

FOOD SECTION

Fruits and Vegetables Make Great Desserts and Entrees

Meat doesn't always have to be the main attraction of a meal; nor does dessert always have to be the traditional cake, pie, or cookies.

How about featuring vegetables in their creative forms instead of meat? Use your imagination or creative recipes and give fruit a chance to be the "apple" of your meal.

"Although fruits and vegetables are packed with taste and nutrition, they are often overlooked as entree and dessert options. You're missing a lot if you ignore them," said Victor Menashe, M.D., President of the Oregon Affiliate of the American Heart Association.

"Vegetables are sensible, healthful ingredients that can complement a meal or easily stand alone as the main dish. Plus they can give your diet a cholesterol and fat break," Menashe said.

In fact, the AHA recommends that you eat meatless or low-meat dishes several times a week. But a meatless meal doesn't have to be tasteless.

Remember, vegetables provide a variety of main entree choices. All you have to do is use your imagination.

Don't desert ripe, sweet, plump, juicy, nutritious fruits as dessert options.

Not only are they great sources to satisfy an after-meal sweet tooth, but they are also cholesterol-free, low in fats and high in vitamins and minerals.

The American Heart Association dietary guidelines for healthy American adults recommend two to three servings of fruit or real fruit juice a day. One serving is equal to a medium-sized piece of fruit or a half cup of fruit juice or canned fruit.

Household tip: When painting doors or near windows, put a layer of petroleum jelly on the doorknob or window edges to keep paint from sticking. When finished painting, simply clean of petroleum jelly.

Household tip: If your sink is clogged (and plunging won't work), if you don't have a sink unclogger product, put a few tablespoons of baking soda down the drain and pour about one-fourth cup of vinegar in. It should do the trick!

COOL SUMMER CUCUMBER SALAD

1 can 10 3/4 oz cream of celery soup 1/4 cup chopped peppers
1/2 cup sour cream 2 tbsps. finely chopped onion
Pepper to taste 4 med. cucumbers, sliced thin

Combine all ingredients, adding cucumbers last. Chill. Serve on salad greens. Garnish with tomato and parsley. Makes 4 cups.

If you have any recipes, household hints, food events, or health/nutrition questions, please send them to: Angelique Sanders, c/o the Portland Observer, 4747 N.E. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., 97211. I test everything before including it, and reserve the right to edit or otherwise alter contributions before publication.

Produce Tips

Spicier, more flavorful veggies: You can "jazz up" vegetables with this easy lemon-butter sauce: melt 1/4 cup butter or margarine in a saucepan (or microwave in a small dish). Add one teaspoon oregano or any other Italian spice. Sprinkle with pepper and stir; turn off heat. Add 1/8 cup lemon or lime juice and stir immediately before pouring over green beans, peas, corn-on-the-cob, artichokes, or any other vegetable.

Shopping hint: If your family goes through produce rapidly, you might consider going to a produce-specialty market (such as Como's on Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.), or even to a U-pick farm and getting the family involved. Children generally don't mind--and indeed, even enjoy--picking fruits and vegetables; also, if they see where the food came from and had something to do with the selection process, they should be less reluctant to eat it. Additionally, the per-pound price is much less this way!

Health hint: Keep a watchful eye on the nutrition information on canned fruits and vegetables: often, many vitamins are removed from produce during processing. Also, avoid fruits packed in heavy syrup: the first or second ingredient should not be sugar or corn syrup. Additionally, try to buy generics or store-brands when possible: the government regulates the nutritional standards, and they are generally comparable in quality to name-brands.

Seasons for Fruits and Veggies


Try and buy produce in-season. While you can get most produce year-round, if it is out-of-season, it is either from a greenhouse or imported from another state, and is more costly.

Winter: apples, artichokes, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, onions, oranges, pears, potatoes, squash

Spring: apricots, artichokes, asparagus, carrots, cherries, lettuce, new potatoes, onions, oranges, peas, radishes, strawberries, spinach

Summer: apples, cucumbers, grapes, green beans, lettuce, melons, nectarines, peaches, peas, radishes, tomatoes

Fall: apples, chestnuts, cucumbers, figs, grapes, lettuce, pears, spinach, sweet potatoes, zucchini



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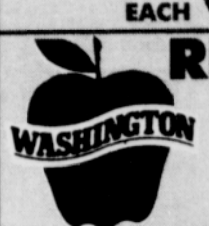


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Meatless Recipes

Some tips on this recipe: it doesn't specify how to cut the zucchini, but I recommend either slicing it very thinly or shredding. Shredding it makes the dish easier to eat, but quite juicy. Also, one should up the spices and onions to enhance the flavor--it's otherwise a bit weak. It serves six, is rich in vitamins, and has 130 calories per serving.

Zucchini Cheese Casserole

This meatless recipe is rich in vitamins, big on taste, and has only 130 calories per serving. It serves six.

3 medium zucchini squash
1/2 cup chopped onion
2 fresh tomatoes, sliced
2 tablespoons oil
1 pound low-fat cottage cheese
1 teaspoon basil
1/2 teaspoon oregano
1/3 cup Parmesan cheese
Saute zucchini and chopped onion in oil. Whip cottage cheese with basil and oregano in blender. Place alternating layers of zucchini, cottage cheese and tomato in a 1 1/2 quart casserole dish. Top with Parmesan cheese.
Bake at 350 F, uncovered, for 25-30 minutes.

Blackberry Muffins

1 cup blackberries
1/4 cup flour
1/2 cup sugar
1 cup flour
1/2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp cinnamon
1/8 tsp nutmeg
1-1/2 cup oatmeal (quick cooking)
1-1/2 cup buttermilk (low fat)
1 lemon: juice and grated rind

Dredge blackberries with the 1/4 cup flour, discarding excess flour. Sift the 1 cup flour with baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Mix buttermilk with the lemon rind and juice and blend with oatmeal, sugar and the remaining dry ingredients. Fold in the berries. Fill muffin tins 3/4" full and bake muffins at 375° for 30 minutes. Makes 12 muffins.

Per muffin: 109 calories, trace fat, 1.1 mg cholesterol, 50 mg sodium

Very Berry Sorbet

This is a good-for-you dessert, with low fat and only 67 calories per 1/2 cup serving.

1 1/2 cups frozen no-sugar-added blackberries, slightly defrosted
1 teaspoon frozen orange juice concentrate
2 teaspoons water
1 teaspoon brandy, or cognac (optional)
In a blender or food processor, process ingredients until smooth, scraping sides as needed. Serve immediately.

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