



American  
Heart  
Association®

life is why™

GETTING TO KNOW

# FRUITS AND VEGETABLES





Fruits and vegetables are a key part of an overall healthy eating plan. They're also delicious, colorful, versatile, convenient, affordable and fun. This guide includes great tips and recipes to help you eat plenty of heart-healthy fruits and vegetables.





## WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS GUIDE:

How to Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

What's a Serving?

Know Your Nutrients

Seasons of Eating

Get Fresh

Budget Basics

Healthy Preparation

Mastering the Myths

Recipes

- Asian Marinated Vegetable Salad
- Spaghetti Squash Spaghetti

Kids' Zone

- Fun Facts Monthly Calendar
- Fruit and Veggie Challenge



# HOW TO EAT MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

You can include more fruits and vegetables in your diet in countless ways. Try some of these practical tips that don't require a lot of changes to the way your family eats:

- Pack portable, easy-to-eat fruits and veggies in your work or school bag, and avoid vending machine temptations.
- Add frozen peas or broccoli to rice when it's almost done cooking.
- Add extra veggies to soups and stews.
- Try a meatless meal once a week. Think vegetable lasagna, Portobello mushroom “burgers” or grilled veggie kabobs.
- Fill out a sandwich with fruits and veggies. Try sliced or shredded vegetables like beets, carrots, celery, cucumbers, onions, peppers, radishes, tomatoes and zucchini and/or sliced fruits like apple, avocado and pear.
- Keep frozen and canned fruits and vegetables on hand for when you need to throw together a meal in a hurry. Compare food labels and choose items without sauces and too much sodium.
- Work fruits and vegetables into your family's favorite dishes.
- Make adding fruits and veggies to meals a snap by cutting them up and keeping them in the fridge. They'll also be handy for snacking!
- When eating out, ask if you can substitute a fruit cup or side salad for fries and other less-healthy sides.
- Top yogurt, oatmeal and cereal with berries or sliced fruit.
- Make fruit popsicles. Freeze 100 percent juice in an ice tray or popsicle mold.
- Add spinach, peppers or mushrooms into scrambled eggs and omelets.
- For snack time, keep fresh fruit and pre-chopped or no-chop veggies (such as baby carrots, cherry tomatoes and sugar snap peas) on hand, as well as single-serve containers of raisins or applesauce. Your kids are more likely to grab fruits and veggies over other items if they're readily available.
- Enjoy fruit for dessert most days and limit traditional desserts to special occasions.
- Make it fun for kids to try new fruits and veggies. Let them pick out a new fruit or vegetable in the grocery store each week, and figure out together how to cook or prepare it. You might end up expanding your palate as well!
- Eat the rainbow: A fun and tasty way to make sure your family is eating a good variety of fruits and vegetables is to eat as many different colors as you can each day.
- Keep a bowl of whole fruit handy on the desk, table or countertop.

# WHAT'S A SERVING

## FRUITS

4-5 servings per day

- ONE MEDIUM FRUIT *servicing size*



- FRESH, FROZEN OR CANNED FRUIT



- DRIED FRUIT



- FRUIT JUICE



## VEGETABLES

4-5 servings per day

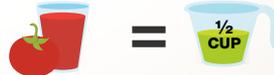
- RAW LEAFY VEGETABLE *servicing size*



- FRESH, FROZEN OR CANNED VEGETABLE



- VEGETABLE JUICE



\*based on a 2,000 calorie eating pattern

The good news is eating the right amount of fruits and vegetables doesn't have to be complicated. Find the approximate serving sizes for some of your favorites:

### FRUITS

**Apple, pear, orange, peach or nectarine:**  
1 medium

**Avocado:** Half of a medium

**Banana:** 1 small (about 6 inches long)

**Blackberry, blueberry:** 8-10 medium to large

**Grapefruit:** Half of a medium (4 inches across)

**Grape:** 16

**Kiwifruit:** 1 medium

**Mango:** Half of a medium

**Melon:** Half-inch thick wedge of sliced watermelon, honeydew, cantaloupe

**Pineapple:** 1/4 of a medium

**Plum:** 1 large

**Strawberry:** 4 large

### VEGETABLES

**Bell pepper:** Half of a large

**Broccoli or cauliflower:** 5-8 florets

**Carrot:** 6 baby or 1 whole medium (6-7 inches long)

**Celery:** 1 stalk

**Corn:** 1 small ear (6 inches long) or half of a large ear (8 to 9 inches long)

**Cucumber:** 1/4 of a medium (8 to 9 inches long)

**Green bean:** About 19-20

**Leafy vegetable:** 1 cup raw or 1/2 cup cooked (lettuce, kale, spinach, greens)

**Potato:** Half of a medium (2 1/2 to 3 inches across)

**Squash, yellow:** Half of a small

**Sweet potato:** Half of a large (2 1/4 inches across)

**Zucchini:** Half of a large (7 to 8 inches long)

# KNOW YOUR NUTRIENTS

Fruits and vegetables are an important part of an overall healthy eating plan because they're typically high in vitamins, minerals and fiber and low in calories and saturated fat. Most fruits and vegetables also have no or little sodium. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables may help you control your weight and blood pressure and reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. The vitamins and minerals also help your body with many daily functions.



NUTRIENT	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT	SOME GOOD CHOICES
Calcium	Plays a key role in bone and tooth health and may reduce the risk of osteoporosis.	Collard greens, kale, mustard greens, spinach, turnip greens
Fiber	Aids digestion and provides a feeling of fullness on fewer calories. A fiber-rich diet may help reduce cholesterol levels, maintain blood sugar and reduce the risk of heart disease and some types of cancer.	Apple, artichoke, banana, blackberry, blueberry, broccoli, green bean, kiwifruit, orange, pear, raspberry, spinach, sweet potato
Potassium	Helps maintain normal cell function and blood pressure. Potassium deficiency can increase risk of kidney stones, cardiovascular disease and stroke.	Banana, broccoli, kiwifruit, sweet potato, white potato
Vitamin C	Essential for collagen formation, which is important for healthy skin. Helps carry oxygen throughout the body.	Broccoli, cantaloupe, cauliflower, kale, kiwifruit, orange, mango, pineapple, red and green pepper, strawberry, sweet potato

# SEASONS OF EATING

Your heart-healthy recipes will taste even better with seasonal produce.

## SPRING

artichokes, asparagus, carrots, chives, fava beans, green onions, leeks, lettuce, parsnips, peas, radishes, rhubarb and Swiss chard



## SUMMER

berries, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, figs, garlic, grapes, green beans, melons, peppers (sweet and hot), stone fruit (apricots, cherries, nectarines, peaches, plums), summer squash, tomatoes and zucchini



## FALL

apples, Brussels sprouts, dates, hard squash (acorn, butternut, spaghetti), pears, pumpkins and sweet potatoes



## WINTER

bok choy, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, citrus fruit (clementines, grapefruit, lemons, limes, oranges, tangerines), collard greens, endive, leafy greens (collards, kale, mustard greens, spinach) and root vegetables (beets, turnips)



Keep these tips in mind when using and shopping for seasonal produce:



Fresh foods are often less expensive during their harvest season. You may even save money by buying in bulk.



Shop the farmers' market to learn more about produce and get ideas on how to prepare foods in season.



Gardening gives you fresh seasonal produce and a little exercise, too. The sense of accomplishment you'll feel will make that produce taste even better!



Frozen, canned and dried fruits and vegetables also can be healthy choices. Compare food labels and choose items with the lowest amounts of sodium and added sugars.



Choose canned fruit packed in water, its own juice or light syrup (avoid heavy syrup).



Choose canned and frozen vegetables without sauces that can be high in sodium and saturated fat.



Freeze fresh produce at the peak of its season, so you can add it to smoothies, soups and breads and enjoy it throughout the year.

# GET FRESH

## with **FRUITS** and **VEGETABLES**

Stretch your produce and dollars by knowing how to store fresh fruits and vegetables.



## 1 PANTRY

Pack away in a cool, dark place like your pantry or cellar:

**ONIONS, GARLIC & SHALLOTS**

**HARD SQUASH**

(Winter, Acorn, Spaghetti, Butternut)

**SWEET POTATOES, POTATOES, & YAMS**

**WATERMELON**

## KEEP THEM APART:

- Fruits like apples, bananas and pears give off ethylene gas, which can make other produce ripen and rot faster.
- Store vegetables and fruits separately.
- Keep apples, bananas, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumbers, onions, pears, potatoes and watermelon away from other produce.

## COUNTERTOP

2

Store loose and away from sunlight, heat and moisture:

### BANANAS

### CITRUS FRUIT

Store lemons, limes, oranges and grapefruit loose or in a mesh bag. Refrigerate for longer storage.

### STONE FRUIT

Ripen avocados, apricots, nectarines, peaches and plums in a paper bag, then move to the fridge where they'll last a few more days.

### TOMATOES

## REFRIGERATOR

3

Store in plastic bags with holes in your produce drawer, unless noted:

### APPLES & PEARS

### BEETS & TURNIPS

Remove greens and keep loose in the crisper drawer.

### BERRIES, CHERRIES & GRAPES

Keep dry in covered containers or plastic bags.

### BROCCOLI & CAULIFLOWER

### CARROTS & PARSNIPS

Remove greens.

### CELERY

### CORN

Store inside their husks.

### CUCUMBERS, EGGPLANT & PEPPERS

Store on the upper shelf, which is the warmer part of the fridge.

### FRESH HERBS

Except basil. Keep stems moist and wrap loosely in plastic.

### GREEN BEANS

### LETTUCE & LEAFY GREENS

Wash, spin or pat dry, wrap loosely in a dish towel or paper towels and place in a plastic bag in vegetable drawer. Keep stems moist.

### MELONS

### MUSHROOMS

Keep dry and unwashed in store container or paper bag.

### PEAS

### ZUCCHINI & SUMMER/YELLOW SQUASH

The American Heart Association  
recommends



4-5 servings per day each of  
fruits and vegetables.

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## BUDGET BASICS

By creating a food budget, planning menus and shopping wisely, you can save money and enjoy delicious, nutritious meals!

## PLAN YOUR MEALS

**MAKE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES A PRIORITY.** When meal planning, start with the vegetables you want to serve and add your protein and whole grains from there.

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**GO MEATLESS ONCE A WEEK.** Skip the meat and make room for more vegetables! Whole grains and beans provide protein, and they're often more affordable and may require less work to prepare. Burritos, tacos, soups and pasta dishes are family favorites that can easily be made meatless. Many recipes also make enough for you to cook once and eat twice by saving leftovers.

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**BUY FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN SEASON.** Seasonal produce is the freshest and tastiest, and it's often more affordable. Carrots, potatoes and greens are versatile and readily available. Bananas, grapes, apples and oranges are generally the most affordable fruits year-round.

- For the best price, buy in bulk, but don't buy more than you can use before it spoils.
- Shop your local farmers' market. Looking at the produce and talking with growers may give you ideas about what to cook.
- Many farmers' markets accept SNAP benefits — see if yours does!
- Make casseroles, soups and other seasonal produce recipes when the ingredients are at their freshest, then freeze them. This will keep the meal tasting its best and give you a quick dinner on a busy night! Label your containers with dates and check for spoilage or freezer burn before using.

## MAKE A LIST

**HAVE A GAME PLAN.** Before you go shopping, make a meal plan for the week, but be prepared to be flexible — you might encounter an unexpected sale item. Based on your recipes for the week, write down what ingredients you need to buy. Note the quantity of items needed (i.e., four tomatoes, two onions) and which coupons you have. Without a list, you're likely to spend more money on impulse buys and waste time wandering around the store.

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**INVENTORY YOUR PANTRY AND FREEZER.** Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables have lots of good nutrients without being too high in calories, and they generally last a long time without spoiling. Plus, they're great to have on hand when you're low on funds or don't feel like heading to the store. Compare food labels and choose products with the lowest amounts of sodium and added sugars.

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**ADD HEALTHY SNACKS TO YOUR LIST.** Your family will grab fruits and veggies over other items if they're readily available. Produce that's already cleaned and cut up is especially appealing.

# SHOP SMART

## KNOW THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF GROCERY STORES AND THE PRICES THEY CHARGE.

A basic grocery store sells a wide selection of foods and basic household items. A supermarket is larger and stocks food along with clothing, electronics and other household accessories. Many convenience stores are smaller (often connected to gas stations) and primarily offer pre-packaged snacks and candy. Specialty grocery stores and delis sell unique types of food, but usually have less variety and may be more costly. Grocery stores and supermarkets tend to have the most affordable food prices.

**VISIT A GROCERY STORE CLOSE TO YOUR HOME.** Make shopping as easy as possible, and get to know your grocery store aisles and shelves. Look for aisle markers to help you locate an item. Ask the staff to direct you to save time.

**COMPARE PRICES AS YOU SHOP.** Store-brand products may be more affordable, but remember to check the Nutrition Facts label.

## SIGN UP FOR CLUB CARDS AND ONLINE COUPONS WHEN STORES HAVE THEM.

You may get special savings alerts and discounts.

**BUY IN BULK WHEN IT MAKES SENSE.** If fresh produce is on sale, decide whether it's better for you to buy in bulk or just buy a week's worth. If you have a recipe in mind to use the produce and freeze it, this can be a cost-efficient time saver for busy weeknight dinners. Otherwise, choose the amount your family can consume before the produce spoils. Follow fresh produce storage guidelines to maximize the flavor and life of your produce!

## SAVE YOUR RECEIPTS.

When you get home, compare what you spent to what you budgeted.

Adjust your meal planning and budgeting, if needed.

**USE COUPONS  
FOR FOOD ITEMS YOU  
PLAN TO BUY.**

And compare prices.  
Having a coupon for an item  
doesn't always mean that it's  
the best deal.



## HEALTHY PREPARATION

Fruits and vegetables have many nutrients that are good for our bodies. But cooking methods that add saturated fat, like deep frying or using heavy creams, can turn healthy ingredients into unhealthy meals. To have better control over the nutritional content and the overall healthfulness of the foods you eat, prepare meals at home using healthier methods, such as:

**Baking:** Bake foods slowly in the oven in covered cookware with a little extra liquid.

**Blanching:** After boiling 30 seconds in water, plunge the food into ice water to stop the cooking. This keeps it tender-crisp.

**Boiling:** Cook food in water or broth that's bubbling vigorously.

**Braising or stewing:** Cook food slowly in the oven or on the stovetop with a little liquid (water or broth).

**Broiling:** Place food directly under a heat source at high temperature.

**Grilling:** Cook food on a rack or skewers directly over a heat source.

**Poaching:** Immerse the food in simmering liquid.

**Roasting:** Cook food uncovered in the oven.

**Sautéing:** Use a nonstick pan so you will need little or no oil. Or use a nonstick vegetable spray, a small amount of broth or wine, or a bit of healthy oil rubbed onto the pan with a paper towel.

**Steaming:** Steam food in a covered basket over simmering water.

**Stir-frying:** Use a wok to cook food quickly over high heat in vegetable stock, wine or a small amount of healthy oil.

These cooking methods can help your veggies and fruits retain flavor, color and nutrients. Here are a few more important tips:

Avoid salt and high-sodium seasonings like teriyaki and soy sauce. Instead, use herbs, spices, salt-free seasoning blends, flavored vinegars, peppers, garlic and citrus juice or zest to enhance flavor.

Use healthier oils such as olive, canola, corn or safflower oil as your primary fats for cooking. Try to avoid using butter, lard, shortening, partially hydrogenated oils and products containing trans fat.

Drain and rinse canned vegetables and beans to remove excess salt or oil.

Cook vegetables just long enough to make them tender-crisp. Overcooked vegetables can be less tasty and less nutritious.



# MASTERING THE MYTHS

Don't let these falsehoods keep you from getting enough fruits and vegetables on your plate!

## 1 MYTH: ORGANIC COSTS MORE, SO IT MUST BE BETTER FOR ME.

To be considered "organic," an agricultural product must be grown or raised according to specifications of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Organic products cost more because of the increased cost of complying with USDA standards and a decreased yield per acre. Studies have not shown nutrition-related health effects from consuming organically produced foods. The American Heart Association encourages consumers to eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables, whether or not they're organic.

## 2 MYTH: JUICE DOESN'T COUNT AS A SERVING OF FRUIT.

One serving of 100 percent juice (4 ounces) can replace one fruit serving. However, juice isn't as filling or nutritious as whole fruit and may add excess calories. Stick to a small glass of 100 percent juice with no added sugars. Combine juice and water to make it go further.

## 3 MYTH: FRESH PRODUCE IS HEALTHIER.

Fresh, dried, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are all good choices. They're nutritionally comparable in most cases. Frozen fruits and vegetables are typically picked at the peak of ripeness and flash-frozen to preserve optimal nutrition. They last for several months in the freezer and can be an economical choice. Choose products without sauces or seasonings that may contain excess salt, added sugars and calories. Canned fruits and veggies are convenient to have in your pantry when you can't get to the store; they can even be kept at work (with a can opener) for an afternoon snack. Since they're non-perishable, you won't waste money – which sometimes happens with fresh produce that goes bad. Compare food labels and choose items with the lowest amounts of sodium, added sugars and saturated fat. Drain and rinse canned veggies to get rid of some of the sodium. Choose fruit canned in water, natural fruit juice or light syrup (drain and rinse).

## 4 MYTH: FRUIT HAS TOO MUCH SUGAR, AND I'M SUPPOSED TO LIMIT MY SUGAR INTAKE.

Naturally-occurring sugars are found in foods such as fruit (fructose) and milk (lactose). Added sugars include any sugars or caloric sweeteners that are added to foods or beverages during processing or preparation (such as putting sugar in your coffee or adding sugar to your cereal). The American Heart Association recommends limiting the amount of added sugars you consume to no more than half of your daily discretionary calories allowance. For most American women, that's no more than 100 calories per day, or about 6 teaspoons of sugar. For men, it's 150 calories per day, or about 9 teaspoons. Getting too much added sugar in your diet could significantly increase your risk of cardiovascular disease and contribute to obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Eating fresh fruits or fruits canned in water or natural juice (without added sugars) provides vitamins, minerals and fiber without contributing to your added sugar intake and may even help you manage your weight and blood pressure. Instead of adding sugar to cereal or oatmeal, try fresh fruit (bananas, cherries or strawberries) or dried fruit (raisins, dried cranberries or apricots). If you have high triglyceride numbers, your healthcare provider can help you monitor your fructose intake and identify vegetables and fruits lower in fructose.

## **MYTH: BRUISING OR BROWNING ON MY PRODUCE MEANS I SHOULDN'T EAT IT.**

The same process that causes produce to ripen and taste delicious also causes it to brown. These fruits may still be edible, and adding a squeeze of lemon to cut-up fruits and vegetables can sometimes slow down the browning process. Storing produce in the refrigerator may also help keep it from turning brown as quickly. You can freeze produce that's ripening quickly and add it to breads or smoothies.

## **MYTH: IF MY FRUIT LOOKS CLEAN, I DON'T NEED TO WASH IT.**

All fruits and vegetables, including those that are organically grown, benefit from a thorough washing. Soil, surface microbes and pesticides can be found on the skins of produce, so thoroughly washing with water is the best way to reduce your risk of getting sick. The FDA does not recommend washing produce with soap, detergent or commercial produce wash. Rub produce with your hands under running water and pat dry. Produce with rinds, grooves or waxy skin, including melons, cucumbers, squash, citrus and potatoes, should be scrubbed with a brush. Leafy vegetables grow close to the ground, where bacteria thrive. Remove the outer layer of leaves before thoroughly rinsing the rest in water. Spin or pat dry. Store in sealed containers or plastic bags with a dry paper towel to absorb any excess moisture.

## **MYTH: WHITE-COLORED FOODS AREN'T HEALTHY.**

White fruits and vegetables, such as banana, cauliflower, garlic, Jerusalem artichoke, mushroom, onion, potato and parsnip, provide many of the same nutrients as their more colorful cousins. You can enjoy a variety of colored fruits and vegetables in a balanced diet. Bananas and potatoes can provide potassium, an important nutrient that lessens the impact of sodium in the diet and is typically not eaten in high enough quantities by Americans.

## **MYTH: FRUITS AND VEGETABLES CAN ONLY BE GROWN IN A GARDEN AND IN PLACES WITH A LOT OF SPACE.**

Gardening is a great way to get kids to try new things while learning how produce grows. You can also grow fresh herbs to use in cooking. If your space is limited, you can garden in a container on the patio or your window sill. You can grow many fruits, vegetables and herbs in pots, such as cherry tomatoes, spinach, lettuce, radish, eggplant, thyme, sage and parsley.

## **MYTH: I'M TRYING TO MANAGE MY WEIGHT, AND CUTTING CALORIES WILL MAKE IT HARD FOR ME TO GET THE DAILY RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES.**

It's true that weight loss involves eating fewer calories than your body uses each day. The water and fiber in fruits and vegetables will add volume to your plate without adding a lot of calories. You can lighten up any meal by adding fruits and vegetables and cutting back on higher-calorie foods. Add more fruit and less cereal to your breakfast bowl, or make that daily sandwich into a salad with more vegetables and less meat. Enjoy fruits and vegetables as lower-calorie snacks, too. Whole fruits are easy to take along when you're on the go, so you can eat well even on the busiest days.

**MYTH: FOR PROPER DIGESTION, IT'S BEST TO EAT FRUIT ON AN EMPTY STOMACH, NOT AS A SNACK OR AT THE END OF A MEAL.**

There are some confusing myths about when it's best to eat fruit. Do you get more nutrients when eating fruit on an empty stomach? If you eat fruit after a meal, can it cause weight gain? The most important thing is to consume the daily recommended intake of 4-5 servings. Your body's digestive processes allow you to get the beneficial minerals, nutrients and energy from fruits and vegetables regardless of when they're consumed. Because fruits and vegetables are sources of fiber and are low in calories and saturated fat, they can help you feel full when your stomach is empty and stay fuller longer when eaten alongside a meal. Try to fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables, or grab fruits and pre-cut or no-cut veggies for convenient snacking. If you find yourself still not quite full after a meal, fruit is a nutritious way to control your hunger. And when your sweet tooth strikes, fruit is a healthier choice than candy or dessert.

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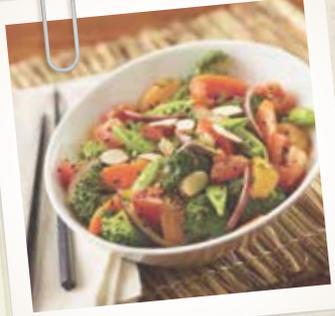


# RECIPES

Cooking at home is an affordable and enjoyable way to be sure your family gets their recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Try one of these easy recipes!

## ASIAN MARINATED VEGETABLE SALAD

Makes 4 servings  
About \$2.10 per serving



### Citrus Vinaigrette Ingredients

- 1/2 cup 100% orange juice (no added sugar) or juice from 2 medium oranges
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro or 2 tablespoons dried cilantro
- 1 tablespoon lime juice fresh or bottled
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger or 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

### DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients in blender and process until smooth, set aside and chill. If using dried cilantro and ginger, you can whisk in a bowl.

### Vegetable Salad Ingredients

- 1 cup sugar snap peas
- 1 cup broccoli, cut into small, bite-size pieces
- 3 medium carrots, cut into thin 1/2 inch pieces
- 3/4 small red onion, cut into very thin strips
- 1 medium tomato, diced or 1 (14.5 oz.) can no-salt-added diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 medium orange, peeled and diced (can substitute canned mandarin oranges in lite syrup or own juice; drain and rinse)
- 2 tablespoons chopped unsalted almonds or walnuts
- 1 teaspoon sesame seeds (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

Toss ingredients with 3/4 cup of Citrus Vinaigrette and chill for at least 4 hours.

Enjoy colorful recipes from  
our National Recipe Host



Per serving:  
Calories 137  
Total Fat 5.5 g  
Saturated Fat 0.5 g  
Trans Fat 0.0 g  
Polyunsaturated Fat 1.0 g  
Monounsaturated Fat 3.5 g  
Cholesterol 0 mg  
Sodium 90 mg  
Carbohydrates 21 g  
Dietary Fiber 4 g  
Total Sugars 13 g  
Protein 3 g



## SPAGHETTI-SQUASH SPAGHETTI

Makes 4 servings

About \$2.63 per serving

### Ingredients

1 (3 lb.) spaghetti squash

Cooking spray

1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil

1 garlic clove or 1 teaspoon jarred garlic, minced

1/2 small onion, chopped

1 cup tomatoes, diced or 1 (8 oz.) can no-salt-added diced tomatoes

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1/4 teaspoon dried salt-free Italian herbs blend

1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

2 (8 oz.) cans no-salt-added tomato sauce

1/2 cup small "bite size" fresh mozzarella balls (can substitute fresh mozzarella cut into bite-size pieces)

1/4 cup fresh basil, roughly chopped or torn or 1 tsp. dried

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Cut spaghetti squash in half. On a baking sheet coated with cooking spray, place halves of squash face down and bake for 1 hour or until tender.
3. Heat oil in medium saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic and onion and cook until soft, about 5-7 minutes. Add diced tomatoes, pepper, herbs and red pepper flakes. Cook until liquid is evaporated, about 2-3 minutes. Add tomato sauce and reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Let squash sit at room temperature until just cool enough to handle. Take a fork and scrape flesh from outside working in, creating "spaghetti noodles."
5. Add squash "noodles" to sauce and remove from heat. Toss with mozzarella balls and fresh basil and serve.

Get the kids involved: Scraping the spaghetti squash to make "noodles" and tossing all the ingredients together are safe and fun steps to involve kids in this recipe!

Enjoy colorful recipes from  
our National Recipe Host



Per serving:  
Calories 172  
Total Fat 6.5 g  
Saturated Fat 2.5 g  
Trans Fat 0.0 g  
Polyunsaturated Fat 1.0 g  
Monounsaturated Fat 2.0 g  
Cholesterol 10 mg  
Sodium 64 mg  
Carbohydrates 27 g  
Dietary Fiber 6 g  
Total Sugars 13 g  
Protein 6 g

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# KIDS' ZONE



## Fun Facts Monthly Calendar

Got the broccoli blues? Bored with bananas? The good news is there are many different fruits and vegetables that can help you get the recommended daily amount. Use this calendar to try new fruits and vegetables every month. Talk with your family and come up with your own ideas to add!

	FRUITS	VEGETABLES	FUN FACT AND TIP
<b>January</b>	Kiwifruit Pear	Celery Spinach	Kiwifruit was named by the people of New Zealand after their national bird the kiwi. Try adding kiwifruit to fruit salad.
<b>February</b>	Orange Tangerine	Carrot Turnip	Turnips were carved and used as lanterns before pumpkins became the Halloween tradition. Try adding turnips and carrots for a new take on mashed potatoes.
<b>March</b>	Apricot Avocado	Corn Swiss Chard	The avocado is actually a large berry and is sometimes called an alligator pear. Add avocado slices to your sandwich, or scoop it right out of the peel with a spoon!
<b>April</b>	Banana Mango	Asparagus Snow Pea	A less sweet type of banana often used in cooking is called a plantain. Make fruit kabobs with bananas, mangos and your other favorite fruits.
<b>May</b>	Honeydew Melon Strawberry	Artichoke Green Bean	The average strawberry has more than 200 seeds. Add strawberries to a salad for a hint of sweetness.
<b>June</b>	Blackberry Watermelon	Cucumber Summer Squash	Squash is actually a fruit, not a vegetable, because it contains the seeds of the plant. Try growing summer squash in your garden.
<b>July</b>	Cantaloupe Plum	Sugar Snap Pea Tomato	Tomatoes are eaten more than any other fruit or vegetable in the United States. Tiny cherry or grape tomatoes are a fun and delicious snack.
<b>August</b>	Cherry Peach	Okra Zucchini	Peaches are botanically related to almonds. They both make a great addition to whole-grain cereal or oatmeal.
<b>September</b>	Pineapple Pomegranate	Bell Pepper Butternut Squash	The pineapple got its name because it looked like a pine cone. Make a healthy pineapple salsa to serve with fish or chicken.
<b>October</b>	Apple Grape	Brussel Sprouts Cauliflower	Brussels sprouts are named for the capital of Belgium. Try roasted Brussels sprouts chips for a healthy, crunchy snack.
<b>November</b>	Cranberry Pear	Broccoli Cabbage	Not all pears are pear-shaped; some types look more like apples. Add sliced pears to sandwiches and salads.
<b>December</b>	Clementine Grapefruit	Kale Sweet Potato	A sweet potato is not a potato at all; it's more closely related to a carrot. Try baked sweet potato fries for a healthy side dish.

## Fruit and Veggie Challenge

Keep track and see how many fruits and veggies you're eating. If you're not meeting the recommended daily amounts, try to improve your record or challenge your family to a weekly competition! Make copies of this chart and use it to track your success by listing the fruits and veggies you eat each day.

WEEK: _____	FRUITS	VEGETABLES
	Goal: at least 4 each day	Goal: at least 4 each day
<b>Monday</b>	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
<b>Tuesday</b>	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
<b>Wednesday</b>	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
<b>Thursday</b>	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
<b>Friday</b>	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
<b>Saturday</b>	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
<b>Sunday</b>	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
<b>WEEKLY TOTALS:</b>	_____ FRUITS	_____ VEGETABLES



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