

Sensational Summer



Fruits & Veggies

Celebrate Summer Fruits & Veggies

In today's hectic, fast-paced lifestyle, it seems that eating the recommended amounts of fruits and veggies is a challenge for most everyone. With a little know-how and fresh produce, you can enjoy more fruits and veggies in your daily routine. The North Carolina Cooperative Extension is pleased to share with you a variety of recipes featuring that are not only great-tasting, but good for you as well!

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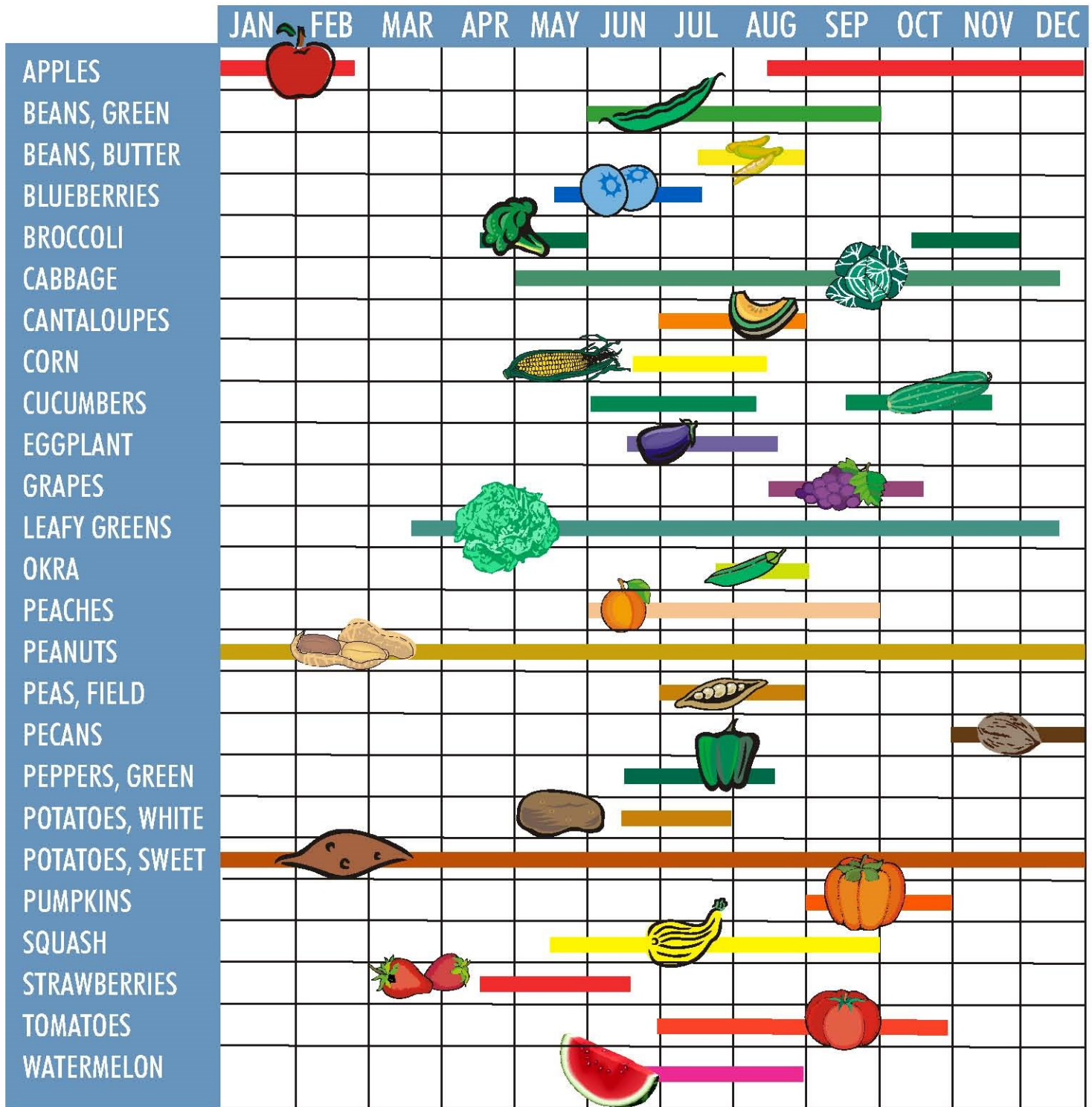
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What's in Season?

North Carolina Fruit and Vegetable Availability

You can use this guide to choose the freshest, best tasting produce obtainable!

Insist on buying locally grown food in grocery stores, restaurants, in the work place and schools,
Or- buy direct from a local grower at a farmers market, pick-your-own or roadside farm market.



For directories and more information about NC produce, visit www.ncdamarkets.org.

Agriculture is NC's #1 industry. When you see the Goodness Grows in North Carolina logo on food products, you are contributing to the economic growth of North Carolina and to our farmers.



Goodness Grows in Living Color !

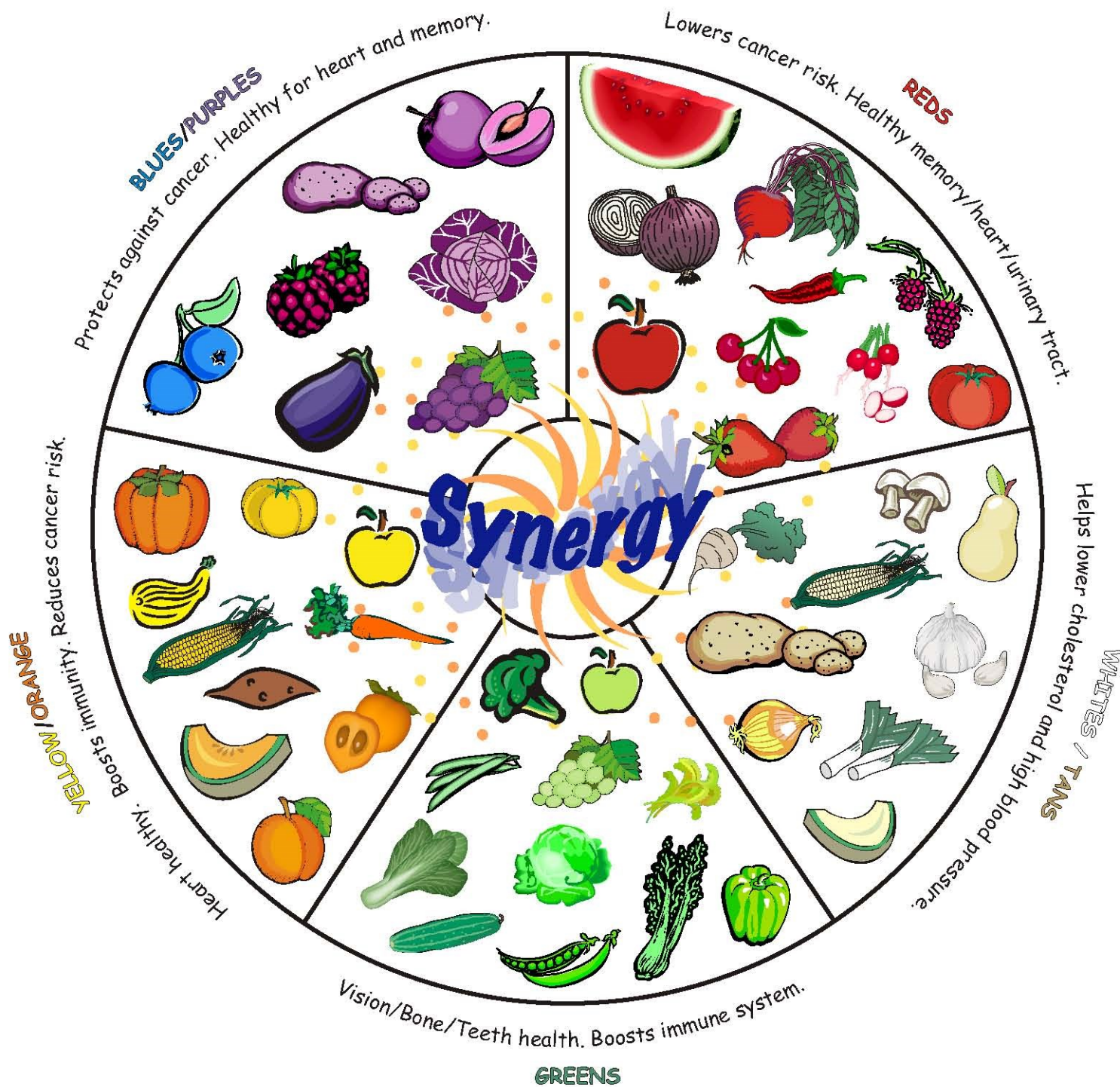
All Foods Can Fit! **Color + Variety = A Healthy Diet.**

No single food is better than another. They all work together in **synergy**.

When food digests, **synergy** happens as two or more nutrients combine to do what neither could do as well by itself. Colorful fruits and vegetables contain essential vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants and phytonutrients that work together to make this **nutritional synergy**.

They naturally protect and maintain our bodies and are found in varying amounts in each food.

Put 5 or more North Carolina colors & flavors on your plate everyday!



Small family farmers grow these foods in North Carolina. Look for them wherever you shop.

NORTH CAROLINA DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE & CONSUMER SERVICES

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Farmer's Market Favorites: Blackberries & Raspberries

Fresh summer berries can be enjoyed eaten freshly picked or frozen for a multiple of uses for throughout the year. Berries are low calorie fruits when eaten raw, which is one of the all-time favorite ways to enjoy berries. One-cup of raw berries contains about sixty to seventy calories, depending on the type of berry. Berries are also a good source of vitamin C, potassium, and contain antioxidants that may help to reduce cancer risk and prevent urinary tract infections.

Selection

- For the best price and flavor, buy “in season” locally.
- Select berries that are plump and without mold.
- For the best raspberries, check that each individual small cell making up the berry is plump and tender, not mushy or immature.
- Berry size is determined by the variety of the berry. Some people think that the small to medium berries have better flavor than larger berries.
- No attached stems will be on good quality raspberries and blackberries
- Wild berries may taste sweeter than commercially grown fruits.

Storage

- As soon as you get the berries home, check them over for decay, mold or other signs of spoilage.
- Discard fruit that shows signs of spoilage. Use blackberries within a couple of days.
- Raspberries are more fragile than other fruits. Raspberries should be eaten soon after harvest and not stored for more than a day.
- The fragile characteristics of the raspberry make it more expensive than other types of berries.

Preparation

Blackberries can be washed, drained, covered and stored in the refrigerator for later use. Store unwashed raspberries covered in the refrigerator. Wash raspberries before using.

Freezing

- Select fully-ripe, firm berries. Wash berries in cold water. Drain and dry berries. Discard soft, under-ripe or defective berries. Remove stems. Pack using one of the following methods:
- **Dry Pack**: Pack berries into containers, leaving headspace. Berries can also be frozen first on a tray and then packed into containers as soon as they are frozen. Seal and label.
- **Sugar Pack**: Mix one part sugar with four parts berries until fruit is coated with the sugar. Pack into plastic freezer bags. Seal, label and freeze.
- **Syrup Pack**: Prepare a heavy syrup (4-1/4 cups sugar mixed with 4-1/4 cups water: yields 7 cups syrup). Pack drained berries into can-or-freeze jars or plastic freezer boxes. Shake the container gently to pack berries. Cover berries with syrup, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

Canning and Jammin' with Berries

If you plan to use berries for home-canning or making jams and jellies, contact the Cooperative Extension office for the most up-to-date recipes to ensure food safety.

Blackberry and Raspberry Serving Suggestions

Berries can be used in variety of ways. Use them in baked goods such as muffins, cakes, pies. Fruit smoothies made with fresh berries are a refreshing and wholesome snack for kids. Berries make very tasty fruit sauces and add color and tartness to fruit salads. Berries also are a great ingredient in cold soup recipes.

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Blackberry & Raspberry Recipes

Berry Coffeecake

(Adapted from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension)

Serves: 8

1 cup raspberries or blackberries, fresh or frozen	3 tbsp. brown sugar
1 cup flour	1/3 cup sugar
½ teaspoon baking powder	¼ tsp. baking soda
½ cup plain low-fat yogurt or sour cream	2 tablespoons margarine, melted
1 tsp. vanilla flavoring	1 egg
Cooking Spray	1 tbsp. sliced almonds
¼ cup powdered sugar	1 tsp. skim milk
½ tsp. vanilla flavoring	

Combine berries and brown sugar in a bowl. Mix by tossing to coat berries with sugar and set aside. Combine flour and next three ingredients in a large bowl. Combine yogurt (or sour cream) and next three ingredients in a separate bowl. Stir well. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients, stirring just until moistened. Spoon 2/3 of batter into an 8-inch round cake pan that has been coated with cooking spray. Top with berry mixture. Spoon remaining batter over berry mixture; top with almonds. Bake at 350 degrees for forty minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool for ten minutes. Combine powdered sugar, milk and vanilla. Stir well. Drizzle over cake. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Added fiber tip: You can substitute up to ½ cup whole wheat flour for white flour in this recipe. *Nutritional content per serving:* 172 calories; 4 grams fat; 30 grams carbohydrate; 1.6 grams fiber

Summertime Fruit Salad

(Adapted from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension)

½ cup orange juice	¼ cup honey
2 cups strawberries, stemmed and halved	2 cups raspberries or blackberries
2 cups blueberries	1 cup cantaloupe, cut to bite-sized pieces
fresh mint leaves	

In medium bowl, whisk juice and honey; add remaining ingredients. Toss gently to combine. Chill one hour. Serves: 4 (1 ¾-cup servings). Nutrition content per serving: 186 calories; 1 gram fat; 7 grams fiber.

Summer Favorite: Blueberries

Nutrition

Blueberries are low in calories--only 80 calories per cup and high in fiber--5 grams per cup. Ranked high in disease-fighting antioxidants, blueberries taste great and are good for you. In addition to their healthfulness, blueberries are also a convenient way to add color and flavor to a variety of recipes.

Selection

Look for berries that are plump, firm, dry and free of leaves and stems. Color indicates a berry's ripeness, not its size. The skin should be smooth and deep purple-blue with a silvery-white bloom. Reddish berries are not fully ripe, but may be used in cooking.

Storage

Store fresh blueberries covered in the refrigerator and use within 10 days of purchase. Wash blueberries just before serving.

Freezing

Use berries that are washed and completely dry. Remove the berries from the original container and place in a resealable plastic bag. Berries can be arranged on a cookie sheet in a single layer and placed in the freezer until frozen. Remove the berries from the cookie sheet and place in plastic bags or freezer containers.

Preparation Tips

- Use hard frozen berries in batters such as muffin and pancake batter to reduce the amount of color streaking.
- Add frozen blueberries last to mixtures with other fruits, so their juice will not discolor the other fruits.

Blueberry Recipes

Blueberry Salsa Salad

1 large fresh orange	2 cups fresh blueberries
2 cups medium-sized green or red apples, diced	½ cup chopped sweet onion
2 tablespoons chopped cilantro	⅓ cup red wine vinegar
3 tablespoons apple juice	2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons granulated sugar	¼ teaspoon salt
2 bags (5 oz. each) spring mix (salad blend of tender baby greens)	
16-oz. container low fat cottage cheese or 4-oz. crumbled Gorgonzola cheese	

Peel and section orange then cut sections into small pieces; place in large bowl. Stir in blueberries, apples, onion and cilantro. In small bowl, whisk vinegar, apple juice, oil, sugar and salt. Pour dressing over blueberry mixture, stirring gently to coat; let stand ten minutes. Arrange spring mix salad on six salad plates. Spoon blueberry mixture over salad greens. Evenly spoon remaining dressing over salads. Top each salad with cheese.

Lemon and Blueberry Chicken Salad

2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries, divided	1/2 cup sliced green onions
3/4 cup low-fat lemon yogurt	3/4 cup chopped celery
3 tablespoons reduced-calorie mayonnaise	1/2 cup diced red sweet bell pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt	2 cups cubed cooked chicken breasts

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Reserve a few blueberries for garnish. In a medium bowl, combine yogurt, mayonnaise and salt. Add remaining blueberries, chicken, green onions, celery and red bell pepper; mix gently. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow the flavors to blend. Serve over salad greens and garnish with reserved blueberries.

Yield: 4 servings

All-American No-Bake Blueberry Pie

3-oz. package raspberry or strawberry-flavored gelatin	2 ½ cups blueberries, divided
9-inch graham cracker pie crust	1 cup whipped topping

Prepare gelatin according to package directions. Refrigerate until gelatin mounds when dropped from spoon and is almost set, about 2 hours. Stir gently to break up gelatin; stir in 2 cups blueberries. Spoon into piecrust; cover and refrigerate until set, 3 to 4 hours. To serve: Top pie with whipped topping. Decorate with remaining blueberries.

Yield: 8 servings

Best Blueberry Muffins

1 cup blueberries	1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 tablespoon plus 1-¾ cup flour, divided	1 egg
½ cup sugar	1 cup sour cream
1 teaspoon baking powder	1/3 cup milk
½ teaspoon baking soda	¾ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Grease twelve 2 ½-inch muffin cups. In a small bowl toss blueberries with 1 tablespoon flour; set aside. In a large bowl combine 1-¾ cup flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, nutmeg and salt; set aside. In a medium bowl, beat egg; stir in sour cream and milk; stir into flour mixture until just combined (batter will be lumpy). Stir in reserved blueberries just until evenly distributed

Blueberry Waldorf Salad

2 cups orange juice	2 cups divided fresh blueberries
2 tbsp. honey	1 tbsp. lemon juice
1 tbsp. sugar	2 tsp. Dijon mustard
1/4 tsp salt	1/2 cup canola oil
2 lrg Granny Smith apples	1/2 cup pecan halves, toasted
2 cups celery, sliced	8oz (about 6 cups) baby spinach

In a medium-sized saucepan, over medium-low heat, simmer orange juice until reduced to 1/4 cup and syrupy; cool slightly. In a blender container, combine reduced juice, half of the blueberries, the honey, lemon juice, sugar, mustard and salt; blend until smooth. With the blender running, gradually drizzle in oil until a thick dressing forms. Cover and refrigerate until service. (Makes about 1-1/2 cups.)

Core and quarter apples; slice quarters crosswise. In a large bowl, combine apple slices, pecans, celery and the remaining 1 cup blueberries; cover tightly and refrigerate until needed.

At service: Arrange spinach leaves on cold salad plates; top with blueberry-apple mixture, dividing evenly; shake dressing and then drizzle on salad.

Summer Favorite: Eggplant



Did You Know?

Thomas Jefferson, who experimented with many varieties of plants in his Virginia garden, is credited with the introduction of eggplant to North America. The early Asian varieties were very bitter to the taste, but cultivation and crossbreeding have greatly improved the flavor.

Nutrient Information

Eggplant is a very good source of fiber, potassium, copper and thiamin. It is also a good source of vitamin B6, folate, magnesium and niacin. Eggplants are high in oxalates and therefore people with kidney or gallbladder problems may want to avoid eating them. One-half cup of raw eggplant has about 11 calories.

Availability

Look for heavy, firm fruit with unblemished skin. Wrinkled, loose skin is an indication of age, and the fruit will be more bitter. Smaller eggplants have fewer seeds, thinner skin, and tend to be sweeter, more tender and less bitter. Press your finger lightly against the skin. If it leaves a light imprint, it is ripe.

Eggplants can be stored in perforated plastic bags in the refrigerator where they should keep for several days. They may be blanched or steamed then frozen for up to six months.

Preparation

- Wash eggplant just before using it, and cut off the cap and stem. Use a stainless steel knife because carbon blades will discolor the eggplant. Eggplant should not be eaten raw. Eggplant may be cooked with or without its skin. However, large eggplant and most white varieties have thick, tough skin and should be peeled prior to cooking with a vegetable peeler.
- Unlike many vegetables, eggplant is not harmed by long cooking. An undercooked eggplant can have a chewy texture; but overcooked eggplant is just very soft. Do not cook in an aluminum pot because the eggplant will become discolored.
- Spices that enhance its flavor include allspice, basil, bay leaves, garlic, chili powder, oregano, sage, thyme, marjoram, and parsley. Eggplant is most often paired with tomatoes or onions.
- Baking: To bake a whole eggplant, pierce the skin with a fork several times, and cook it at 400 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes. Baking whole eggplants produces a soft flesh that is easy to mash or puree.
- Broiling: Cut the eggplant into thick lengthwise slices, and score them lightly with a sharp knife. Place the slices on a broiler pan or grill; brush them lightly with oil. Broil about 5 inches from the heat, and turn slices when they begin to brown. Eggplant should be cooked for approximately 5 minutes per side.
- Microwaving: Eggplant may also be microwaved whole, cubed, or sliced. Cooking times vary from 6 to 8 minutes for a whole eggplant to 3 or 4 minutes for a pound of cubed eggplant.
- Stewing: Stewed eggplant is called ratatouille. For this dish, eggplant may be stewed alone, or with other vegetables. Simmer, covered with a liquid such as tomato juice, until the eggplant is tender. The cooking time is usually 20 to 25 minutes.

Eggplant Yield: 1 pound = 3 to 4 cups chopped

Eggplant Recipes

Mesquite Grilled Vegetables

1 eggplant, trimmed and cut into 1/2-inch chunks	1 zucchini, quartered lengthwise
1 red onion, peeled and cut in large chunks	2 red bell peppers, cored and cut into large slices
2-3 tablespoons mesquite grilling blend	2 green bell peppers, cored and cut into large chunks
2 tablespoons olive oil, divided	1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

Preheat grill to medium (or preheat large nonstick skillet or grill pan on the stove). In large bowl, combine grilling blend and 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add vegetables and toss till well coated. Place vegetables on grill. Cover and cook, turning once during cooking. Cook until vegetables develop grill marks and are tender, about 3-4 minutes per side. (Or cook on stove top.) Remove vegetables from grill as soon as they are cooked. Coarsely chop vegetables into smaller pieces, about 1/2 inch in size. Mix remaining olive oil and the balsamic vinegar in large bowl. Add cut vegetables and toss to coat. Can serve hot or at room temperature.

Yields 6 servings.

Grilled Eggplant with Sauce

1/2 cup tomato sauce	1/4 teaspoon dried basil
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mushrooms	Dash garlic powder
1 tablespoon chopped green pepper	Dash ground red pepper
1 teaspoon lemon juice	1 medium eggplant
1 teaspoon minced onion	2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano	

Combine first 9 ingredients in small saucepan; simmer uncovered for 20 minutes. Set aside and keep warm. Cut eggplant into 12 1/2-inch thick slices. Brush slices with oil. Grill slices over medium coals for 2 minutes on each side. Place on serving platter; top with sauce.

Yield: 6 servings Per serving: 97 calories, 4.6 g fat, 6.5 g carbohydrates

Oven-Fried Eggplant

1 small eggplant	1/2 cup plain nonfat yogurt
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese	1/2 teaspoon oregano
1/4 teaspoon hot sauce	1 cup soft breadcrumbs
Vegetable cooking spray	

Peel eggplant and cut crosswise into 1/2-inch thick slices. Combine yogurt, cheese oregano and hot sauce. Thinly spread yogurt mixture on both sides of eggplant slices. Dredge eggplant in breadcrumbs. Place eggplant on greased baking sheet. Bake at 425 degrees for 15 minutes. Turn slices and bake an additional 10 minutes or until golden and tender. Yield: 6 servings. Per serving: 71 calories, 1.6 g fat, 10 g carbohydrates

Summer Favorite: Okra

Nutrition

Okra was discovered around Ethiopia during the 12th century B.C. and was cultivated by the ancient Egyptians. You'll now see okra in African, Middle Eastern, Greek, Turkish, Indian, Caribbean, and South American cuisines. This vegetable is more famously known by its rows of tiny seeds and slimy or sticky texture when cut open. Okra is also known as bamia, bindi, bhindi, lady's finger, and gumbo, is a member of the cotton (Mallow) family.

Okra is a powerhouse of valuable nutrients. It is a good source of vitamin C. It is low in calories and is fat-free.

Selection & Storage

- Okra is available year-round, with a peak season during the summer months. It is available either frozen or fresh.
- When buying fresh okra, make sure that you select dry, firm, okra. They should be medium to dark green in color and blemish-free.
- Fresh okra should be used the same day that it was purchased or stored paper bag in the warmest part of the refrigerator for 2-3 days.
- Severe cold temperatures will speed up okra decay.
- Do not wash the okra pods until ready to use, or it will become slimy.

Freezing Okra

Select young tender pods and separate into small pods (4 inches or under) and large pods. Wash. Remove the stems at the end of the seed cells, being careful not to expose the seed cell. Water blanch small pods 3 minutes and large pods 5 minutes. Cool promptly and drain. Leave whole or slice crosswise. Package, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

For frying: Wash and remove stems. Blanch small pods 3 minutes and large pods 5 minutes. Cool promptly and drain. Slice crosswise and dredge with meal or flour. Spread in a single layer on shallow trays. Place in freezer just long enough to freeze firm. Package quickly, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Preparation

- When preparing, remember that the more it is cut, the slimier it will become. Its various uses allow for okra to be added to many different recipes. Okra is commonly used as a thicken agent in soups and stews because of its sticky core. However, okra may also be steamed, boiled, pickled, sautéed, or stir-fried whole. Okra is a sensitive vegetable and should not be cooked in pans made of iron, copper or brass since the chemical properties turns okra black.
- Most okra pods are ready to be harvested in less than two months of planting. If the okra is going to be consumed, then these pods must be harvested when they are very young. They are usually picked when they are two to three inches long, or tender stage.
- Okra pods grow quickly from the tender to tough stage. Pods are considered mature when they exceed three inches in length. Mature okra is tough and is not recommended for use in certain recipes.

Most people who have eaten or have cooked okra, know about the okra slime. Some recipes call for the whole okra, but how do you deal with the okra slime?

There are few ways to minimize the slime:

- Simply trim the off the ends and avoid puncturing the okra capsule.
- You can also minimize the slime factor by avoiding the tendency to overcook okra.

Okra and Green Beans

(Makes 6 servings)

Source: University of Illinois Extension

1 lb okra, uncut	1 Tbsp olive oil
1 medium onion, diced	1 lb fresh green beans
2 large garlic cloves, crushed then chopped	1 cup water
½ tsp salt	½ tsp ground pepper
1 6-ounce can tomato paste	

Wash okra pods, trim stems, do not remove caps. Rinse well and drain. Wash beans and cut into 3 inch lengths. Combine water, tomato paste, olive oil, onion, garlic, salt and pepper in a sauce pan and mix well. Heat, stirring frequently, until mixture comes to boil. Add okra and beans and additional water if necessary to almost cover vegetables.

Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer gently until vegetables are crisp-tender, 20 to 30 minutes.

Serve it warm or cold.

*This dish can also be oven-baked. Instead of simmering, lightly cover with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes at 350°F. Per serving: Calories 106, Protein 5g, Fat 3g, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 19g, Fiber 7g, Sodium 187mg.

Okra with Rice and Beans

(Makes 2 servings)

1/2 cup chopped onion	2 cups chopped tomato
1 tsp oil	1 cup sliced okra
2 cloves garlic, chopped	1/2 cup low-sodium broth (vegetable, chicken or beef)
2 cups cooked brown rice	1 cup canned black beans, rinsed

In a medium size saucepan, sauté onions and tomatoes in oil for 5 minutes. Add okra, garlic and broth. Cook for 15 to 20 minutes. Serve hot over rice and beans. Per serving: 410 calories, 15g protein, 5 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 76 g carbohydrate, 14 g fiber, 450 mg sodium.

Summer Favorite: Peaches

Varieties

Peaches are available almost all year. The season dictates the variety. Semi-freestones (Queencrest) are early season late April to June. In mid-June the market shifts to freestone (Elegant Lady) or clingstone. On the off seasons peaches are imported into the U.S. from Chile and Mexico. Fresh varieties are sold as freestone while clingstone is usually used for canning. The fruit inside these peaches is either yellow or white. The white flesh is a "sub-acid" fruit its flavor is more sugary sweet. The more traditional color is yellow. It's more acidic, which does give it a bit more flavor. Half of the United States crop comes from the South and the other half from California. The United States also produces 25% of the total world market (THE PACKER 1999).

Nutrition

Peaches are nutritious: fat free, cholesterol free, sodium free, and high in vitamins A and C. One medium peach contains 40 calories and 2 grams of fiber.

Selection

Select peaches that are soft to the touch, blemish free, and have a fragrant smell. Peaches that are mildly fragrant ripen into sweet and delicious flavors. Choose fruit that has a background color of yellow or cream and has a fresh looking appearance. Peaches may have some red "blush" depending on the variety, but this isn't a sign of how the fruit will taste after it's ripened. Peaches are highly perishable, so don't buy more than you plan to use.

Ripening & Storage

The best way to ripen stone fruit is to place the fruit in a paper bag, fold the top of the bag over loosely, and place the bag on the counter for one to three days. Never store hard fruit in the refrigerator, in plastic bags, or in direct sunlight. Check the fruit daily. When it is ripe, it will be aromatic and will give slightly to gentle pressure. Once ripened, it can be stored in the refrigerator for about a week.

Use

Wash peaches carefully in cool water, then rinse well before eating or using. Unless a recipe calls for it, you never need to peel the fruits; in fact, many of the nutrients found in stone fruits are contained in the peel, and it's highly recommended that the peel be consumed along with the flesh. If used in cooking they peel really fast if blanched in boiling water for a minute then plunged into ice water to cool. In fruit salads or platters, sprinkle cut peaches with lemon juice to help them keep their great color.

Freezing Tips

Sort, wash, pit and peel. For a better product, peel peaches without a boiling-water dip. Slice if desired.

- **Syrup Pack:** Use light or medium syrup. For a better quality product, add ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid for each quart of syrup. Put peaches directly into cold syrup in container. Press fruit down and add syrup to cover, leaving head space. Seal and freeze.
- **Sugar Pack:** Add sugar to taste and mix well. To retard darkening, sprinkle ascorbic acid dissolved in water over the peaches before adding sugar. Use ¼ teaspoon ascorbic acid in ¼ cup cold water to each quart of fruit. Pack into containers, leaving head space. Seal and freeze.
- **Water Pack:** Pack peaches into containers and cover with cold water containing 1 teaspoon ascorbic acid to each quart of water. Leave head space. Seal and freeze.

Ways to Enjoy Peaches

- One serving of peaches is equal to one medium size fruit, 1/2 cup of cut, canned, frozen or fresh fruit, or 6 oz of 100% peach juice.
- Slice peaches and add to your favorite cereal, or as a topper to pancakes or waffles.
- Take a peach or a cup of light canned peaches to work or school for a light snack.
- Include peaches in low fat yogurt or cottage cheese and put on toast.
- Combine peaches and other fresh fruits into a fruit salad and use as a dessert or appetizer before dinner. Keep it tasty and brightly colored by adding a bit of concentrated orange juice.
- Make a peach smoothie with yogurt and peaches in a blender for breakfast or a snack.
- Bake, grill, or broil and serve along with your favorite meat or fish dinners.
- As a dessert cut it fresh and add to angel food cake or over lowfat frozen yogurt
- Place canned peaches in the freezer and place in the blender for a great summer dessert sorbet.

Recipes

Peachy Perfect Smoothie

1 small container low-fat yogurt (vanilla, peach, raspberry, or other flavor work well)
1/2 cup frozen strawberries
8-10 frozen peach slices
1 banana (slice and freeze ahead of time for best smoothie consistency)

Put all ingredients in blender. Blend on medium-high until all frozen fruits are finely chopped. If smoothie needs sweetening - sweeten to taste with Splenda, honey, or other preferred sweetener.

Peachy Crisp

1/2 cup all-purpose flour	1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup packed brown sugar	3 Tbsp. chilled stick margarine or butter, cut into small pieces
6 cups sliced peeled peaches (about 3 pounds)	
2 tsp. lemon juice	1 cup raspberries
1 Tbsp. granulated sugar	1 Tbsp. cornstarch
Cooking spray	1 Tbsp. seedless raspberry jam, melted

Preheat oven to 375°. Lightly spoon flour into a dry measuring cup, and level with a knife. Combine flour, 1/4 cup granulated sugar, and brown sugar in a bowl; cut in margarine with a pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse meal.

Combine sliced peaches and lemon juice in a large bowl, and toss gently to coat. Add raspberries, 1 tablespoon granulated sugar, and cornstarch, and toss gently. Spoon fruit mixture into an 8-inch square baking dish coated with cooking spray, and drizzle raspberry jam evenly over fruit mixture. Sprinkle with flour mixture. Bake at 375° for 45 minutes or until brown. Makes 6 servings (serving size: 1 cup).

Nutrition analysis per serving: Calories 258 (22% from fat); Fat 6.2g (sat 1.2g, mono 2.6g, poly 2g); Protein 2.5g; Carbohydrates 51.2g; Fiber 4.7g; Cholesterol 0mg; Iron 1mg; Sodium 73mg; Calcium 25mg

Summer Favorite: Sweet Corn

Nutrition

Summertime would not be the same without the sweet taste of fresh sweet corn. While eating corn right off the cob is probably everyone's favorite, sweet corn can be included in salads, soups and easy side dishes. Fresh corn can be bright yellow, creamy white or a combination of the two.

Selection

Choose ears with fresh green husks with silk ends that are free from decay and stem ends that are not too discolored or dry. Corn should feel heavy for its size when compared to other ears around it, and should fill the husk completely.

Pull back the husks to examine the corn. The kernels should be plump, equal in size and without spaces between rows of kernels. Avoid underdeveloped kernels that lack color or very large kernels and kernels that are dark yellow with depressed areas on the outer edges.

Storage

Ideally corn should be eaten the day you buy it. For best quality, corn should be refrigerated immediately. Corn will retain fairly good quality for several days.

Freezing Corn

Whole Kernel Corn: Blanch cleaned ears for 4 minutes. Chill thoroughly in cold water; cut corn from cob and pack.

Corn on the Cob: Select small diameter ears for best quality. Clean and blanch for 7 minutes. Chill and pack.

How to Cook

Slicing whole kernels from the cob: This can be done when the corn is raw or cooked. Follow the directions in your recipe. Place an ear of shucked corn in a mixing bowl and starting at the tip end, carefully slice down the sides of the cob using a paring knife. Turn the ear upside down and repeat.

To boil: Carefully strip the ears of their husks by breaking the stem at the base of the ear and pulling back the husks. To remove the silks, use a vegetable brush under cold running water.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the corn. Cook for two minutes, covered, after the water returns to a boil. Turn off the heat. Keep the pot covered for five minutes.

Corn Recipes

Grilled Corn on the Cob

3 tablespoons margarine, melted

2 teaspoons lemon juice

6 ears of corn

(continued on next page)

1 tablespoon cumin

Dash pepper

Combine margarine, cumin, lemon juice and pepper in a small bowl. Peel back husks from corn and remove silks. Brush corn with margarine mixture. Place husks back over corn. Wrap corn in aluminum foil. Grill 45 minutes or until tender. Yield: 6 servings.

Summer Sweet Corn Salad

6 cups fresh corn cut from cob (about 12 ears)
1 ½ cups water
½ cup chopped green onions
1/3 cup green pepper
2 tablespoon chopped fresh basil or 1 tablespoon dried basil
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar
¼ teaspoon white pepper
¼ teaspoon hot sauce

Combine corn, water, green onions and green pepper in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 20 minutes. Add chopped basil and next 4 ingredients, cook 10 minutes or until corn is tender. Transfer to a serving bowl; serve with a slotted spoon. Yield: 10 one-half servings

Corn and Okra Creole

Vegetable cooking spray
1 cup chopped green pepper
½ cup chopped onion
½ cup water
2 ½ cups fresh corn cut from cob (about 3 ears)
2 14-½ oz. cans whole tomatoes, undrained and chopped
2 tablespoons tomato paste
½ teaspoon sugar
¼ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon hot sauce
2 cups sliced fresh okra

Coat a nonstick skillet with cooking spray; place over medium high heat until hot. Add green pepper and onion; sauté 3 minutes or until tender. Add corn and water to vegetables, stirring well. Cover and cook over medium heat for 10 minutes. Add chopped tomato and next 5 ingredients. Bring to a boil; cover, reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes. Add okra; cover and simmer an additional 5 to 7 minutes or until okra is tender. Yield: 12 servings

Summer Favorite: Tomatoes

Nutrition Information

Summer tomatoes have arrived and are showing up at local farmers' markets and roadside stands. There's just nothing in the world as tasty as a tomato bursting with flavor. One of my favorite ways to enjoy summer's first fresh-off-the-vine tomato is the classic toasted tomato sandwich. No matter how they're served, tomatoes are a quick and refreshing way of eating more vegetables.

Fruit or vegetable? If tomatoes are the topic of discussion, then more than likely the longstanding question will arise, "Are tomatoes a fruit or a vegetable?" The answer is "both"; tomatoes are both a fruit and vegetable. A "fruit" is considered to be any fleshy material covering a seed or seeds. Therefore produce such as tomatoes, watermelon, green pepper and cucumbers are fruits. From the view of an Extension horticulturist, the tomato is a vegetable plant, which is a nonwoody, annual plant. Most fruits are grown on a woody plant (apples, cherries, raspberries, oranges) with the exception of strawberries.

According to the U.S. government the tomato is a "vegetable". In 1893, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the tomato was a "vegetable" and therefore subject to import taxes. The suit was brought by a group of growers who wanted the tomato declared as a vegetable to protect U.S. crop development and prices. Fruits at that time were not subject to import taxes and foreign countries could flood the market with lower priced produce.

Nutrition. A medium size tomato contains less than 30 calories, plus almost half the recommended daily allowance of vitamin C. Tomatoes are rich in vitamin A and antioxidants, such as lycopene, which may protect against certain cancers and heart disease. Naturally low in sodium, tomatoes make a great addition to a low-calorie diet.

Selection. Tomatoes should be well formed, smooth and reasonably free from blemishes. Ripe tomatoes should be completely red or reddish-orange, depending on the variety. Ripe tomatoes have a sweet aroma and will give slightly to gentle pressure.

Storage. Tomatoes originally came from a warm climate and should be stored at room temperature. Refrigerating under-ripe tomatoes stops the ripening process and destroys the flavor. Tomatoes at the mature-green stage are especially sensitive to chilling which results in minimal flavor development. Fully ripe tomatoes are less sensitive to chilling - allow refrigerated tomatoes to "recover" at room temperature for a day or two before eating. To ripen tomatoes, place fresh tomatoes in a brown paper bag. As the tomato ripens, it gives off natural ethylene gas, which speeds up the ripening process.

Preparation. One pound of tomatoes is equal to about three medium tomatoes or two cups chopped. Wash tomatoes thoroughly before serving. Cut fresh tomatoes just before serving. Practice food safety by refrigerating tomatoes once they have been cut. Helpful hint – use a serrated knife to slice tomatoes and to retain juice, slice tomatoes lengthwise rather than crosswise.

Serving tips. Peeling fresh tomatoes is not necessary, although some cooks prefer peeled tomatoes. For easy peeling, make a small slit on the bottom of the tomato skin and dip fresh tomatoes in boiling water for about 30 seconds or until skins split. Remove with a slotted spoon and dip in cold water. The skins will come off very easily.

Canning tomatoes. Canning is a popular way to preserve the flavor of summer tomatoes. Bottled lemon juice (not fresh lemon juice) or citric acid must be used for all canned tomato products. This is to ensure the safety of whole, crushed, or juiced tomato products, regardless of whether they are processed in a boiling water bath or pressure canner. Contact your local Extension office for the latest research-based guidelines for canning tomatoes and other foods.

Freezing tomatoes. Freeze tomatoes for use in soups, sauces and chili. To freeze: Wash, peel and core tomatoes. Cover and cook until tender (10 to 20 minutes). Cool by placing the saucepan in a bowl of ice. When cool, pack in freezer containers and freeze.

Tomato Recipes

Skillet Tomatoes and Zucchini

1 teaspoon margarine	2 small onions, chopped
4 small zucchini, thinly sliced	2 medium tomatoes, chopped
Freshly ground pepper	

In a large nonstick skillet, melt margarine over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring until softened. Add zucchini and cook for 2 minutes. Add tomatoes and cook for 3 to 5 minutes or until zucchini are crisp tender. Season to taste with pepper. Yield: 4 servings. Calories per serving: 60

Gazpacho

6 large tomatoes	1 large cucumber, peeled, seeded and finely diced
1 large green bell pepper, finely chopped	1 medium-sized red onion, minced
3 Tbsp. red wine vinegar	2 Tbsp. olive oil
Juice of 1/2 lemon	2 to 3 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped (to taste)
2 Tbsp. fresh basil, chopped or 2 tsp. dried basil	Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
Tabasco sauce to taste	

To peel the tomatoes, submerge them in boiling water for 15 seconds. Place into a colander and rinse under cold water. The skins should slip right off. Core the tomatoes and gently squeeze out the seeds. Chop half of the tomatoes coarsely and puree the other half in a food processor. Combine the puree and chopped tomatoes in a large mixing bowl. Blend the remaining ingredients with the tomatoes. Cover and refrigerate for several hours before serving. Serve chilled; garnish with herbed croutons if desired. Makes 6 servings. Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 99, Fat 5g, Cholesterol 0mg, Fiber 3g, Sodium 20mg.

Tomato-Broccoli Salad

1 (8 ounce) package spiral pasta	1 ½ cups fresh, chopped broccoli
2 cups fresh, diced tomatoes	3 tablespoons shredded Italian-style cheese
3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, divided	½ tablespoon Italian seasoning
1 cup fat-free Italian dressing	

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain pasta well, place in a bowl and cool. Stir chopped broccoli and diced tomatoes into drained pasta. Mix two tablespoons of each of the cheeses together with the seasoning and salt. Stir cheese mixture into tomato-broccoli-pasta mixture. Toss with Italian dressing. Sprinkle with the remaining cheeses. Yield: 6 servings.

Summer Favorite: Zucchini

Nutrition Information

Summer is here and so is your favorite summer squash, zucchini. Whether fresh from the garden or straight from the grocery store - zucchini is a versatile vegetable that almost everyone can enjoy. With its mild flavor and many uses in preparation, zucchini is a great way to add more fresh vegetables to your family's meals.

A one-half cup serving of raw zucchini contains only 9 calories, 2 grams carbohydrate, 1 gram protein and 0 grams fat. This amount also provides 4% of the Daily Value (DV) for vitamin A, 10% of the DV for vitamin C and 2% of the DV for iron. This makes zucchini a great veggie to add to your plate, especially if you're trying to lose a few pounds or looking for a less starchy alternative to peas and corn.

Selection & Storage

- Choose zucchini that is firm with shiny, tender rinds. Avoid squash that has injury, pitting or dull rinds.
- Smaller zucchini have a firmer texture because they have a lower water content – making them ideal for dishes in which you want a firmer texture, such as in salads and pasta sauce.
- Larger zucchini are better for stuffing or shredding for use in foods such as zucchini breads, where extra moisture is needed.
- Zucchini can be stored up to a week in the refrigerator.

Preparation

- Consider how you will be using zucchini in your recipes for best flavor and texture.
- Sliced ¼-inch-thick coins are easy to cut and work well for breading (baked zucchini instead of fried, of course) and to add to your fresh vegetable platter and served as an appetizer.
- For a crunchier texture cut zucchini into thin julienne slices that resemble matchsticks. This works great for pasta salads or sauces where they visually mimic the spaghetti noodles while providing a crunchier texture.

Meal Ideas

- Try sautéing with a small amount of olive oil and garlic with a twist of fresh lemon juice.
- Add julienne strips to pasta salad or spaghetti sauce (especially great in any vegetable lasagna recipe), or as a topping for homemade pizza.
- Use zucchini as a substitute for yellow squash in your favorite low-cal squash casserole recipe.
- Try stuffed zucchini as a side item instead of your usual.
- Zucchini bread and muffin recipes have come along way from the traditional versions. Experiment with new versions of these classic recipes.

Freezing

- Choose fresh, young squash with tender skin. Wash; slice; blanch three minutes. Cool. Drain. Pack squash into freezer-safe containers. Seal, label and freeze.

(Continued on next page)

Zucchini Recipes

Cornmeal-Zucchini Muffins

1-¼ c. all-purpose flour	¾ c. yellow cornmeal
1 tsp. baking powder	1 tsp. baking soda
¼ tsp. salt	3 TBS. brown sugar
¾ c. nonfat buttermilk	2-½ TBS. vegetable oil
1 egg lightly beaten	1 c. shredded zucchini
Vegetable cooking spray	2 tsp. yellow cornmeal
2 tsp. brown sugar	

Combine first six ingredients in a medium bowl; make a well in center of mixture. Combine buttermilk, oil and egg; add to dry ingredients, stirring just until dry ingredients are moistened. Fold in zucchini.

Spoon batter into muffin pans coated with cooking spray, filling two-thirds full. Combine 2 teaspoons cornmeal and 2 teaspoons brown sugar; sprinkle evenly over batter. Bake at 400°F for 15 minutes or until golden. Remove from pans immediately.

(Yield: 1 dozen muffins. Per muffin: 131 calories, 21 grams carbohydrate, 4 grams fat)

Zucchini Relish (taken from *Ball Blue Book of Preserving*, 2003)

2 c. chopped zucchini (about 3 medium)	2 TBS. salt
1 c. chopped onion	1¾ c. sugar
½ c. chopped sweet green pepper (about 1 small)	2 tsp. celery seed
½ c. chopped sweet red pepper (about 1 small)	1 tsp. mustard seed
	1 c. cider vinegar

Combine zucchini, onion, green and red peppers; sprinkle with salt; cover with cold water. Let stand 2 hours. Drain; rinse and drain thoroughly. Combine remaining ingredients in a large saucepot. Bring to a boil. Add vegetables; simmer 10 minutes. Pack hot relish into hot jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Adjust two-piece caps. Process 10 minutes in a boiling-water canner.

Zucchini with Onions and Tomatoes (taken from *Choices for A Healthy Heart*, Joseph C. Piscatella)

1 large white onion, chopped	3 cloves garlic, peeled
¾ cup white wine	16-ounce can plum tomatoes, diced
1 cup chicken broth	3 medium zucchini, thinly sliced
1/8 tsp of each of the following: thyme, oregano, marjoram	
1/4 tsp of each of the following: dried basil and black pepper	

In a nonstick skillet, saute onion and garlic in 1/2 cup white wine, just until onions begin to soften. In a saucepan, combine remaining 1/4 cup wine with tomatoes, chicken broth, thyme, oregano, marjoram, basil and black pepper. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to simmer. Add onions, garlic and zucchini. Cover partially with lid. Simmer 30 minutes. (Per 1/2 cup serving: 40 calories, 6 grams carbohydrate, 0 grams fat)

Mexican Squash Casserole

4 small yellow squash, sliced	3 medium zucchini, sliced
1 medium yellow onion, sliced	2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tsp oil	1 jalapeno, chopped
1 can low-sodium corn	1/2 cup grated 2% milk cheddar cheese
1-1/2 tsp cumin	

Heat oil in large skillet, Lightly sauté squash, zucchini, onion, and garlic until just soft. Toss with remaining ingredients. Place in lightly sprayed with cooking spray, 2-quart casserole dish. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes. Serve warm. Makes 6 servings. (Per serving: 120 calories, 3 gram fat, 21 grams carbohydrate, 7 grams protein, 3 grams fiber, 170 mg sodium.)