup of veggies.

Excellent Eggplant

Top 5 Ways to Enjoy Eggplant

- 1) **Breaded and Baked:** Dredge slice eggplant in egg wash and bread crumbs and bake for a tasty treat
- 2) **Stir-Fry:** Cook in a hot skillet. Add early on with other hard veggies
- 3) **Grilled Kabob:** Add cubed eggplant to a veggie kebob
- 4) **Parmesan:** Top sliced eggplant with cheese and marina sauce for a meatless entree
- 5) **Over Pasta:** Roast, peel, and toss cubed eggplant into pasta

Easy Eggplant Stir Fry

Ingredients

- 2 eggplants, peeled and cubed
- 1 zucchini, thinly sliced
- 1 c. green bell pepper, cut into strips
- 2 onions, sliced thin or diced
- 3 Tbsp. Italian dressing, low fat
- 2 c. cherry tomatoes
- 2 c. brown rice, cooked

Directions

Cook brown rice according to directions on package. Place eggplant, zucchini, green bell pepper, onions and salad dressing into a skillet. Cook until tender. Stir in cherry tomatoes and cook for 3-5 minutes. Serve over brown rice as a vegetable-rich side dish.

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters via Connecticut Food Policy Council. Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

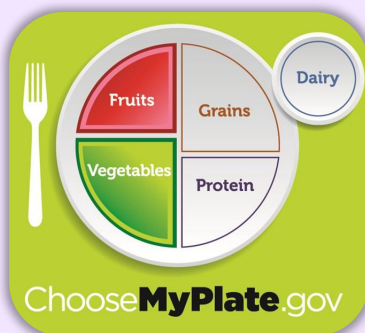
Beets

Nutrition Benefits

Like most fruits and veggies, beets are low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and calories.

Beets provide:

- Folate
- Several vitamins/minerals
- Antioxidants (cancer-fighting compounds)



Prepping and Washing

Cut off the green stem before washing.

To wash: Rinse under cool, running water and scrub thoroughly with a clean vegetable brush. Skin may be removed using a vegetable peeler, if needed, before cooking. Beets may be prepared in a variety of ways, including roasting, boiling, steaming, or pickling.

Veggie Bites

Beets are a root vegetable that come in deep red-purple, yellow, and white colors. Like most veggies, beets are rich in vitamins and minerals and also provide many other compounds that can reduce cancer risk and protect against heart disease.



Beets have a rich earthy flavor that is easy to enhance through roasting, steaming, boiling, or pickling. They may be sliced, chopped, or diced and added to soups, stir-fry, salads, or eaten alone as a side dish. Beet leaves have a slightly bitter taste, but can be used as greens and eaten raw or cooked.

Tip: Since beet juice can stain your skin, wearing kitchen gloves when handling cooked beets is a good idea.

Storing Beets

Short Term Storage

Beets should have firm, smooth skin that are deep in color and have non-wilted leaves, if still attached. Smaller beets are sweeter. Remove leaves, leaving about an inch of the stems. Do not wash beets before storing. Beets can be stored in the refrigerator for about one week.

Long Term Storage: Freezing

Beets stay fresh in the refrigerator for about a week; however, if you would like to have local beets on hand year-round, consider freezing the extra beets that you do not use in your program. Raw beets do not freeze well since they tend to become soft when thawed. However, cooked beets can be frozen and will keep their flavor and texture. Freezing beets takes a little bit of preparation, including peeling, cooking, cutting but it will allow you to have fresh, local produce even when it's not growing season. For more details about freezing beets, refer to the "Freezing Vegetables" section in the introduction of this kit.

Suggested Activities

Veggie Scavenger Hunt

Print out pictures of different vegetables (try to focus on those that you have tried recently or are purchasing from the farm) and hide them around an outside play area (or inside, if weather is poor). Give each child a veggie to find and a basket. When children find their veggies, they will put it in their basket.

Eat a Rainbow

Explain to children how fruits and veggies come in all different colors. Ask children to name fruits or veggies for each color of the rainbow: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, and Purple. Consider having children draw, color, or paste colored fruits and veggies into the corresponding color of the rainbow on a piece of construction paper or poster board.

Build Your Own Veggie Story

Fill a paper bag with random objects or pictures of objects/foods (any fruit or vegetable, pencil, car, comb, keys). Have the children sit in a circle and show them a beet or picture of a beet. Tell the children that you are going to make up a story about a beet. Starting with yourself, go around the circle and each child will add something to the story. When it is your turn to add to the story, pull out something from the bag and use it in the story.

Suggested Tasting Activities

*The more comfortable children are with a new food,
the more likely they are to try it.*

It is very likely that beets will be a new vegetable to the children in your program, but beets can be very FUN to introduce to children because they come in various shapes, sizes, and colors! Consider setting apart a specific time for children to explore a beet using their senses. Give each child a whole beet (or pass around one beet, depending on how many children). Ask them about the color, shape, texture, and size of the beet. You can also cut into a beet so they may explore the inside, describing how the outside is different from the inside.

Try offering beets in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- Add diced beets to homemade vegetable soup.
- Roasted and sliced as a side dish.
- Sliced and add to stir-fry.
- Create vegetable kabobs and include beets on the skewer with other vegetables.



Suggested Books:

Eating the Alphabet by
Lois Ehlert

*The ABCs of Fruits and
Vegetables and Beyond*
by Steve Charney

Round the Garden by
Omri Glaser

Muncha! Muncha!
Muncha! by Candace
Fleming

*Mention of these materials is not an
endorsement over other available
materials on this subject.



Roasted Beets

Ingredients

Beets (as many as needed)

Early Childhood Tip:

Roast extra beets to use in different recipes (see below) or freeze for later use.

Directions

Preheat oven to 425°F. Cut the greens, leaving about 1/4" of the stem. Scrub the beets and place in baking dish with 1/4 inch water. Cover tightly. Place in the oven and roast small beets 30 to 40 minutes, medium beets for 40 to 45 minutes, and large beets for 50 to 60 minutes until tender when pierced with a knife. Cool, slice off the ends, and slip off the skins. Slice into desired shape/sizes and serve.

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters. Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Pink Hummus

Ingredients

1 medium red beet	1/2 lemon, juiced
1 large garlic clove, unpeeled	1/4 c. olive oil
1 (15 oz.) can white beans, drained and rinsed	1 tsp. salt

Directions

Roast and peel beet and garlic clove. Place the peeled beet and garlic clove, along with white beans, lemon juice, olive oil, and salt into a food processor or blender and puree until smooth. Serve with cut-up vegetables or pita chips.

Roasted Root Vegetables

Ingredients

4 medium-sized root vegetables (choose a variety from potatoes, beets, sweet potatoes, rutabagas and turnips)	1/4 c canola or olive oil
2 chopped carrots	3 Tbsp Parmesan cheese
1 medium chopped onion	Salt, pepper, your favorite spices (optional)

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F. Wash, peel and cut vegetables into large chunks. (You can leave the skins on if desired.) Place in a medium bowl and pour oil over top. Add Parmesan cheese and/or seasonings. Mix well. Spread an even layer on a baking sheet. Bake for 1 hour or until tender. Check a few vegetables to see if they are tender. Makes 4 servings.

Source: NDSU Extension Service. Available at: ag.ndsu.edu

Beets

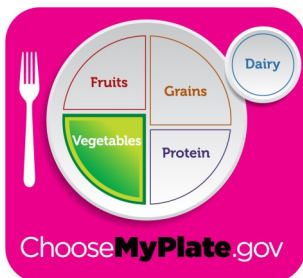
Veggie Bites

Beets are a root vegetable that come in deep red-purple, yellow, and white colors. Like most veggies, beets are rich in vitamins and minerals and also provide many other compounds that can reduce cancer risk and protect against heart disease (antioxidants).



Beets have a rich earthy flavor that is easy to enhance through roasting, steaming, boiling, or pickling. They may be sliced, chopped, or diced and added to soups, stir-fry, salads, or eaten alone as a side dish. Beet leaves have a slightly bitter taste, but can be used as greens and eaten raw or cooked.

Tip: Since beet juice can stain your skin, wearing kitchen gloves when handling cooked beets is a good idea.



Remember, most children need about 1-2 cups of veggies per day, and adults need at least 2 1/2 cups daily. 1 cup of chopped, cooked or raw beet equals 1 cup of veggies.

Beautiful Beets

Top 5 Ways to Enjoy Beets

- 1) **Baked:** Scrub, wrap in foil, and bake at 400° F for 45-60 min. or until tender
- 2) **Stir-Fry:** Cook in a hot skillet. Add early on with other hard veggies
- 3) **Soup:** Add cooked beets to homemade soup
- 4) **Grilled Kabob:** Add cubed beets to a veggie kabob and grill
- 5) **In a salad:** Top a salad with diced beets for an interesting twist.

Roasted Beets

Ingredients

Beets (as many as needed)

Directions

Preheat oven to 425°F. Cut the greens, leaving about 1/4 inch of the stem. Scrub the beets and place in baking dish with 1/4 inch water. Cover tightly. Place in the oven and roast small beets 30 to 40 minutes, medium beets for 40 to 45 minutes, and large beets for 50 to 60 minutes until tender when pierced with a knife. Cool, slice off the ends, and slip off the skins. Slice and serve.

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters. Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Snap Beans

Nutrition Benefits

Like most veggies, snap beans (also known as green beans) are low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and calories.

Snap Beans provide:

- Vitamin C
- Vitamin A
- Fiber
- Folate
- Potassium
- Cancer-fighting Antioxidants



Prepping and Washing

Before washing, you may wish to remove the hard, fibrous ends of the beans by either cutting or snapping them off. (**Child Care Tip:** Snapping the ends of green beans can be a fun activity for children to do!)

To wash: Place snap beans in a colander and rinse thoroughly under cool, running tap water. Dry thoroughly with clean cloth or paper towels.

Veggie Bites

Snap beans, also referred to as green beans, string beans, or bush beans, are a versatile, low calorie food that provides children and adults with a variety of nutrients. Green beans are edible pod beans that come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors (“green” beans can actually be yellow or purple, too!). Green beans are harvested and eaten while still immature, before the inner bean in the pod has begun to develop, which makes the bean pod crisp and edible.



These beans are sometimes referred to as string beans because a fibrous string originally ran along the seam of the bean pod. The name “snap beans” comes from the snapping noise fresh green beans make when broken with fingers. No matter what you call this bean, it can be a delicious part of any child care menu.

Storing Snap Beans

Short Term Storage

Store unwashed fresh snap beans pods in a plastic bag kept in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator for up to 5-7 days. You may cut and wash snap beans before refrigerating if they will be used very soon.

Long Term Storage: Freezing

If your program purchased more green beans than your children can eat before they spoil, consider freezing them for long-term storage. Freezing fresh green beans requires a little bit of prep work, including washing, removing the ends, and blanching, but it is worth it when the children in your program can have local produce in the winter months! For specific freezing directions, refer to the “Freezing Vegetables” section in the introduction of this kit.



Suggested Activities

Growing Beans

Read the story *One Bean* and/or *How a Seed Grows*, and discuss how seeds grow. Explain to children that they will have the opportunity to follow the same steps as they did in the story to grow a plant from a bean. Follow the steps in the book *One Bean* to have each child plant their own bean, or follow the steps in the included handout “How to Sprout a Bean Plant – Garden in a Bag.”

Reference: Farm to Preschool: Harvest of the Month. Available at: <http://www.ourcommunityourkids.org/domains--committees/early-childhood/farm-to-preschool-.aspx>

Green Bean Stretch and Song

Ask children to give themselves plenty of space. Ask children to watch you show them a special green bean stretch, then ask them to join along. Squat to the ground and wrap arms around knees, creating a ball shape with your body (explain that this is how green beans start, as a little seed or bean). Slowly extend your legs (touching toes), then stand up extending your arms above your head. Repeat stretch several times, reminding children how the stretch is like green beans growing on a bush.

Ask children to sing this song after you have stretched into a green bean:

To the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”

We are string beans, green and fine, green and fine, green and fine.

We are green beans, green and fine. Growing on a leafy vine!

Suggested Tasting Activities

***The more comfortable children are with a new food,
the more likely they are to try it.***

It is very likely that many of the children in your program have eaten snap beans at some point in their lives, as it is a very common first food for infants. However, not as many children may be familiar with what a green bean looks like when it’s fresh from the farm—before it is cut and canned/frozen. Consider setting aside time to allow children to explore a few clean, fresh snap bean pods. If available, give each child different colored snap beans, and encourage them to snap the beans with their fingers. Ask them to describe the texture, sound, smell, shape, and colors of the snap beans. Encourage

Try offering snap beans in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- Fresh, washed, and trimmed green beans with fat-free cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, or low-fat ranch dressing for dip
- Lightly steamed or sautéed with drizzles of olive oil or lemon juice and sprinkle with garlic powder or other herb
- Bread and bake green beans for a healthy alternative to French fries
- Within a casserole or hot dish



Suggested Books:

Jack and the Beanstalk
by Steven Kellogg

*Inch by Inch: The
Garden Song* by David
Mallett

One Bean by Anne
Rockwell

How a Seed Grows by
Helene J. Jordan

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement over other available materials on this subject.



Green Beans in Dip

Ingredients

- 4 c. fat free sour cream
- 4 c. mild salsa
- 8 cups fresh green beans, washed, ends cut/snapped off
- 32 small cups (if desired)

Directions

In a large bowl, mix sour cream and salsa. Spoon 1/4 cup dip into cup. Insert 4 to 5 green beans into each cup. Serve one cup to each child immediately. May also portion each child green beans and dip onto a plate. Makes 32, 1/4 cup-size servings.

Source: Adapted from: Healthy Latino Recipes Made With Love, Network for a Healthy California, 2008.

Early Childhood Tip:

This is a great recipe for children to help with!

Suggested Child Tasks:

- Snap ends off of green beans
- Mix sour cream and salsa
- Dip green beans into dip

Seasoned Green Bean Fries

Ingredients

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 lb. fresh green beans, trimmed | 2 c. seasoned bread crumbs |
| 1/2 c. water | 1 tsp each of chili powder, garlic powder, and onion powder |
| 1 egg | 1 c. all purpose flour |
| 1/2 c. low-fat milk | |

Directions

Preheat oven to 375° F. Combine green beans and water in a saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil. Cook until beans are bright green, about four minutes. Drain and transfer to a bowl. Cover with cold water; set aside. In another bowl, whisk egg and milk together. In separate bowl, mix bread crumbs and seasonings. Drain beans and toss with flour to coat, shaking off excess flour. Dip a few beans into egg mixture at a time, then into crumbs, coating thoroughly. Place beans in a single layer on greased baking sheet. Cook for 15 to 20 minutes or until crisp. Makes 16 servings.

Source: Spilling the Beans (FN 1646). NDSU Extension Service.
Available from <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/landing-pages/food-and-nutrition/spilling-the-beans-fn-1646>

Steamed Green Beans

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 lbs. fresh green beans
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- Dash salt

Directions

Rinse green beans and remove stem and flower ends. Cut in 1" pieces if desired, or leave whole. Make sure all pieces are similar in length so they cook evenly. Put 1" of water in a large pot and heat to boiling. Place the green beans on a vegetable steamer and lower into the pot. Cover and let steam for 3 minutes. Check for doneness. Alternatively, you can heat 1 gallon of water to boiling in a large pot, add the green beans, and boil for 3 minutes. Drain the beans. Toss the green beans with salt and pepper before serving, or with other herbs (summer savory, thyme, rosemary, etc.) and parmesan cheese. Serve hot. Makes 10 servings.

Source: University of Minnesota Extension Farm to School. Available at: <http://www1.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/toolkit/>



Snap Beans

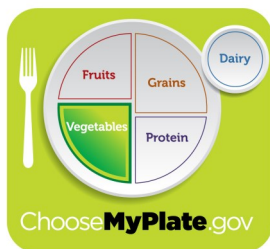
Veggie Bites

Snap beans, also referred to as green beans, string beans, or bush beans, are a versatile, low calorie food that provides children and adults with a variety of nutrients. Green beans are edible pod beans that come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors ("green" beans can actually be yellow or purple too!). Green beans are harvested and eaten while still immature, before the inner bean in the pod has begun to develop, which makes the bean pod crisp and edible.



These beans are sometimes referred to as string beans because a fibrous string originally ran along the seam of the bean pod. The name "snap beans" comes from the snapping noise fresh green beans make when broken with fingers. No matter what you call this bean, it can be a delicious part of any child's diet.

How Much Do We Need?



Depending on age and activity level, young children (2-8 years old) need 1-to-2 cups of vegetables every day, and adults need 2 1/2-to-3 cups each day. About 1 cup of cooked green beans, or 20 medium green beans, equals a 1-cup serving of veggies.

Snappin' Green Beans

Top 5 Ways to Eat Snap Beans

- 1) **Raw:** Snap off ends and dip in veggie dip or cottage cheese
- 2) **Stir-Fry:** Cook with sliced vegetables and chicken strips
- 3) **Salad:** Top salad with fresh snap beans for extra crunch and color
- 4) **Steamed:** Cook lightly and drizzle with olive oil and other herbs/seasonings of choice
- 5) **Casserole:** Use fresh green beans in a casserole for a boost of texture and fresh flavor

Green Beans in Dip

Ingredients

4 c fat free sour cream
4 c mild salsa
8 c. fresh green beans, washed, ends cut/snapped off
Small cups (if desired)

Directions

In a large bowl, mix sour cream and salsa. Spoon 1/4 cup dip into small cup. Insert 4 to 5 green beans into each cup. (May also just serve green beans along side the salsa dip). Makes 32, 1/4 cup-size

Source: Adapted from: Healthy Latino Recipes Made With Love, Network for a Healthy California, 2008

Peppers

Nutrition Benefits

Like most fruits and veggies, peppers are low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and calories.

Peppers provide:

- Vitamin C

Red Peppers also provide:

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin B6



Prepping and Washing

To wash: Rinse under cool, running water and scrub thoroughly with a clean vegetable brush. Peppers can be diced, sliced, or even stuffed.

Prepping Hot Peppers:

Wear gloves while prepping (avoid touching eyes or face). Remove seeds and ribs to decrease spiciness.

Prepping Sweet Peppers:

Remove top stem, seeds, and ribs (white parts inside the pepper). Then cut as desired.

Veggie Bites

Peppers come in a variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and flavors. In general, peppers are divided into two groups: Sweet and Hot. Hot peppers have a fiery, hot flavor, and are spiciest when fully ripe. These peppers include jalapenos, cayenne, Serrano, Anaheim, poblano, and habanero peppers. On the other hand, sweet peppers do not typically have a spicy flavor and come in a variety of colors, including green, red, yellow, purple, and orange. Examples of sweet peppers include bell peppers, pimento, and banana peppers.



As sweet bell peppers mature, their flavor becomes sweeter and their color changes to red. Red bell peppers contain a pigment that is rich in vitamin A. All peppers are an excellent source of vitamin C, providing more in a serving than most citrus fruits. Peppers are actually the fruits of plants; however, their low calorie/high-nutrient characteristics make them more like a vegetable than a fruit.

Storing Peppers

Short Term Storage

Peppers should be smooth and firm with good color and shape. Refrigerate in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer for 3-5 days. Do not wash before storage.

Long Term Storage: Freezing

Bell peppers are typically grown during warm months, and are therefore the freshest during the summer. You could buy peppers during the fall or winter, but they will likely have an inferior flavor than local, summer-grown peppers. If you would like to have local peppers with delicious flavor during the cold months, considering purchasing peppers this summer and freezing them. With a little prep work, peppers are easy to freeze. For more specific details about freezing hot or sweet peppers, refer to the “Freezing Vegetables” section in the introduction of this kit.



Suggested Activities

Hot Pepper Game (Hot Potato)

Make large pepper cutouts of different colors and laminate if possible. You can write the name of the color (Green, Red, Yellow, Orange or Purple). Have the students sit in a large circle. Play music while one of the peppers is passed around. When the music is stopped, the student with the pepper tells the class what color the pepper is in her/his hands. Switch the “pepper” being passed and continue the game until all children have had a turn to name the pepper’s color.

Rainbow of Vegetables (Peppers)

Start a rainbow of colors chart for vegetables for your entire program, or for one classroom (see example below). Peppers can be put in each of the columns. Ask children what other vegetables are found in each color. This chart can be added on whenever you discuss different vegetables with the children.

Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Purple
Red pepper	Carrots Orange pepper	Squash Yellow peppers	Green peppers Spinach Broccoli	Eggplant Purple peppers

Source of Activity Suggestions: Farm to Preschool Harvest of the Month Curriculum.
Available at: <http://farmtopreschool.org/documents/F2P%20Curriculum.pdf>

Suggested Tasting Activities

***The more comfortable children are with a new food,
the more likely they are to try it.***

Peppers, specifically sweet bell peppers, are great for tasting and learning activities because of the wide variety of shapes, colors, and sizes available. However, there may be some children in your program who are not familiar with peppers. Before serving peppers for children to eat, consider giving them the opportunity to explore a whole sweet pepper using their senses (hot peppers not recommended for exploring activities). Ask them about the color, shape, and texture. Show children at least two different colors of peppers, and let them to cut into one to see what is inside (cut with adult supervision/assistance). Ask children to taste a piece of raw sweet pepper after they have explored.

Try offering sweet bell peppers in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- Washed and cut into thin strips and dipped in cottage cheese, low fat dressing, or other veggie dip
- Diced and added to pasta sauce, soups, or scrambled eggs
- Grilled on a kabob
- On top of a pizza or mini pizza made on pita bread
- Stuffed with cheese, rice, and/or ground beef. Let children stuff their own pepper for a fun cooking activity!



Suggested Books:

Vegetable Soup by
Dianne Warren

Farmer’s Market: Families Working Together
by Marcie Rendon and
Cheryl Walsh Bellville

Chile Fever: A Celebration of Peppers by Elizabeth King

I’m a Seed (Hello Reader! Science, level 1) by
Jean Marzollo

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement over other available materials on this subject.



Pepper Pita Pizza

Ingredients

4 pieces pita bread (wheat preferred)
3/4 c. pizza sauce or marinara sauce (low-sodium or no salt added)
1 1/4 c. shredded mozzarella cheese
1 red pepper, sliced into thin strips



Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spread a spoonful of pizza sauce over each piece of pita bread. Top each pita with shredded cheese and red pepper pieces. Place pitas on baking sheets and place in preheated oven. Bake at 400°F for 10 minutes, or until cheese is melted. Makes 4 pita pizzas.

Suggestions: Top with additional toppings, such as diced onions, chopped broccoli, spinach, or chicken. If you have different colors of peppers available, try letting each child pick their own color for their pizza.

Source: LANA'S Favorite Recipes; LANA Preschool Program .Minnesota Department of Health.
Available at: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdrr/nutrition/nutritioneducation/lanatastingActivities.html

Stuffed Peppers

Ingredients

4 medium bell peppers (any color, washed)	2 tsp. olive oil
1/2 medium onion, chopped	1 tsp. cumin
2 small tomatoes, chopped	1 garlic clove, minced
2 c. corn (fresh or frozen)	2 tsp. cilantro, finely chopped
2 (15-ounce) cans black beans, drained and rinsed	1/4 c. shredded cheese

Directions

Cut peppers in half lengthwise and remove the seeds. Place peppers in a large pot and cover with water. Bring the water to a boil, reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Drain the peppers and set aside. Preheat oven to 350°F. Sauté chopped onion until tender. In a large bowl, mix together onions, tomatoes, corn and black beans. In a separate bowl, combine the rest of the ingredients, except the cheese and peppers. Add the oil mixture to the vegetables; mix until spread throughout. Place bell pepper halves on a greased baking sheet. Fill with the mixture and sprinkle each one with cheese. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes or until cheese is completely melted. Makes 8 servings.

Source: NDSU Extension Service. Available at: <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise/recipes/>

Black Bean Quesadilla

Ingredients

1 (15-oz) can black beans, drained and rinsed	4 (8-inch) whole wheat tortillas
1/2 c. shredded cheese	2 tsp canola oil
1/2 c. diced bell peppers (any color)	1 ripe avocado (optional)



Directions

Combine beans, cheese and bell peppers in a medium bowl. Place tortillas on a work surface. Spread 1/2 c. filling on half of each tortilla. Fold tortillas in half, pressing gently to flatten. Heat 1 tsp. oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add two quesadillas and cook, turning once, until golden on both sides, two to four minutes total. Transfer to a cutting board and tent with foil to keep warm. Repeat with the remaining 1 tsp. oil and quesadillas. Serve the quesadillas with avocado (if desired). Makes 4, adult-sized servings.

Suggestions: Try adding lean ground beef, chicken, tomatoes, or onions to quesadilla recipe. Before making quesadillas, briefly sauté or microwave bell peppers to soften, if desired.

Recipe Adapted From: Julie Garden-Robinson. Spillin' the Beans! Dry Edible Beans and Snap Bean Recipes (FN1646). NDSU Extension Service. <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/landing-pages/food-and-nutrition/spilling-the-beans-fn-1646>

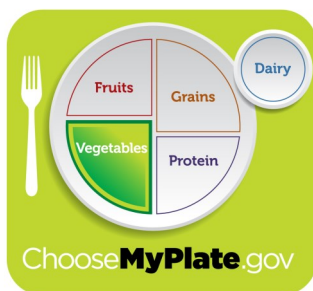
Peppers

Veggie Bites

Peppers come in a variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and flavors. In general, peppers are divided into two groups: Sweet and Hot. Hot peppers have a fiery, hot flavor, and are spiciest when fully ripe. These peppers include jalapenos, cayenne, Serrano, Anaheim, poblano, and habanero peppers. On the other hand, sweet peppers do not typically have a spicy flavor and come in a variety of colors, including green, red, yellow, purple, and orange. Examples of sweet peppers include bell peppers, pimento, and banana peppers.



As sweet bell peppers mature, their flavor becomes sweeter and their color changes to red. Red bell peppers contain a pigment that is rich in vitamin A. All peppers are an excellent source of vitamin C, providing more in a serving than most citrus fruits. Peppers are actually the fruits of plants; however, their low calorie/high-nutrient characteristics make them more like a vegetable.



Remember, most children need about 1-2 cups of veggies per day, and adults need at least 2 1/2 cups daily. One cup of diced bell pepper, or 1 large pepper (about 3" wide and 3 3/4" long) counts as a 1 cup serving of vegetables.

Pick-A-Pepper

Top 5 Ways to Enjoy Peppers

- 1) **Dipped:** Bell peppers are tasty when raw and pair well with many dips
- 2) **Stir-Fry:** Cook with sliced vegetables and chicken breast
- 3) **Stuffed:** Remove the top/inside of pepper and stuff with any combo of rice, beans, or veggies
- 4) **Diced:** Add diced peppers to any salad, sandwich, or pizza
- 5) **Grilled:** Cut peppers into quarters, brush with olive oil and sprinkle with salt before grilling

Pepper Pita Pizza

Ingredients

- 4 pieces pita bread (wheat preferred)
- 3/4 c. pizza sauce or marinara sauce (low-sodium)
- 1 1/4 c. shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 red pepper, sliced into thin strips

Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spread a spoonful of pizza sauce over each piece of pita bread. Top each pita with shredded cheese and red pepper pieces. Place pitas on baking sheets and place in preheated oven. Bake at 400°F for 10 minutes, or until cheese is melted. Makes 4 pita pizzas. Suggestion: If available, use different colored peppers on your pizza. Also try topping with onions, chicken, or chopped broccoli.

Source: LANA'S Favorite Recipes; LANA Preschool Program .Minnesota Department of Health. Available at: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdrri/nutrition/nutritioneducation/ana/tastingActivities.html

Melons

Nutrition Benefits

Like most fruits and veggies, all varieties of melons are low in saturated fat, total fat, cholesterol, and sodium.

Melons provide:

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Folate
- Potassium
- Cancer-fighting Antioxidants



Prepping and Washing

Wash the outside of any melon with a firm scrub brush. Even though you likely won't be eating the outside of the melon, it is important to wash it so that germs from the outside are not transferred to the inside with the knife you use to cut. Melons can then be sliced, diced, or even scooped out with spoons or a melon baller and served.

Fruit Bites

Melons come in many shapes, sizes, colors, and flavors. Many local farms offer many of these melons. Watermelon may even come in a variety of colors, like red, orange, and yellow. The orange and yellow watermelons tend to be sweeter than the more common red watermelon.



A ½ cup serving of cantaloupe or honeydew is an excellent source of vitamin C. This vitamin boosts your immune system, helping your body to heal cuts and wounds and stay healthy. Melons are great when mixed into fruit salads and when paired with low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese. Melons grow best, taste best, and contain the most nutrients during the summer months. Take advantage of this refreshing treat this summer!

Storing Melon

Short Term Storage:

Once any melon is cut, it should always be refrigerated. Refrigerated cut melons will last up to five days in an airtight container. Whole melons can be stored in a cool, shaded area for about a week.

Long Term Storage: Freezing

Melons thrive during the warm summer months. However, if you would like to have local watermelon, honeydew, or cantaloupe on hand year-round, consider buying and freezing some extra melons this summer. In order to freeze melons, first wash and cut into slices, cubes, or balls. Pack into a freezer safe container or zipper bag. Cover melons with a 30% syrup (made by dissolving 1 3/4 c. sugar in 4 c. lukewarm water, cooled). Leave head space, seal and freeze for up to 12 months. Serve before completely thawed. (Melons may be frozen without using syrup, but texture, flavor, and Vitamin C content may be compromised.)

Suggested Activities

Can You Tell What's Hiding?

Place cantaloupe (or any melon) inside a large paper bag. One at a time, have each child come and feel inside the bag without looking. Ask each child to describe what he/she feels (give children options, if needed: is it big or small?). After everyone has guessed, reveal the melon. Talk about the melon and discuss the following questions:

- Is cantaloupe a fruit or a vegetable?
- What shape is it? What color is the outside of the cantaloupe?
- Has anyone ever tasted a cantaloupe?

Activity Adapted From: *Grow It, Try It, Like It! Preschool Fun with Fruits and Vegetables Curriculum: Cantaloupe Cornder*. Available at teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/growit.html.

Watermelon Dance

Read *Watermelon Day* by Kathi Appelt. In the story, Jesse spits out watermelon seeds—discuss with the children when and where it is ok to spit and why. Jesse also dances in this story—explain to the children that dancing is not only fun, but it is healthy for us too! Turn on upbeat music and encourage children to create their own “watermelon dance.” Consider teaching and singing the following watermelon song/chant below:

The Watermelon Song

(Tune: “Frere Jacques”)
Watermelon, watermelon,
Tastes so yummy, tastes so yummy.
Green on the outside, red on the inside.
With black seeds! with black seeds!

The Watermelon Chant

First you take a seed and you plant it, plant it
Then you see a sprout and you water it, water it
Then you see a vine and you watch it, watch it
Then you see a watermelon and you pick it, pick it
Then you slice it up and you eat it, eat it
If you find a seed then you plant it, plant it
And start all over again!

Source: *Harvest of the Month Preschool Activity Packet*. Network for a Healthy California—Merced County Office of Education Pre-school Activity Packet: Melons. Available at: http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/nut/LACOLLAB_Files/documents/HOTM/HOTM%20Resources.htm

Suggested Tasting Activities

Melon is a cool, sweet fruit that appeals to many children’s taste buds. After completing the “Can You Tell What’s Hiding?” activity, you may want to complete a taste test with the children. Cut up cantaloupe, honeydew and watermelon into small pieces. Show the children the cantaloupe, honeydew, and watermelon wedges. Have children taste all three of the fruits. Ask them to compare and contrast the smell, texture and taste of each melon. Consider allowing older children to cut into a melon so they may explore the inside, describing how the outside is different from the inside.

Try offering melon in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- Served simply as fresh slices or bite-size pieces
- Cut into chunks and served with low-fat yogurt as a dip
- On skewers with other fruits such as grapes or berries
- Scoop fruit into melon balls (this may almost look like ice cream!)
- Blend low-fat yogurt, skim milk, chopped melon, frozen strawberries, and a banana into a delicious smoothie. Customize the smoothie for your program by adding your children’s favorite fruits!



Suggested Books:

Anansi and the Talking Melon by Eric Kimmel

The Cantaloupe Cat by Jan Yager

Watermelon Day by Kathi Appelt

A Seed Grows (My First Look at a Plant's Life Cycle) by Pamela Hickman and Heather Collins

One Cool Watermelon by Hannah Tofts

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement over other available materials on this subject.



Cantaloupe Fruit Salad

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 c. fresh cantaloupe
- 1 1/4 c. canned peaches
- 1 1/4 c. fresh strawberries
- 3 Tbsp. frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed

Directions

Wash cantaloupe with cool tap water. Cut open and remove seeds. Cut cantaloupe flesh from rind and cut into small pieces. Place in a medium-size bowl. Wash strawberries and remove green tops. Cut strawberries into small pieces and add to bowl of fruit. Cut peaches into small pieces and add to bowl. Pour orange juice concentrate over fruit and mix. Refrigerate for 2 hours and serve. Makes 16, 1/2 c. servings. (May also substitute watermelon or honeydew melon for cantaloupe).

Time-Saving Tip:

Wash, chop, and refrigerate fruit the night before food will be served.

Source: Grow It, Try It, Like It! Preschool Fun with Fruits and Vegetables Curriculum: Cantaloupe Corner. Available at teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/

Melon Kabobs

Ingredients

- 1 c. fresh cantaloupe, cut into 1" cubes
- 1 c. fresh honeydew melon, cut into 1" cubes
- 1 c. fresh watermelon, cut into 1" cubes (seeds removed)
- 1 c. low-fat yogurt, for dipping and drizzling
- 12 wooden craft sticks



Directions

Wash melons under cool running tap water. Scrub outside of melons with clean vegetable brush and rinse. Remove melon flesh from rind and cut into 1-inch cubes. Press wooden stick through center of a piece of cantaloupe. Repeat pressing other pieces of melon on wooden stick alternating types of melon until stick is full. Refrigerate or serve immediately. Offer yogurt as sauce for dipping kabobs. Tip: Freeze kabobs for a cool, summer treat!

Source: Grow It, Try It, Like It! Preschool Fun with Fruits and Vegetables Curriculum: Cantaloupe Corner. Available at teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/

Melon Salsa

Ingredients

- 2 c. watermelon, seeded and chopped
- 1 c. cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1/4 c. red or white onion, chopped
- 1/4 c. lime or lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. mint leaves, chopped (optional)

Directions

In a medium bowl, stir together all ingredients. Taste and season with more lemon or lime juice and sugar as needed. Cover and chill for at least 30 minutes. Serve the salsa with toasted whole wheat pita bread, toasted whole grain tortilla, or wheat cracker to take the place of a traditional tortilla chip. Makes about 6, adult-size servings.

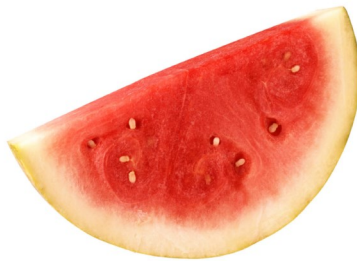


Source: NDSU Extension Service. Foodwise Newsletter (Issue #258). Available at: <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise/recipes/fruit/melon-salsa>

Melon

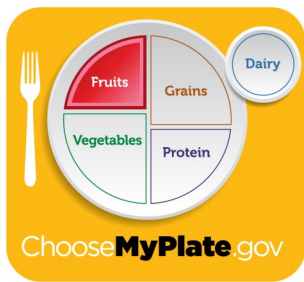
Fruit Bites

Melons come in many shapes, sizes, colors, and flavors, including cantaloupe, watermelon, and honey dew. Watermelon may even come in a variety of colors, like red, orange, and yellow. The orange and yellow watermelons tend to be sweeter than the more common red watermelon.



A ½ cup serving of cantaloupe or honeydew is an excellent source of vitamin C. This vitamin boosts your immune system, helping your body to heal cuts and wounds and stay healthy. Melons are great when mixed into fruit salads and when paired with low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese. Melons grow best, taste best, and contain the most nutrients during the summer months. Take advantage of this refreshing treat this summer!

Young children (ages 2-8 years old) need about 1-to-1 1/2 cups of fruit per day, and adults need about 2 cups each day. One cup of diced cantaloupe or watermelon or one small wedge of watermelon is equal to a 1 cup serving of fruit.



Remember to make
half of your plate
**FRUITS AND
VEGGIES!!**

Marvelous Melons

Top 5 Ways to Enjoy Melon

- 1) **Simple:** Served simply as slices, or in fun shapes (cubes, balls, etc.)
- 2) **Dipped:** Cut into chunks and served with low-fat yogurt as a dip
- 3) **Kabob:** Serve on skewers with grapes, berries, or other fruits
- 4) **Fruit Salsa:** Any melon is a delicious addition to fruit salsa
- 5) **Smoothie:** Blend with strawberries, banana, low fat yogurt, and skim milk

Melon Salsa

Ingredients

- 2 c. watermelon, chopped
- 1 c. cucumber, peeled and chopped
- 1/4 c. red or white onion, chopped
- 1/4 c. lime or lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. mint leaves, chopped (optional)

Directions

In a medium-sized bowl, stir together all ingredients. Taste and season with more lemon or lime juice and sugar as needed. Cover and chill for at least 30 minutes. Serve with wheat crackers or toasted pita bread. Makes about 6 servings.

Source: NDSU Extension Service. Foodwise Newsletter (Issue #258).
Available at: <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise/recipes/fruit/>

Winter Squash

Nutrition Benefits

Like most fruits and veggies, winter squash is low in fat, sodium and cholesterol.

Winter Squash provide:

- Fiber
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Potassium
- Magnesium



Prepping and Washing

Winter squash should feel firm and heavy for their size. Avoid squash with nicks, bruises, or dark spots. Even though the outer shell of winter squash will not be consumed, wash outside of the squash to avoid spreading dirt and germs to the inside when the squash is cut. Then prepare as directed in recipes—squash may be peeled, diced, and/or roasted.

Veggie Bites

Squash are commonly divided into “summer” and “winter” varieties. Summer squash tend to be smaller with a more tender, edible skin (yellow crookneck squash, for example). Winter squash is harvested at the end of summer when a hard shell (rind) and thick, inedible skin has formed. Because of this thick outer shell, winter squash has a much longer shelf-life than summer squash, as it can be stored for several months. Common varieties of winter squash include pumpkin, acorn, butternut, and spaghetti squash.



While summer squash can be eaten raw, winter squash is best when cooked prior to eating. In addition to the inner flesh of winter squash, the seeds are also edible and are a delicious snack when toasted. Tasting and exploring all different kinds of winter squash is a great activity for children because of all the different shapes, sizes, and colors!

Storing Winter Squash

Short Term Storage

Winter squash, such as pumpkin, butternut squash, and spaghetti squash, have a much longer shelf life than most other fruits or vegetables. If kept in a cool, dark location, some varieties of winter squash can be kept for several months. Once cut and/or cooked, store squash in the refrigerator in a covered container for 1-to-2 days.



Long Term Storage: Freezing

Winter squash are often synonymous with flavors of fall and winter. However, if you desire to have local pumpkin or butternut squash available during spring or summer, consider purchasing extra squash and freezing it for long term storage. Pumpkin and other varieties of winter squash should be chopped and cooked before frozen. For more details about freezing winter squash, refer to the “Freezing Vegetables” section in the introduction of this kit.

Suggested Activities

Finger Play Song: Pumpkin Trees by Deirdre Banks

Pumpkins and other winter squash varieties grow on vines on the ground. Use this finger- play song to explain how squash grows on ground and to **get active**.

It's harvest time, and what do I see? (Put hand to forehead and look around)
Pumpkins! Pumpkins! In a tree! (Point upward)
In a tree? That can't be! (Place hands on cheeks)
Where, oh where, should pumpkins be? (Throw hands outward)
On the ground? Yes! On the ground! (Point to the ground)
That's where pumpkins should be found! (Place hands on hips)

Do Pumpkins Float?

In this experiment, ask children if they think a pumpkin (or other squash) will sink or float when placed in water. Ask them to raise their hands for "sink" or "float." Fill a large bucket with water. Have a child place a small pumpkin (or other squash) in the water. Consider asking the following questions: Does it float? Stem up, stem down, sideways? Ask children to guess why it floats. (It floats because it is hollow inside and filled with air like a balloon). You can also test if other fruits or vegetables will float (such as apples, peppers, carrots, or zucchini). Be sure to ask the class what their predictions are before testing.

Activities adapted from: *Farm to Preschool Harvest of the Month Curriculum*. Urban and Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College. Available at: <http://farmtopreschool.org/documents/F2P%20Curriculum.pdf>

Suggested Tasting Activities

***The more comfortable children are with a new food,
the more likely they are to try it.***

If winter squash is new to many of the children in your care, consider giving children the opportunity to first explore different kinds of squash using their senses. Winter squash is perfect for exploration because of the variety of colors, shapes, and sizes! Show children at least two different kinds of squash, and allow them to touch and describe the outside (hard, bumpy, round, etc).

Ask children to guess what is inside each squash, and then cut into one to reveal the seeds and inner flesh. Consider allowing children to scoop out the inside of a squash one day to prepare for a recipe the following day!

Try offering squash in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- Use spaghetti squash to replace spaghetti noodles. Slice the squash in half lengthwise, remove seeds, and season the flesh with salt and olive oil, and bake it at 450°F until tender. Scrape out the inside using a fork (will come out looking like noodles), and top with favorite spaghetti sauce. Children will love scraping the "noodles" out themselves!
- Cubed, roasted, and seasoned with cinnamon, ginger, or sprinkle of sugar
- Add cubes of any winter squash to vegetable soup
- Make a soup or quick bread (muffins, bread, or pancakes)



Suggested Books:

Carlos and the Squash Plant by Jan Romero Stevens

The Little Squash Seed
by Gayla Dowdy Seale

It's Pumpkin Time! by
Zoe Hall

*Delicious! A Pumpkin
Soup Story* by Helen
Cooper

*Vegetables (Good for
Me)* By Sally Hewitt

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement over other available materials on this subject.



Spaghetti Squash & Parmesan

Ingredients

1 (3 lb.) spaghetti squash	2 Tbsp. Parmesan or Romano cheese
1/2 c parsley, finely chopped	1 Tbsp. Butter or olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced	Salt and Pepper to taste



Directions

Microwave squash on high for 9 minutes. Let cool and remove spaghetti-like strands (scrape out with fork). Place spaghetti strands in colander and let drain over a bowl. Sauté garlic in butter or olive oil for 2 minutes. Add drained juice (from squash) and parsley. Heat for one minute in garlic mixture. Toss with spaghetti squash strands. Sprinkle with cheese, salt and pepper, and toss again. Serve. Makes about 4, adult-size servings. (Suggestion: may also top with favorite spaghetti sauce and meatballs)

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters via University of Illinois Extension Family Nutrition Program. Available at: www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/spaghetti-squash-wparmesan-romano

Winter Squash Pancakes

Ingredients

2 c. winter squash, mashed and cooked	1/2 c flour
1 1/2 Tbsp. brown sugar, packed	1 tsp baking powder
1 c. skim milk	1/2 tsp salt
1/2 c. egg substitute	1/8 tsp nutmeg or cinnamon

Time-Saving Tip:

Cook, mash, and refrigerate the squash the night before making pancakes.

Directions

Heat griddle or skillet lightly sprayed with cooking spray on medium heat. Beat mashed squash with brown sugar, milk and egg substitute until smooth. In a separate bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, salt and nutmeg. Fold dry ingredients into squash mixture until just combined. Drop batter onto hot skillet into desired pancake size. Lightly oil a spatula and flatten the pancake. When golden brown on the bottom, flip pancakes. (May keep warm in 250-degree oven until all batter is cooked). Make about 4 adult-size servings. (Tip: You may cook winter squash by slicing open and roasting in oven or in microwave).

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters via CDC Available at: www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Sweet Winter Squash

Ingredients

2 medium winter squash (acorn, butternut, buttercup, etc.)
1/2 c. (4 oz) 100% orange juice
1 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp nutmeg



Directions

Place each squash in the microwave and heat on high for 1 1/2 minutes. Cut each squash in half. Remove the seeds and loose fibers in the middle. Place the squash on an ungreased baking pan. The cut side of the squash should be face up and the uncut part of the squash should touch the pan. Pour 2 Tbsp of juice into half of the squash. Spread it evenly on the inside of each squash. Bake at 400°F for 20-30 minutes, until tender. Season with cinnamon and nutmeg. Serve. Makes about 4 adult-size servings.

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters via Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Program. Available at: www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

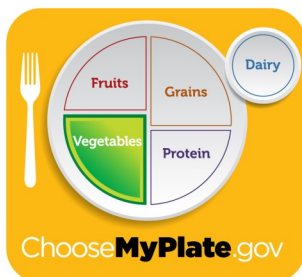
Winter Squash

Veggie Bites

Squash are commonly divided into “summer” and “winter” varieties. Summer squash tend to be smaller with a more tender, edible skin (yellow squash, for example). Winter squash is harvested at the end of summer when a hard shell (rind) and thick, inedible skin has formed. Because of this thick outer shell, winter squash has a much longer shelf-life than summer squash, as it can be stored for up to several months at room temperature. Common varieties of winter squash include pumpkin, acorn, butternut, and spaghetti squash.



While summer squash can be eaten raw, winter squash is best when cooked prior to eating. In addition to the inner flesh of winter squash, the seeds are also edible and are a delicious snack when toasted. Tasting and exploring all different kinds of winter squash is a great activity for children because of all the different shapes, sizes, and colors!



Remember, most children need about 1-2 cups of veggies per day, and adults need at least 2 1/2 cups daily. About 1 cup of cooked squash, or about 1/2 of an acorn squash is equal to a 1 cup serving of vegetables.

Snackin' on Squash

Top 5 Ways to Enjoy Winter Squash

- 1) **New Noodles:** Use roasted spaghetti squash as spaghetti noodles.
- 2) **Roasted:** Dice and roast squash. Season with cinnamon or nutmeg.
- 3) **Soups:** Add chunks of any winter squash to a hearty soup.
- 4) **Stuffed:** Stuff squash with rice, beans, or even apples and bake.
- 5) **Baked Goods:** Add cooked/mashed squash to pancakes or muffins for a tasty fall treat.

Sweet Winter Squash

Ingredients

2 medium winter squash (acorn, butternut, buttercup, etc.)
1/2 c. (4 oz) 100% orange juice
1 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp nutmeg

Directions

Place each squash in the microwave and heat on high for 1 1/2 minutes. Cut each squash in half. Remove the seeds and loose fibers in the middle. Place the squash on an ungreased baking pan. The cut side of the squash should be face up and the uncut part of the squash should touch the pan. Pour 2 Tbsp of juice into half of the squash. Spread it evenly on the inside of each squash. Bake at 400°F for 20-30 minutes, until tender. Season with cinnamon and nutmeg. Serve. Makes about 4 adult-size servings.

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters via Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Program. Available at: www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Nutrition Benefits

Like most fruits and veggies, kale is low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and calories.

Kale provides:

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin K
- Vitamin C
- Fiber
- Calcium
- Potassium
- Iron
- Folate
- Antioxidants



Photo Credit: creativecommons.org

Prepping and Washing

Before washing and cooking, you may wish to remove the kale leaves from the tough stems. To do this, simply grab the base of the stem with one hand, and with your other hand, wrap your fingers around the base of the leaves and rip them off with one motion.

To wash: Kale may be washed in a manner very similar to other leafy greens, like spinach. Place kale in a colander and spray with a sink sprayer or rinse under cool running water until water runs clear.

Thoroughly dry with clean paper towels or in a salad spinner before using or storing.

Kale

Veggie Bites

Often hailed as a “super food,” kale is a dark, leafy green that is rich in a wide variety of vitamins and minerals, including vitamin A, vitamin C, and potassium. Kale, along with a few other dark leafy greens, is also a good source of calcium. This makes kale a valuable food to any child or adult who does not consume dairy products, as calcium is vitally important to bone growth and development.



Kale, a member of the cabbage family, is a cool-season green that can withstand fall frosts and grows best in the spring and fall. Kale is typically available year-round; however, the flavor will be different depending on when it was planted and harvested. Kale available during the summer months may have a more bitter flavor. Kale harvested after the first frost actually gives this green a sweeter flavor. Kale may have a tough texture and bitter flavor when raw, but when lightly steamed or sautéed, kale becomes sweeter and more tender.

Storing Kale

Short Term Storage

Do not wash kale before refrigerating, as this will cause rapid spoiling. Kale should be stored in a plastic bag in the coldest part of your refrigerator (typically the back of the fridge) for about 3-5 days.

Long Term Storage: Freezing

Kale is available year-round, but often tastes better and sweeter when harvested in the fall after the first frost. You can have local, fresh-tasting kale even during spring or summer months if you choose to freeze any excess kale that your child care program may have received. Frozen kale can be kept for up to 12 months, and is very easy to prepare. For specific freezing directions, refer to the “Freezing Vegetables” section in the introduction of this kit.



Photo Credit: creativecommons.org

Suggested Activities

Play “Red Veggie, Green Veggie” (Red Light, Green Light)

Have children color cards of red and green veggies or print off pictures of red and green veggies. Choose a starting line and a finishing line. An older child or teacher should stand up by the finish line. Hold up a picture of either a red or green veggie. When a picture of a green veggie is held up, the children will run or walk quickly. When a red veggie is held up, children will stop. Continue alternating red and green veggie pictures until children cross the finish line.

Suggestions: 1) Add red and green *fruits* to the cards. 2) Add pictures of yellow fruits and/or veggies, and have children walk slowly when these cards are held up.

Kale Leaf Print

Show a drawing of a kale leaf (or any leafy green, like spinach) to the children. Talk with the children about what kale looks like. Review the shape and color of kale. Have each child take a piece of paper and fold the paper in half, assisting any children needing help. Ask the children to put one leaf of kale inside the folded paper, and rub a crayon or pencil gently on the top of the paper covering the leaf. As the leaf is rubbed, the details of the leaf will appear. Assist those children who need help. After the leaf print is made, remove the kale leaf from the paper. Look at the leaf print and point out the stem, outline, and any veins of the kale leaf that are visible.

Suggested Tasting Activities

*The more comfortable children are with a new food,
the more likely they are to try it.*

If kale is a relatively new food for many of the children in your care, you may consider setting apart a special time for children to “explore” this new food using their senses. Give each child a few washed and trimmed kale leaves. Show them what a bunch of kale looks like. Encourage children to smell and feel the kale leaves, and describe what it looks like. Ask them about the color and texture. You may even try steaming/sautéing some kale and allowing children to see the color and texture difference between raw kale and cooked kale. If children taste the kale, encourage them to taste the cooked kale first, as this will be less bitter.

Try offering kale in one of these kid-friendly ways:

- Kale Chips: this leafy green make a nutritious and crunchy chip
- Cooked within another meal, such as soup, scrambled eggs, pasta, stir fries, or even macaroni and cheese
- Steam or sauté: raw kale may have a bitter flavor and a tough texture for most children. However, when heated, the flavor becomes more complex and somewhat sweet, and the texture softens considerably. Children might be more likely to accept kale when cooked. (Steaming kale retains the most nutrients.)



Suggested Books:

Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert

Eating the Alphabet Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z by Lois Ehlert

The Surprise Garden by Zoe Hall

Farmer's Market by Paul Brett Johnson

A Harvest of Color: Growing a Vegetable Garden by Melaine Eclare

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement over other available materials on this subject.



Super Kale Soup

Ingredients

1 medium onion, chopped	3 c. kale, chopped fine
4 garlic cloves, minced	1 c. diced celery
5 c. chicken or vegetable broth, low sodium	2 tsp. dried sage
2 red potatoes, diced	2 tsp. dried thyme
1 medium carrot, finely diced	Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Place all ingredients in a slow cooker. Cook on high for 5-7 hours or until vegetables are tender. Makes 4 servings.

Source: *The World's Healthiest Foods*. Available at: <http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?dbid=214&tname=recipe>



Photo Credit: creativecommons.org

One-Pot Lentil Dish

Ingredients

1 c. uncooked, rinsed lentils	3 c. water
1/2 c. uncooked brown rice	1 packet (4 Tbsp) onion soup mix, reduced sodium
3 c. sliced carrots	1 tsp basil
1 lb. swiss chard, cleaned and chopped	1 Tbsp olive oil
1 lb. kale, cleaned and chopped	

Directions

Place all ingredients in large pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook until rice is tender (about 20 to 30 minutes). Serve. Makes about 6 servings.

Source: *Fruits and Veggies More Matters*. Available at: <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/recipe?iRID=1024>

Baked Kale Chips

Ingredients

1 bunch of kale
2 tsp. olive oil (approximately)
Salt, parmesan cheese, or any favorite seasoning

Directions

Remove kale leaves from tough stem and rip into "chip-size" pieces. Rinse thoroughly. Dry thoroughly in salad spinner or with paper towels. Toss in bowl with olive oil. Preheat the oven to 200°F. Lightly spray two large baking sheets with cooking spray. Place kale in a single layer on baking sheets. Bake about 20 minutes, then turn kale chips over. Check after an additional 10 minutes to determine if they are evenly crisp. Continue baking until edges of leaves are beginning to brown and crisp. Let chips cool slightly. Transfer to a bowl and sprinkle lightly with salt, grated Parmesan cheese or your favorite spice if desired.

Source: Julie Garden-Robinson. Featured in: *Prairie Fare: Feast Your Eyes on Kale*. NDSU Extension Service; June 8, 2012.
Available at: <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/news/columns/prairie-fare/prairie-fare-feast-your-eyes-on-kale>



Kale

Veggie Bites

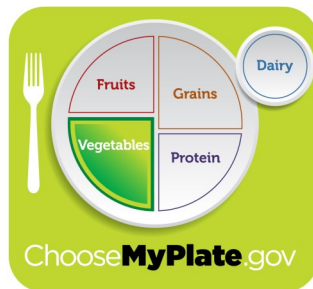
Often hailed as a “super food,” kale is a dark, leafy green that is rich in a wide variety of vitamins and minerals, including vitamin A, vitamin C, and potassium. Kale, along with a few other dark leafy greens, is also a good source of calcium. This makes kale a valuable food to any child or adult who does not consume dairy products, as calcium is vitally important to bone growth and development.



Kale is a cool-season green that can withstand fall frosts and grows best in the spring and fall. Kale is usually available year-round; however, the flavor will be different depending on when it was planted and harvested. Kale available during the summer months may have a more bitter flavor. Kale harvest after the first frost is actually sweeter in flavor. Kale may have a tough texture and bitter flavor when raw, but when lightly steamed or sautéed, this dark leafy green’s flavor sweetens and the texture softens.

How Much Do We Need?

Depending on age and activity level, young children (2-8 years old) need 1-to-2 cups of vegetables every day, and adults need 2 1/2-to-3 cups each day. Because leafy greens like kale and spinach shrink when heated, the amount that counts as a 1 cup serving depends on whether the green is cooked or raw. **1 cup of raw kale or 2 cups of cooked kale counts as a 1 cup serving of vegetables.**



Crazy for Kale

Top 5 Ways to Eat Kale

- 1) **Add It:** Add kale to other dishes, like soups, stir-fries, or pasta
- 2) **With Noodles:** Add chopped kale to cooking water when pasta is about 5 minutes from being done
- 3) **Steamed:** Steaming maximizes nutrient content. Season with lemon juice, olive oil, and salt
- 4) **Substitute:** Use kale in recipes instead of spinach or collard greens
- 5) **Saute:** Cook kale with diced potato, squash, and mushrooms in small amount of oil

Baked Kale Chips

Ingredients

1 bunch of kale
2 tsp. olive oil (approximate)
Salt, parmesan cheese, or favorite seasoning

Directions

Remove kale leaves from tough stem and rip into “chip-size” pieces. Rinse thoroughly. Dry thoroughly in salad spinner or with paper towels. Toss in bowl with olive oil. Place kale chips in single layer on greased baking sheets in preheated 200° F oven. Bake about 20 minutes, then turn kale chips over. Continue baking until edges of leaves are beginning to brown and crisp. Let chips cool slightly. Transfer to a bowl and sprinkle lightly with salt, grated Parmesan cheese or your favorite spice if desired.

Source: Julie Garden-Robinson. Featured in: *Prairie Fare: Feast Your Eyes on Kale*. NDSU Extension Service. Available at: www.ag.ndsu.edu/news/columns/prairie-fare/

Cooking with Aromatics

Nutrition Benefits

Many classic ways of adding flavors to food involve increasing salt, fat, and/or calories. By using aromatics, you can add potent flavors without adding unwanted calories or sodium.

Many aromatics, including carrots, garlic, and onion, are great sources of:

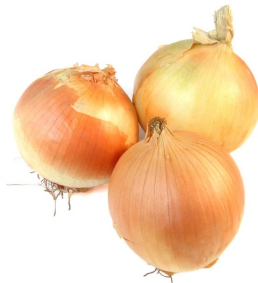
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Potassium
- Antioxidants



Common Aromatics

- Onions
- Green Onions (Scallions)
- Shallots
- Carrots
- Celery
- Leeks
- Ginger
- Garlic
- Chili Peppers
- Bell Peppers
- Parsnips

Full of Flavor



Some vegetables are great to eat on their own, like potatoes or green beans; but have you ever wondered what to do with other vegetables that are too potent to eat on their own, like onions, shallots, leeks, or parsnips? These vegetables, along with many others, are often referred to in the culinary world as *aromatics*.

Aromatic vegetables contribute deep, delicious flavors when cut or cooked. In fact, before these veggies are cut/cooked, they have almost no scent. Just think about the aroma of a clove of garlic before and after it has been crushed, or the mild scent of a whole onion compared to the strong odor released once the onion has been cut. Knowing how to prepare and utilize aromatics in cooking can impart delicious flavors to your meals without adding significant fat, sodium, or calories.

Using Aromatics

There's no need to shy away from veggies like bell peppers, leeks, ginger, or shallots. Here are some tips to keep in mind when using aromatics:

- **Use fresh over frozen.** Fresh aromatics provide better flavor and texture.
- **Limit fats and oils.** Aromatics will release their flavors if cooked in very small amounts of oil, broth, or water.
- **Remember to chop aromatic veggies.** This will release their flavors and lead to even cooking.



Shallots.

Aromatic Facts:

Leeks: Leeks have a mild onion flavor, and taste great when grilled or cooked within pasta or soups.

Shallots: Shallots look like very small onions, and have a flavor between garlic and onions.

Garlic: With its pungent flavor, garlic is often enjoyed most when cooked in sauces or soups. Eating garlic may reduce cholesterol levels and cancer risk.



Photo credits: www.pachd.com
Shallots Photo Credit:

Evan Amos via creativecommons.org & Wikimedia Commons

Garlic Mashed Potatoes

Ingredients

4 lb potatoes, diced. (peel or leave skin on)
10 2/3 oz light sour cream
6 oz cream cheese

1/4 c margarine
1/4 c minced garlic
1/4 tsp ground white pepper
1/2 tsp salt



Directions

Steam diced potatoes for 15-25 minutes or until very tender. Place in mixing bowl and beat until smooth. Add other ingredients and whip until smooth. Place in 9x13" pan and bake at 350°F for 45 minutes or until heated through. Makes 10 servings.

Source: University of Minnesota Extension Service. Available at www1.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/

Roasted Cauliflower

Ingredients

1 head of cauliflower, cut into florets
Olive oil or canola oil cooking spray
Lemon pepper seasoning

1 red onion, sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 shallots, cut into quarters
Grated Parmesan



Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Put cauliflower florets in single layer on cookie sheet or baking dish. Add red onion, shallot and garlic. Spray with cooking spray and stir to coat. Sprinkle with lemon pepper seasoning. Bake uncovered for 15 to 25 minutes, or until cauliflower is fork-tender and slightly browned. Stir once during baking. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and put back into the oven for 3 to 4 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters via University of Florida / IFAS Sarasota County Extension.
Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Very Veggie Fettuccini

Ingredients

1 9-oz. package refrigerated spinach fettuccini
1 Tbsp. olive oil
2 medium carrots, diced
2 Tbsp chopped scallions

1 c chopped yellow peppers
1/4 c chopped tomatoes or
sun-dried tomatoes
1/2 c shredded mozzarella cheese



Directions

Prepare pasta as label directs and keep warm. Meanwhile, heat olive oil over MEDIUM-HIGH heat and sauté carrots until tender-crisp, about 4 minutes. Add scallions and peppers and stir-fry until tender crisp, about 4 more minutes. Add vegetables to pasta and stir to mix. Mix in chopped tomatoes. Sprinkle with cheese. Serve immediately. Makes about 4, adult-size servings.

Source: Fruits and Veggies More Matters via Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH).
Available at: fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Cooking with Fresh Herbs

Nutrition Benefits

Because herbs are used in such small quantities (i.e., teaspoons and tablespoons rather than cups), they do not provide much nutritionally on their own. However, they can replace salt and fat as flavoring agents in some recipes.



Common Herbs

- Basil
- Cilantro
- Parsley
- Fennel
- Sage
- Rosemary
- Dill
- Mint
- Oregano
- Thyme
- Chives
- Tarragon
- Bay

Pairing Herbs and Food

Basil: tomatoes, pasta, rice, beef stew, meatloaf, potatoes, egg

Dill: salad, green beans, meatballs, stews, chicken

Cilantro: salsa, soup, salads, potato dishes, Latin

Small, but Powerful

Culinary herbs are slightly different from your typical vegetable—they are used in relatively small quantities and are primarily used for seasoning foods rather than being eaten alone. In addition to flavor, herbs add beautiful color and variety to many dishes.



Using fresh herbs rather than dried herbs is ideal in most recipes because they contain much more flavor; however, dried herbs are good options when fresh herbs are not in season. In order to get more flavor from dried herbs, crush the herbs between your fingers before adding them to food.

Whether fresh or dry, remember not to overdo herbs in any dish, as they overpower other flavors quickly. You can replace dried herbs in recipes with a larger amount of fresh herbs. It is difficult to generalize dry-to-fresh conversions, but these ratios may be useful as a guide (tsp = teaspoon):

2 tsp fresh herbs = 3/4 tsp dried herbs = 1/4 tsp powdered herbs

Storing & Using Fresh Herbs

Fresh herbs may be refrigerated for about a week by trimming off the ends of the stems on the diagonal and putting them upright in a tall glass or vase with an inch of water. Cover loosely with a plastic bag, allowing air to circulate, and change the water daily.



To use herbs, first rinse them under running water. Then, use a sharp knife or a pair of scissors to chop herbs (most flavor is within the leaves of the herbs, not the stems). Long cooking times can dilute the flavors of herbs, so try to add them towards the end of recipes that must cook for extended periods, such as soups or slow cooker recipes.

If you are just starting to use fresh herbs and want to become more familiar with their different flavors, try chopping fresh herbs and adding a small amount to a tablespoon of softened butter or cream cheese, and allow to stand for one hour. Spread on a piece of bread or cracker to familiarize yourself with the taste.

Source: Ronald C Smith, Julie Garden-Robinson. From Garden to Table: Harvesting Herbs for Healthy Eating (H1267). Available from <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/plantsci/hortcrop/h1267.pdf>.

Photo credit: www.pachd.com

Spaghetti and Meat Sauce

Ingredients

1 1/2 lb 90/10 ground beef	1/2 tsp salt
1/4 c chopped raw onion	1 tsp chopped fresh parsley
2 tsp minced garlic	1 tsp chopped fresh basil
1/4 tsp black pepper	2 tsp dry oregano leaves
1 can (29 oz) tomato puree	1/2 tsp dry marjoram leaves
1 1/2 c water	1/2 tsp ground thyme leaves

Directions

Brown ground beef. Drain. Add onions and garlic. Cook for 5 minutes. Add pepper, tomato puree, water, salt, parsley, basil, oregano, marjoram, and thyme. Simmer about 1 hour. Serve over top of spaghetti (enough sauce for 1 pound dry spaghetti).

Source: University of Minnesota Extension Service. Available at www1.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/

Red Potatoes with Herbs

Ingredients

2 1/2 lb small red potatoes, skin on	1 Tbsp lemon juice
2 1/2 Tbsp fresh minced basil	1/4 tsp black pepper
1/4 tsp dried chives or 1 Tbsp fresh minced chives	2 Tbsp canola or olive oil



Directions

In a large pot, boil potatoes until just fork tender; approximately 20 minutes. While potatoes are cooking, combine basil, chives, lemon juice, pepper, and oil in a saucepan and heat to simmer. Drain potatoes once tender. Allow potatoes to air dry slightly before coating with oil mixture. Pour hot herb and oil mixture over the cooked potatoes and toss lightly to coat. Serve hot. (You may try substituting any herbs in this recipe. Examples: rosemary, sage, or dill)

Source: University of Minnesota Extension Service. Available at www1.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/

Herbed Broccoli and Cauliflower

Ingredients

2 Tbsp margarine	1/8 tsp pepper
2 tsp lemon juice	1/4 c grated parmesan cheese
1/4 c chopped onion	1/4 c dry bread crumbs
1 Tbsp fresh chopped basil	1 lb + 4 oz chopped broccoli
1 Tbsp fresh chopped parsley	1 lb + 4 oz chopped cauliflower



Directions

Heat margarine or butter in a stock pot until starting to brown. Turn off heat and add lemon juice, chopped onion, chopped basil, chopped parsley, pepper, parmesan cheese, and bread crumbs to the margarine or butter. Mix, then set aside. Steam broccoli and cauliflower for 6 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Combine cooked broccoli and cauliflower in a lightly greased 9x13" pan. Sprinkle bread crumb mixture over pan of vegetables. Cook in a 350°F oven until heated through, and serve hot. Makes 10 servings.

Source: University of Minnesota Extension Service. Available at www1.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/