

A Taste of



Kentucky

Recipes for Farmers' Market Fruits & Vegetables

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Introduction

Farm fresh foods taste good and they are better for you. Why? Because, fresh fruits and vegetables contain more vitamins and minerals. The WIC Program and the Cooperative Extension Office have worked to provide your family with some simple recipes and give you tips on how to select and store them. This can help you get the most out of your WIC Farmers' Market coupons.

It is important to eat a variety of colors everyday. The more colors you eat, the more vitamins and minerals you get! The way to a healthy and happy family is to give them a variety of foods to choose from everyday. Use these recipes to help you get more of the foods you need.

Try something new the next time you visit your local Farmers' Market. The market offers a variety of fruits and vegetables. Take your child and let them choose a fruit or vegetable. Children are more willing to try new foods if they select the food. Going to the Farmers' Market is also a great opportunity to learn more about where foods come from and how they are grown. It can be a great adventure for the whole family!



Fresh is Best

Appearance and texture are important when selecting fresh produce. High-quality, fresh vegetables are young and brightly colored. Vegetables are low in calories, fat, and sodium. A diet rich in vegetables can help prevent obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.



Daily Recommendations		
	Age	Daily Intake
Children	2-3	1 - 1 ½ cups
	4-8	1 ½ - 2 ½ cups
Girls	9-13	1 ½ - 3 cups
	14-18	2 ½ - 3 cups
Boys	9-13	2 - 3 ½ cups
	14-18	2 ½ - 4 cups
Women	19-50	2 ½ - 3 cups
	51+	2 - 3 cups
Men	19-50	3 - 4 cups
	51+	2 ½ - 3 ½ cups

<u>Nutrition Facts</u>	
Vegetables provide important vitamins and mineral such as:	
◆	Vitamin A, which helps keep our skin and eyes healthy
◆	Vitamin C, which helps keep our blood vessels healthy
◆	B-vitamins that help us use energy from food, regulates our appetite and digestion
◆	Iron, calcium, and fiber

Save those Vitamins!

How you store, prepare, and cook vegetables can make a difference. Vitamin C and the B-vitamins are easily lost.

◆ **Store**

- vegetables whole
- refrigerate most vegetables in the crisper
- keep onions, potatoes, and squash in a cool, dry place

◆ **Prepare**

- close to mealtime
- trim bruised and wilted leaves and tough stems
- leave the skins on or thinly peel
- wash quickly; do not soak
- cut into larger pieces
- serve raw

◆ **Cook**

- just until done
- over-cooking and high
- temperatures destroy vitamins
- use little water
- steam, grill, or bake

◆ **Preservation**

- most vegetables can be easily frozen
- high acid vegetables (such as tomatoes and pickled items) can be canned with boiling
- water bath process
- other vegetables require pressure canning process
- drying vegetables is another way to preserve vegetables for later use

Kentucky Apples

Season: Early summer through December



Nutrition Facts: A medium size apple, about 2 to 2 1/2 inches round, has about 75 calories and provides bulk in the diet, which helps the body digest food. The apple is low in sodium and high in potassium, making it a great natural snack.

Selection: Look for firm, crisp, well-colored fruit. Avoid those with shriveled skins, bruises, worm holes, and decayed spots. Always handle apples gently to avoid causing bruises, blemishes, or other defects.

Storage: Use those with bruises of skin breaks as soon as possible. Apples that are slightly under-ripe should be stored in a cool place to ripen. Once ripe, apples will keep best stored in the refrigerator for a week or longer in the vegetable drawer or in a plastic bag.

Preparation: Raw apples will darken when the cut surface is exposed to the air. Protect cut or peeled apples from darkening by mixing with ascorbic acid or fruit juice, such as lemon or orange. Only work with about five apples at a time to prevent darkening. Mix 1 teaspoon ascorbic acid with 3 tablespoons of water. Toss gently with apple slices. Apples may be preserved by several methods: freezing, drying, or canning.

Variations: More than 2,500 varieties are found in the United States. The following are a few of the kinds that are easily available and popular in Kentucky: Lodi, Red Delicious, Rome, Winesap, Gala, Jonathan, Cortland, and Golden Delicious.

Please contact your County Extension Office for more information.

Apple Betty

4 cups sliced apples
1/4 cup apple juice
3/4 cup flour
1 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
2 tablespoons butter or margarine

Placed sliced apples in a lightly greased pie pan. Pour fruit juice over apples. Mix flour, sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg in a mixing bowl. Cut in butter or margarine with two knives until mixture is crumbly. Pour crumb mixture over apples. Bake at 375° F for 45 minutes or until apples are tender.

Yield: Eight 6-ounce servings
Nutritional Analysis: 220 calories, 2.5 g fat, 1 g protein, 51 g carbohydrate, 0 mg cholesterol, 35 mg sodium.

Apple Salad

2 cups diced apples (with peel)
1 cup diced celery
1/2 cup raisins
1/2 cup nuts
2 tablespoons salad dressing or
mayonnaise (thinned with 1
tablespoon lemon or orange juice)

Toss apples, celery, raisins, & nuts with the dressing mixture.

Yield: Eight 1/2-cup servings
Nutritional Analysis: 110 calories, 6 g fat, 1 g protein, 15 g carbohydrate, 0 mg cholesterol, 35 mg sodium.

Kentucky Asparagus



Asparagus Quiche

Season: April through May.

Nutrition Facts: Asparagus is a good source of Vitamin A and folate. One-half cup of fresh, steamed asparagus has 22 calories, 2 grams protein, and 4 grams carbohydrate.

Selection: Choose bright green stalks with tightly closed tips. The most tender stalks are apple green in color with purple-tinged tips.

Storage: Fresh asparagus will keep 1 to 2 weeks in the refrigerator. Refrigerate upright with stem ends in water or with cut ends wrapped in wet paper towels in a plastic bag.

Preparation: One pound of asparagus will yield 4 half-cup servings, about 6 spears per serving. Wash asparagus thoroughly in cool, running water. Eat asparagus raw or lightly boil, steam, or stir-fry it. Try seasoning it with herbs, butter, or Parmesan cheese.

9-inch pastry shell

6 slices of bacon, cooked crisply

2 cups cooked asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces

1 cup Swiss cheese, shredded

1 cup low-fat milk

3 eggs, lightly beaten

¼ teaspoon nutmeg

Dash of pepper

1 teaspoon dried tarragon

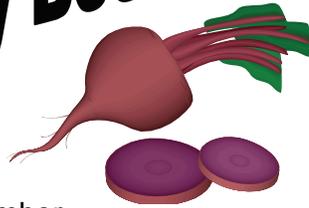
½ teaspoon salt

Prick pastry shell with fork and bake in preheated 450° F oven for 17 minutes. Cool. Layer crumbled bacon, asparagus, and cheese in a pie shell. In a bowl, mix low-fat milk, eggs, and seasonings. Pour over cheese. Bake at 350° F for 30 minutes or until set.

Yield: 8 servings

Nutritional Analysis: 240 calories, 15 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 15 g fat, 110 mg cholesterol, 58 mg sodium.

Kentucky Beets



Season: June-November

Nutrition Facts: All beets are good sources of fiber, folate, calcium, and Vitamin C, and they are low in fat. One cup of cooked beets or one medium raw beet contains about 50 calories and 2 grams fiber.

Selection: When selecting beets, choose those that are round, firm, rich in color, and smooth over most of the surface. Wilted or decayed tops may indicate a lack of freshness. Two bunches of beets, or 6 to 8 individual beets, weigh approximately 2 pounds.

Storage: The roots of the beets can be stored in plastic bags for 1 to 2 weeks in the refrigerator. You can also refrigerate the greens in plastic bags and use them within 2 to 3 days. Cooked beets may be stored in the refrigerator for up to a week.

Preparation: Rinse beets under running water removing any visible traces of dirt. To keep the juices of the beets locked inside while cooking, leave the skin, tail, and an inch of the stem attached. The skin will be easier to remove after the beet is cooked.

To bake: Scrub unpeeled beets and place in a baking pan with $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of water and cover. Bake at 375° F for about 40 minutes for a large beet.

To steam: Scrub unpeeled beets and place in a steaming basket. Cover and steam for about 35 to 40 minutes for large beets, 20 to 25 minutes for smaller beets, or until tender.

Summer Beet Salad

6 medium-size beets

1 red onion, sliced

$\frac{1}{2}$ cucumber, sliced

5 tablespoons reduced-fat sour cream or plain yogurt

2 tablespoons reduced-fat mayonnaise

1 tablespoon balsamic or red wine vinegar

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Dijon-style mustard

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon prepared horseradish

2 tablespoons dried dill weed or 3 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt (optional)

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground black pepper

Scrub and remove tops of beets. Boil in water for about 45 minutes or until tender. Drain hot water from pot and refill with cold water. When beets are cooked enough to handle and peel, slice thinly and place in salad bowl. Add onion and cucumber. In a separate bowl, combine sour cream, mayonnaise, vinegar, mustard, horseradish, dill, salt, and pepper. Pour over vegetables and toss to combine. Refrigerate 2 hours or overnight. Serve chilled.

Yield: 6 (1 cup) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 90 calories, 3.5 g fat, 3 g protein, 1 g fiber, 13 g carbohydrate, 250 mg sodium, 10 mg cholesterol.

Kentucky Blueberries



Season: Mid-June through July

Nutrition Facts: A cup of blueberries has 60 calories and provides 22 percent of the Daily Value of fiber (the amount of fiber recommended as part of a standard healthy diet). Blueberries are rich in Vitamin C and contain calcium and iron.

Selection: Blueberries should be plump and firm and have a deep blue-black skin. They should also have a silvery sheen, which is referred to as bloom.

Storage: Cover and refrigerate berries for up to 14 days. Wash them just before using.

Preparation: Berries can be served fresh or used in cooking. Cooking blueberries in batter may cause their color to turn greenish-blue, but change in color does not affect flavor.

To freeze: Sort, wash, and drain. Pack berries in containers, leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Blueberry Sauce

2 cups fresh blueberries

¼ cup orange juice

¼ cup water

2 tablespoons sugar

1 tablespoon cornstarch

¼ teaspoon orange peel, grated

⅛ teaspoon nutmeg

Dash salt

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan. Cook and stir over medium heat 4 to 5 minutes or until thick. Serve on pancakes, waffles, ice cream, pudding, or cake.

Yield: 2 cups

Nutritional Analysis per tablespoon: 10 calories, 2 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat, protein, fiber, cholesterol, sodium.

Kentucky Broccoli



Season: May through early July, October through mid-November

Nutrition Facts: Broccoli is a good source of Vitamin A, Vitamin C, and phytochemicals, all of which have health benefits.

Selection: Choose tender, young, dark green stalks with tightly closed buds. One-and-a-half pounds of broccoli equals 4 half-cup servings.

Storage: Store broccoli, unwashed, for no more than 3 to 5 days in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator. Wash broccoli just before using.

Preparation: Wash broccoli under cold running water. Trim the leaves and peel the stalk.

To steam: Place on a rack above boiling water and steam for 6 to 8 minutes. Drain and rinse with cold water.

To boil: Place in a saucepan with 1 inch of boiling water and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt. Cook for 5 minutes, then cover and cook for 10 to 15 minutes more. Drain and rinse in cold water.

To microwave: Place broccoli in a microwave-safe dish. Add 1 inch of water and cover with a glass lid or plastic wrap. Microwave for 3 to 4 minutes or until crisp-tender. Remove and rinse with cold water.

Broccoli Salad Supreme

- 4 cups raw broccoli, chopped
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup green onions, chopped
- 4 slices bacon, fried crisp and crumbled
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup slivered almonds, toasted
- 1 cup seedless green grapes
- 1 cup seedless red grapes
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar
- 1 cup reduced fat mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon vinegar

Toss together the vegetables, bacon, almonds, and grapes. Mix the sugar, mayonnaise, and vinegar to make a dressing. Pour the dressing over the mixture and stir gently to allow it to coat the ingredients evenly. Refrigerate overnight or as time allows.

Yield: 14 servings

Nutritional Analysis: 100 calories, 3 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber, 6 g fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 210 mg sodium.

Kentucky Cabbage



Season: June through July and September through November

Nutrition Facts: Cabbage is low in fat and calories and rich in Vitamin A.

Selection: Leaves should be crisp and free of insects and decay. Avoid burst heads.

Storage: Cover loosely and store in refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Wash just before using.

Preparation: To boil: Do not use an aluminum pan. Cut cabbage into quarters and boil in water for 10 to 15 minutes until tender. Drain and serve hot.

To steam: Place cabbage (shredded, wedges, or whole leaves) into steamer basket. Cook for 12 to 15 minutes, until tender. To bring out natural flavor, add apples, pears, raisins, curry, caraway, dill, or onions.

Cabbage Au Gratin

4 cups cabbage, shredded
4 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
1 ½ tablespoons all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup milk
1 cup Cheddar cheese, shredded
1 cup soft bread crumbs

Boil cabbage in water (enough to cover) for 5 minutes; drain. Make white sauce by combining 2 tablespoons melted butter, flour, and salt in a saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until bubbly. Gradually add milk. Cook, stirring constantly, until smooth and thick. Alternate layers of cabbage, cheese, and white sauce in a greased 1 ½-quart casserole dish. Combine bread crumbs and 2 tablespoons melted butter. Sprinkle crumb mixture over casserole. Bake at 350° F for 25 minutes.

Yield: 8 servings

Nutritional Analysis: 190 calories, 7 g protein, 15 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 11 g fat, 20 mg cholesterol, 440 mg sodium.

Cole Slaw

1 small head cabbage, shredded
3 medium carrots, shredded
1 cup mayonnaise
⅓ cup sugar
¼ cup cider vinegar

In a large bowl, combine cabbage and carrots. In a small bowl, combine mayonnaise, sugar, and vinegar. Pour over cabbage mixture and toss to coat.

Yield: 10 servings

Nutritional Analysis: 130 calories, 1 g protein, 17g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 7 g fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 170 mg sodium.

Kentucky Corn



Season: July through August

Nutrition Facts: Corn is low in fat and a good source of fiber and B vitamins.

Selection: Look for ears with green shucks, moist stems, and silk ends that are free of decay. Kernels should be small, tender, plump, and milky when pierced, and they should fill up all the spaces in the rows.

Storage: Keep unshucked fresh corn in the refrigerator until ready to use, wrapped in damp paper towels and placed in a plastic bag. Typical shelf life is 4 to 6 days.

Preparation: To steam: Remove shucks and silks. Trim stem ends. Stand ears in a tall pot with 1 inch of water. Cover with a tight-fitting lid and steam the corn for 5 minutes.

To microwave: Place ears of corn, still in shucks, in a single layer in the microwave. Microwave on high for 2 minutes, turning the ears halfway through cooking time. Allow corn to rest several minutes before removing the shucks and silks.

To boil: Remove shucks and silks. Trim stem ends. Carefully place ears in large pot of boiling water. Cook 2 to 4 minutes, or until the kernels are tender.

To grill: Turn back the inner shucks and remove the silks. Sprinkle each ear with 2 tablespoons of water and nonfat seasonings such as salt, pepper, and herbs. Replace shucks and tie them shut. Place ears on a hot grill for 20 to 30 minutes, turning them often.

Corn and Bacon Spoonbread

¼ cup yellow cornmeal

1 ½ cups water

2 cups Cheddar cheese, shredded

1 ½ cups corn, fresh from cob, cooked

¼ cup butter or margarine

1 to 2 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon salt

4 eggs, separate whites and yolks

1 cup milk

10 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled

Combine cornmeal and water. Boil 1 minute or until thickened, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Add cheese, corn, butter, garlic, and salt. Stir until cheese melts. Stir in milk. Beat egg yolks until thick and lemon-colored. Add bacon. Stir into cornmeal mixture. Beat egg whites until stiff but not dry. Gently fold into the cornmeal mixture. Pour into lightly greased 2 ½-quart casserole dish. Bake at 325° F for 1 hour or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

Yield: 12 servings

Nutritional Analysis: 180 calories, 8 g protein, 9 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 12 g fat, 95 mg cholesterol, 390 mg sodium.

Kentucky Cherries

Season: June

Nutrition Facts: Cherries are a great source of fiber, Vitamins A and C, and potassium. Cherries also contain high amounts of phytochemicals, which may help to prevent cancer. Cherries are naturally free of fat, cholesterol, and sodium.

Selection: Fresh sour cherries are small and should be firm, bright, and red. Choose sweet cherries that are firm, plump, bright, and glossy, with full red or purple color.

Storage: Cherries should be stored loosely in a shallow container covered with plastic wrap and refrigerated for 3 to 5 days. Avoid storing cherries near strong-smelling foods, as they tend to absorb odors. Wash cherries just before using.

Preparation: Rinse cherries under cold water and drain. To pit cherries, cut them in half with a paring knife and pry the pit out with the tip of the knife, or use a cherry pitter utensil (purchased from kitchenware or home supplies shop). One pound of fresh cherries yields approximately 2 cups of pitted cherries. Sweet cherries can be added to salads, cakes, cookies, ice cream, or sauces. Use tart cherries for cobblers, pies, or other desserts.



Fresh Cherry Smoothie

1 cup pitted sour or tart cherries

1 cup low-fat vanilla or plain yogurt

1 ripe banana, peeled

½ cup crushed ice

Combine ingredients in an electric blender. Blend until smooth and serve immediately.

Yield: 2 (1 ½ cup) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 150 calories, 0 g fat, 5 g protein, 34 g carbohydrate, 5 mg cholesterol, 65 mg sodium

Kentucky Cucumber



Season: June-September

Selection: Choose firm, fully green cucumbers with no yellowing or soft spots. Slicing cucumbers, suitable for eating, are 6 to 9 inches long with small, white spines on the surface that rub off easily. Pickling cucumbers have small, black spines on the surface.

Storage: Store unwashed cucumbers in the refrigerator for up to a week. Sliced cucumbers should be tightly wrapped and refrigerated up to 3 days.

Preparation: Wash under cool, running water to remove visible dirt. Slice. You may want to remove the seeds in mature cucumbers lengthwise and scooping seeds from the center.

For pickling: Follow recipe instructions. Four pounds of cucumbers yield 5 to 6 pints of pickles.

Dilled Cucumber Salad

2 peeled and seeded cucumbers,
diagonally sliced

2 tablespoons sugar

¼ cup apple cider vinegar

Salt, to taste (optional)

2 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped

Place the cucumbers in a bowl. In a small bowl, stir the sugar, salt, and vinegar together until sugar is dissolved. Toss with the cucumbers. Add the pepper and dill. Serve immediately or store covered in the refrigerator for up to 4 hours.

Yield: 8 (¼-cup) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 19 calories, 5 g carbohydrates, 1 g fat, 76 mg sodium.

Kentucky Eggplant



Season: Late June to October

Nutrition Facts: Eggplant contains small amounts of several important vitamins that are needed daily. It is very low in sodium and calories, with only 15 calories for a ½-cup serving.

Selection: Firm, heavy eggplant with smooth, shiny, deep purple skin. Choose medium size, about 3 to 4 inches in diameter.

Storage: Store as soon as possible in the vegetable compartment of refrigerator. Use within one week of purchase.

Preparation: Eggplant is a versatile vegetable and can be baked, broiled, grilled, fried, stuffed, or used in a variety of casseroles in combination with other vegetables. It works well with tomatoes, garlic, onions, and cheese. One pound equals 3 cups diced.

Eggplant should be peeled before preparation, unless it is very young and tender.

To oven fry: Peel and cut into ¾-inch slices. Coat slices with seasoned flour or bread crumbs. Place in oven at 350° F for 20 minutes.

To broil or grill: Cut into ¾-inch slices and brush with margarine or Italian dressing. Broil or grill for about 5 minutes on each side until eggplant is tender and browned. Remove from heat and sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese.

To pan fry: Wash and cut into cubes just before cooking as eggplant will discolor quickly. Coat slices with seasoned flour or bread crumbs. Place slices in a non-stick skillet coated with vegetable spray. Gently cook on both sides. Eggplant will be crispy on the outside and tender on the inside.

To season: Use marjoram, oregano, allspice, chili powder, curry powder, garlic, or rosemary.

Eggplant Parmesan

¼ cup milk

1 egg

1 cup bread crumbs

½ cup Romano cheese

1 large eggplant, peeled and sliced
into ¾-inch pieces

1 cup mozzarella cheese,
shredded

1 jar (15 oz.) prepared spaghetti
sauce

¾ cup Parmesan cheese

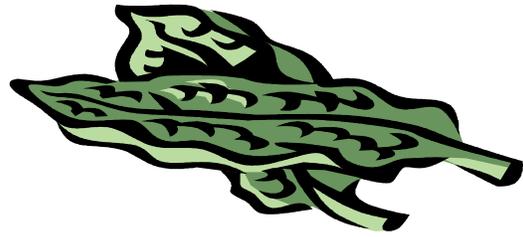
Combine milk and egg. Beat together. In another bowl, combine bread crumbs and Romano cheese. Dip eggplant slices in the milk mixture and roll in bread crumbs to coat. Brown slices in a non-stick skillet coated with vegetable spray.

In a greased 2-quart baking dish, alternate layers of eggplant, spaghetti sauce, and mozzarella cheese, beginning with a layer of eggplant and ending with sauce. Bake a 350° F for 35 minutes. Remove and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Yield: 6 (1-cup) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 310 calories, 18 g protein, 26 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 13 g fat, 65 mg cholesterol, 900 mg sodium

Kentucky Greens



Season: May through June and September through November

Nutrition Facts: Greens are a source of Vitamins A and C. A half-cup serving contains 20 percent of calcium needed daily, and greens are low in calories (20 to 30 calories per half-cup serving).

Selection: Look for bright green leaves that are fresh, young, moist, and tender.

Storage: Store greens in the coldest part of the refrigerator for no more than 2 to 3 days.

Preparation: Wash greens well in luke-warm water. Remove roots, rough ribs, and center stalks if they are large or fibrous.

To cook: Add washed greens to a medium-size saucepan with $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch water. Bring water to a boil. Cover and cook until tender. Leafy greens cook in 1 to 3 minutes. Crisp and tender greens may require 5 to 10 minutes. Seasonings and herbs will enhance the flavor without adding salt. Try allspice, lemon, onion, nutmeg, or vinegar.

To freeze: Wash young, tender green leaves thoroughly and cut off woody stems. Bland greens for 2 to 3 minutes, cool, drain, and package. Leave $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch head-space, seal, label, and freeze. Greens can be stored for up to 1 year.

Pasta with Spinach and Chicken

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken

breast, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch strips

2 tablespoons olive oil

4 cloves garlic, minced

1 medium onion, chopped

2 (14.5 oz.) cans diced tomatoes with herbs

$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon nutmeg

8 oz fresh spinach

1-16 oz box pasta, cooked

Cook the chicken in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat for 5 to 7 minutes or until done.

Remove and keep warm. Add oil. Cook garlic and onion in the oil about 3 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and nutmeg and continue to cook about 10 minutes over medium heat. Add spinach and stir just until leaves have wilted.

Toss tomato-spinach mixture with chicken and pasta until blended.

Yield: 6 (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 340 calories, 22 g protein, 36 g carbohydrates, 3 g fiber, 12 g fat, 50 mg cholesterol, 600 mg sodium.

Kentucky Green Beans



Season: June through September

Nutrition Facts: One-half cup of unseasoned green beans has 15 calories; is low in sodium; and provides fiber, Vitamin A, and potassium.

Selection: Choose slender, firm, smooth, crisp beans with slightly velvety pods and a bright color. Beans should be free of blemishes and have small seeds.

Storage: Beans can be stored unwashed in plastic bags in the refrigerator crisper for 3 to 5 days. Wash just before preparation.

Preparation: Wash well and remove stems and strings. Cook by steaming in a small amount of water, until tender-crisp, about 5 to 8 minutes. They can be cooked directly in soups or stews. They also go well with seasonings, such as chives, dill, marjoram, mint, oregano, thyme, lemon, mustard, or onion.

Freezing: Allow $\frac{2}{3}$ to 1 pound fresh beans for 1 pint frozen. Wash thoroughly. Remove and discard end and strings. Cut or break beans into 1 or 2 inch pieces. Place beans in boiling water for 3 minutes. Plunge the heated beans into cold water. When cooled, remove beans and drain well. Pack beans into freezer bags or containers. Leave $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch headspace. Seal and place in the freezer. Use within 12 months.

Garlic Green Beans

2 pounds fresh green beans,
washed and trimmed

3 tablespoons vegetable oil

3 tablespoons vinegar

1 clove garlic, minced

Pepper, to taste

Cook beans by steaming for 5 minutes. Drain beans. Combine oil, vinegar, garlic, and pepper in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Place lid on jar and shake until well blended. Pour over drained beans and toss.

Yield: 8 ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 80 calories, 1 g protein, 7 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 5 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 0 mg sodium

Kentucky Green Peppers



Season: June through the first frost, usually September

Nutrition Facts: Sweet peppers are low in calories, high in Vitamin C, and a good source of Vitamin A. One raw, medium-sized pepper contains about 20 calories. Red peppers are higher in both Vitamins C and A than green peppers.

Storage: Store in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days. Place them in the vegetable crisper or in plastic bags.

Preparation: To prepare peppers, wash carefully without bruising.

Stuffing: Peppers frequently are stuffed with vegetable or meat filling. Before stuffing, parboil for 3 to 5 minutes in boiling water. Remove the top of the pepper by cutting a thin slice at the stem. Remove seeds and membrane. After boiling, invert and drain before filling.

Raw: Slice into rings or strips

Grilled: To grill peppers, quarter them and remove the seeds. Brush with oil and place on a hot grill for 10 minutes.

Roasting: You can use a grill or broiler or hold peppers by tongs over an open flame. Turn the peppers by tongs over an open flame. Turn the peppers as they cook until they are blackened all over. Place them in a plastic bag and close tightly to let them "sweat" for 15 minutes. Open the bag; cut a slice down one side of each pepper and remove the seeds, membrane, and stems. Pull off the skin.

Pepper Steak

1 pound beef top round steak
2 teaspoons cornstarch
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons soy sauce
¼ cup water
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 clove garlic, minced
2 cups bell peppers, sliced

Partially freeze beef. Slice thin into bite-size pieces. In a small bowl, mix cornstarch, salt, and pepper. Blend in soy sauce and ¼ cup water. Set aside. Preheat large skillet over high heat. Add oil. Stir-fry garlic in hot oil for 30 seconds. Add peppers and stir-fry for 1 minute. Remove from pan and set aside. Add the beef to skillet and stir-fry for 2 to 3 minutes until browned. Add stirred soy mixture to beef. Cook until it is thickened and bubbly, stirring constantly. Return peppers, covers and cook for 1 minute. Serve over cooked rice.

Yield: 4 (1 cup) servings
Nutritional Analysis: 310 calories, 42 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 12 g fat, 1 mg cholesterol, 5 mg sodium

Fiesta Grilled Peppers

6 assorted sweet bell or hot peppers
1 to 2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Wash and quarter peppers, removing the seeds. Brush each pepper with vegetable oil. Place peppers on grill over medium hot coals. Grill about 10 minutes or until peppers are crisp-tender and slightly charred.

Yield: ½ cup
Nutritional Analysis: 50 calories, 1 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 3 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 0 mg sodium

Kentucky Lima Beans



Season: June-September

Nutrition Facts: Lima beans are a good source of fiber, B vitamins, magnesium, potassium, and phytochemicals, including saponin and coumestrol. One-half cup cooked lima beans contains 108 calories, 7 grams protein, 6 grams fiber, 0 grams fat, and 19 grams carbohydrate.

Selection: Choose full, firm, green, crisp pods free from blemishes. Three pounds of unshelled beans will yield 4 half-cup servings.

Storage: Fresh lima beans can be stored in plastic bags in the refrigerator for up to a week. Beans should be shelled just before use.

Preparation: To shell the beans, use a paring knife to cut just under the inner seam along the length of the pod. Open the pod, remove the beans, and discard the pods.

Cook fresh lima beans in a saucepan with just enough water to cover the beans. Cook for 10 to 15 minutes or until tender. Onion and a small amount of minced garlic sautéed in olive oil may be added for extra flavoring.

To make succotash, cook the lima beans and add fresh or frozen corn; cook until tender.

Spanish Lima Beans

1 tablespoon butter or margarine
1 tablespoon chopped onion
1/3 cup chopped green pepper
1 cup cooked or canned tomatoes
1 1/2 cups cooked lima beans
1/4 cup dry bread crumbs
1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper

Brown the onion and green pepper in the margarine in a non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add the lima beans, cooked tomatoes, salt, and pepper. Heat thoroughly. Pour into a serving dish and top with the bread crumbs.

Yield: 6 (1/2 cup) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 110 calories, 5 g protein, 4 g fiber, 2.5 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 160 mg sodium

Broccoli-Lima Bean Bake

2 1/2 cups fresh lima beans
2 1/2 cups fresh broccoli
1 package dry onion soup mix
8 ounces reduced-fat sour cream
1 can (10 3/4 oz) cream of mushroom soup
1 can (4 oz) sliced water chestnuts
3 cups crisp cereal (like Rice Krispies)
2 tablespoons margarine

Cook lima beans and broccoli in separate pans in 1/2 cup of water for 15 minutes over medium heat. Drain. Combine onion soup mix, sour cream, mushroom soup, and water chestnuts. Stir in limas and broccoli. Place in greased 9" x 13" baking dish. Melt margarine and stir in cereal. Spread cereal mixture on top. Bake at 350° F for 30 minutes or until brown.

Yield: 15 (1/2 cup) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 140 calories, 3 g fiber, 6 g fat, 5 g protein, 18 g carbohydrate, 7 mg cholesterol, 604 mg sodium.

Kentucky Melons

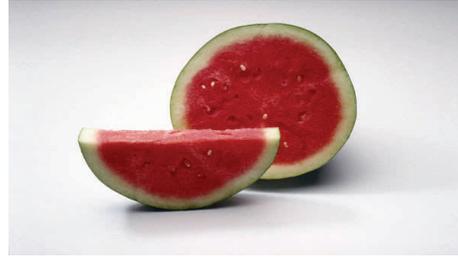
Season: July to September

Cantaloupe: Also known as “muskmelon” because most varieties have a musk smell. Cantaloupes will have a green to tan netted rind and a sweet, light orange-colored flesh. They are high in Vitamin C (one serving provides 100%) and Vitamin A (80%). They are also a good source of potassium and folic acid with only 50 calories and 0 grams fat for a 1-cup serving.

Honeydew Melon: This popular melon has a rind that is smooth and creamy white with a green cast. The pale green flesh has a sweet, juicy flavor and a crisp texture. It is a good source of Vitamin C and contains only about 60 calories per 1-cup serving.

Selection: Choose both cantaloupe and honeydew melons that have a slight give when squeezed and a sweet, delicate scent. Keep under-ripe melons at room temperature for 2 to 3 days. Refrigerate cut melons in plastic bags for up to 1 week.

Preparation: Rinse the outside of the melon before cutting. Cut melon in half and remove the seeds by scraping them out with a spoon. If you are using only part of the melon, leave the seeds in the unused piece, wrap well, and refrigerate 2 to 3 days. Melon halves and quarters make attractive serving bowls. Fill with berries and granola and top with a dollop of yogurt.



Watermelon Smoothie

1 8-oz lemon-flavored, fat-free yogurt
3 cups cubed, seeded watermelon
1 pint fresh strawberries, cleaned and hulled
1 tablespoon honey or strawberry jam
3 ice cubes

Combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor. Process until smooth and frothy. Serve in tall glasses with a straw.

Yield: Four (9 oz) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 130 calories, 4 g protein, 2 g fiber, 28 g carbohydrates, 1 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 45 mg sodium.

Watermelon: Watermelons are low in calories (92 calories for one $\frac{2}{3}$ cup serving) and very nutritious. They are high in lycopene, a powerful antioxidant. They are also high in Vitamins C and A, as well as potassium. Choose melons with a well-rounded shape and smooth surface. The underside should be creamy yellow. The flesh should be deep red with mature, dark seeds. Cut melon should be stored in the refrigerator and covered with plastic for 2 to 3 days. Uncut melon will keep in a cool place for up to 2 weeks. Melons should be rinsed with water before cutting. The flavor of a watermelon is best when served cold and raw. Also look for yellow-fleshed and seedless melons.

Kentucky Okra



Season: June through September

Nutritional Facts: Okra is a good source of Vitamin C, folic acid, and soluble fiber, which helps to lower cholesterol, reducing the risk of heart disease. It contains only 20 calories in a ½ cup serving.

Selection: Select pods that are crisp, tender, and small, 2 to 4 inches long. Pods should be free from blemishes. Pods that have passed their prime will have a dull, dry appearance, contain coarse fibers, and taste stringy.

Storage: Refrigerate unwashed, dry okra pods in the vegetable crisper, loosely wrapped in perforated plastic bags. Okra will keep for only 2 to 3 days before it starts to deteriorate.

Preparation: Wash okra pods before cooking. Cut off stem end. Leave small pods whole. Cut large pods in ½ inch slices.

Okra exudes a unique juice that will thicken soups and stews. The taste complements tomatoes, onions, corn, and fish stock. It is mostly breaded and fried or used in gumbo.

Freezing: The best method for long-term storage. Okra must be blanched before freezing to hold the flavor and quality. It will hold in the freezer for one year.

Fried Okra

16 small pods of okra
½ teaspoon salt
¼ cup cornmeal
2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Slice pods of okra crosswise, about ¼ inch thick. Mix salt with the cornmeal in a bowl or a bag. Add okra slices to mixture to coat. Heat oil in a skillet. Fry okra until brown.

Yield: 4 (4-pod) servings
Nutritional Analysis: 100 calories, 2 g protein, 10 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 7 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 290 mg sodium

Okra Scramble

¾ cup cornmeal
4 medium potatoes, cut into ½-inch cubes
5 slices of bacon
¼ cup vegetable oil
2 cups onions, chopped
1 pound okra, cut into 1-inch pieces
2 tomatoes, thickly sliced
½ teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon salt

Place cornmeal in a gallon-size plastic storage bag. Add potatoes and shake to coat. In a large skillet, fry bacon until crisp. Remove and crumble. Add 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil to skillet. Add potatoes and brown for about 10 minutes. Add onions to potatoes and cook an additional 5 minutes.

As the onions and potatoes are cooking, coat the okra in cornmeal. Add okra and one more tablespoon of oil to the skillet, cooking an additional 15 minutes. Coat the tomatoes in the cornmeal and add to the skillet with the remaining oil. Add salt and pepper. Mix gently and cook about 2 minutes until the tomatoes are cooked. Sprinkle with reserved crumbled bacon. Note: Green tomatoes can be substituted for red.

Yield: 8 (1 cup) servings
Nutritional Analysis: 240 calories, 6 g protein, 27 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 13 g fat, 10 mg cholesterol, 150 mg sodium

Kentucky Peaches



Season: July through September

Nutrition Facts: Peaches contain many nutrients but are most important for fiber and Vitamin A. They are low in calories; one 2½-inch peach has about 35 calories.

Selection: The many varieties come with yellow or white flesh. There are “freestones” (flesh separates easily from pit) and “clingstones” (flesh clings to pit). Look for fairly firm to slightly soft fruit with yellow or cream-colored skin. Avoid peaches that are green, shriveled, or bruised.

Storage: Some peaches may need to be stored at room temperature to ripen. Fragrance is an indication of ripeness. Store ripe peaches in the refrigerator and use within 5 days. Handle gently.

Preparation: One pound of fresh peaches will equal about 3 to 4 medium-sized peaches, 2 cups sliced, or 1½ cups pulp or puree. Wash, peel, and cut in half to remove pit. To peel, dip in boiling water for 30 seconds. Cook quickly in cold water and remove peel with a knife. Peaches will darken when exposed to air. To avoid this, dip peaches in lemon juice or ascorbic acid mixture for fruit. Peaches are used for appetizers, garnishes, salads, desserts, baked products, jellies, preserves, and are most delicious eaten fresh.

Cinnamon Peach Crisp

6 cups peach slices (about 3 pounds)
1 cup oatmeal, uncooked
¼ cup firmly packed brown sugar
⅓ cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup margarine, melted
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon nutmeg

Heat oven to 350° F. Place peaches in an 8-inch square baking dish. Combine remaining ingredients, mixing until crumbly. Sprinkle crumb mixture over peaches. Bake for 30 minutes or until peaches are tender and topping is golden brown. Serve with vanilla ice cream or low-fat frozen yogurt.

Yield: 8 (½ cup) servings
Nutritional Analysis: 170 calories, 2 g protein, 28 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 80 mg sodium.

Fruit Salad Favorites

- ◆ Peach halves topped with light cream cheese rolled in chopped nuts.
- ◆ Halved sweet green grapes or cherries in hollow of peach half.
- ◆ Peach halves with light salad dressing in hollow, topped with grated cheese
- ◆ Fresh peach slices, green grapes, and peanuts.

Kentucky Peas



Season: May-June

Nutrition Facts: Green peas are a good source of fiber and low in fat.

Selection: Fresh pea pods should be moist and bright green, and they should feel slightly fuzzy to the touch. Avoid peas that are flat, dark green, wilted, gray-flecked, or scarred. One bushel of green peas in the pod will yield 12 to 15 pints of frozen, shelled peas.

Storage: The sooner fresh peas are eaten after picking, the sweeter the taste. Peas can be refrigerated for up to two days. Store unwashed in a vegetable crisper or a plastic bag. For long-term storage, freezing is recommended.

Preparation: Fresh peas can be eaten raw, steamed, boiled, or cooked in the microwave. To cook peas, remove from the pod; steam or cook in boiling water for 4 to 10 minutes.

Layered Salad

3 cups fresh spinach or lettuce
1 cup cauliflower florets
1 cup fresh green peas, cooked
4 green onions, sliced
½ cup mayonnaise-type salad dressing
½ cup yogurt, plain
1 teaspoon sugar (optional)
2 tablespoons bacon bits (optional)

In a deep bowl, layer fresh spinach or lettuce, cauliflower, peas, and green onions. Mix yogurt, salad dressing, and sugar (optional). Seal top of salad with the salad dressing/yogurt mixture. Sprinkle on optional bacon bits. Toss just before serving.

Yield: 6 (1-cup) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 102 calories, 4 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 6 g fat, 10 mg cholesterol, 242 mg sodium.

Creamed Peas

2 cups fresh shelled green peas*
2 tablespoons finely chopped onion
2 tablespoons margarine
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon salt
1½ cups milk

Heat 1 inch salted water to boiling; add peas. Heat to boiling; reduce heat and cook uncovered for 5 minutes. Cover and cook an additional 3 minutes until tender; drain. Cook onion in margarine in a 2-quart saucepan until tender. Stir in flour, salt, and pepper. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture is bubbly; remove from heat. Stir in milk. Heat to boiling, stirring constantly. Boil and stir 1 minute. Stir in peas gently; heat through.

Yield: 6 (½-cup) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 110 calories, 5 g protein, 14 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 4 g fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 370 mg sodium.

*One 10 ounce package of frozen peas, cooked and drained, or 1 can (16 oz) green peas, drained, can be substituted for the fresh green peas

Kentucky Potatoes

Season: July through October

Nutrition Facts: Potatoes are a good source of Vitamins B and C, potassium, and complex carbohydrates.

Selection: Green potatoes and those containing sprouts can be bad for you. Select firm, unbruised potatoes. For scalloped potatoes, or salads, boiled red or new potatoes are best. For baking, frying, and mashing, choose drier varieties.

Storage: Potatoes should be kept in a cool, humid, dark place that is well ventilated.

Preparation: Scrub potatoes, and peel if desired. Cook peeled potatoes right away, since soaking potatoes in water for more than a few minutes causes vitamin loss. If you cannot cook the potatoes at once, sprinkle them with lemon juice to prevent darkening.

To Boil: Put potatoes in a saucepan and cover with water. Bring them to a boil. Cover the saucepan and cook potatoes over medium heat for 30 minutes.

To Steam: Cut medium-sized potatoes into quarters. Bring 1 inch of water to a boil. Place the potatoes on a rack in the pan. Cover the pan tightly and steam potatoes for 15 to 20 minutes.

To Bake: Scrub potatoes, leaving skin on. Pierce the skin with a fork. Bake at 400° F for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

To Microwave: Scrub potatoes, leaving skin on. Pierce with a fork. Microwave for 4 to 6 minutes for each potato, turning halfway through cooking time. Let stand for 5 minutes.



Vegetable Potato Salad

- 4 medium potatoes, cooked, peeled, and sliced
- 7 ounces whole kernel corn
- ½ cup celery, sliced
- ½ cup carrots, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup radishes, sliced
- ¼ cup green pepper, chopped
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- 1 medium tomato, cut into 8 wedges

Dressing:

- ¾ cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- Dash pepper
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 2 teaspoons prepared mustard

In a small bowl, combine all dressing ingredients and blend well. In large bowl, combine all salad ingredients except tomato wedges. Combine dressing and salad mixture, cover, and refrigerate. When ready to serve, garnish the salad with tomato wedges. Reduced-calorie mayonnaise would cut the fat in this recipe by one-third.

Yield: 10 (½-cup) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 200 calories, 2 g protein, 20 g carbohydrate, 13 g fat, 10 mg cholesterol.

Kentucky Potatoes



Oven-Fried Potatoes

- 2 medium baking potatoes
- 1½ tablespoons oil
- 1 teaspoon salt

Wash and peel potatoes. Cut into large, long strips as you would for French fries. Pat dry with paper towels. Warm the oil in a saucepan and brush into the potato strips, covering all sides. Place strips in a baking dish and bake in a 400° F oven for 30 minutes. Sprinkle with salt.

Yield: 4 servings

Nutritional Analysis: 150 calories, 2 g protein, 2 g fiber, 5 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 590 mg sodium.

Tex-Mex Stuffed Potatoes

- 6 large baking potatoes
- ½ pound lean ground beef
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 can (16 oz) refried beans
- 1 jar (8 oz) salsa
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped green onion
- 2 tablespoons chopped tomato

Bake potatoes at 400° F for 1 hour.

While potatoes are baking, brown ground beef, onion, and garlic in a saucepan. Drain fat; add beans and salsa. Simmer, stirring occasionally for 30 minutes or until thickened. To serve, cut an “X” into the top of each potato. Fluff potato pulp with a fork and spoon beef mixture over each potato. Garnish with sour cream and sprinkle with chopped green onion and tomato.

Yield: 6 servings

Nutritional Analysis: 380 calories, 18 g protein, 8 g fiber, 13 g fat, 35 mg cholesterol, 517 mg sodium.

Kentucky Raspberries and Blackberries

Season: June, July, and August

Varieties: The raspberry, also known as a brambleberry, is a small, round, delightful fruit. Raspberries are available in red, black, yellow, and purple. Other types of brambleberries-blackberries, boysenberries, and dewberries are similar in plant structure and fruit quality to the raspberry, but they are different in berry shape.

Nutrition Facts: All brambleberries are a valuable addition to the diet. They provide fiber and are a good source of potassium and Vitamin C. One cup or raw berries contains 70 calories and no fat. The sweet ripened berry is tasty without added sugar and combines well with other fruits.

Selection and Storage: Look for plump fruit that is uniform in color and appears fresh. Berries should be free of stems or leaves. Avoid fruit that is moldy, crushed, or bruised or that has moisture leaks staining the carton. Store unwashed and covered berries in the refrigerator. Use within two days.

Preparation: Handle all berries gently. Raspberries are more delicate and perishable than other brambleberries. Wash berries by covering them with water and gently lifting the berries out. Remove any stems and drain on a single layer of paper towels. Serve berries over cereal with milk or use in recipes for salads, pies, breads, and desserts.

Preserving: Berries may be preserved by canning or freezing for making jellies or jam.



Berry Muffins

1³/₄ cups flour

3 teaspoons baking powder

3 tablespoons sugar

1 egg, slightly beaten

1 cup low-fat milk

¼ cup oil

1 cup berries

Preheat oven to 400° F. Mix together 1½ cups flour, baking powder, and sugar in a bowl. In a separate bowl, combine the egg, milk, and oil. Combine the egg mixture with the flour mixture. Stir only enough to dampen the flour. Sprinkle ¼ cup flour over the berries. Gently stir into the batter. Spoon mixture into a greased muffin pan, filling each cup ¾ full. Bake for 15 minutes.

Yield: 12 muffins

Nutritional Analysis (per muffin): 160 calories, 4 g protein, 1 g fiber, 5 g fat, 20 mg cholesterol, 140 mg sodium.

Kentucky Rhubarb



Season: Late spring to early summer

Nutrition Facts: Rhubarb is low in calories (26 calories for a 1-cup serving). It is very acidic and is most often eaten with added sugar to offset the tartness. It is 95 percent water and contains potassium, a small amount of Vitamin C, and fiber.

Selection: Choose crisp, medium-sized, firm stalks. The deeper the red, the more flavorful the stalks will be. Warning: Only the stalks are edible. The leaves of the plant are poisonous.

Storage: Freshly harvested stalks can be kept in the refrigerator unwashed and wrapped tightly in plastic for up to three weeks.

Preparation: Wash well, trim the ends, and use in your favorite recipe. Because of its tartness, it is most often teamed up with strawberries and baked into pies and tarts. It is also used in jam and other desserts.

When cooking fresh rhubarb, always use a non-reactive pan, such as stainless steel, for cooking this high acid plant.

To freeze: Chop into ½-inch pieces, spread them on a baking sheet, and place in the freezer. Once frozen, place in a plastic freezer bag. Packed this way, it will keep for up to six months.

Rhubarb Strawberry Topping

This sauce is excellent as a topping for ice cream, pancakes, waffles, pound cake, and over a bowl of fruit, gingerbread, or yogurt. It will keep in the refrigerator for four days.

5 stalks rhubarb, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces

2 cups sliced strawberries

¾ cup sugar

½ cup orange juice

1 teaspoon lemon zest

1 teaspoon orange zest

In a heavy saucepan, combine all ingredients and stir well. Bring to a boil over medium high heat. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes, skimming off foam. Remove from heat and allow to cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate. Serve warm or cold.

Yield: 8 (½-cup) servings

Nutritional Analysis: 100 calories, 1 g protein, 1 g fiber, 24 g carbohydrate, 0 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 0 mg sodium.

Kentucky Shiitake Mushrooms



Season: Spring, Summer, and Fall

Nutrition Facts: Mushrooms contain a variety of nutrients, including a small amount of B vitamins. A ½-cup serving contains only 9 calories.

Selection: Look for shiitakes with firm, dry caps. Caps can vary from light honey colored to dark brown. Some may have white spots or splits.

Storage: Refrigerate and use within 14 days. Avoid storing in an air-tight container, which will cause spoilage. Mushrooms take up strong odors, so store away from onions or garlic.

To Clean: Gently wipe with a damp cloth or soft brush or rinse with cold water and pat dry with paper towels. Avoid soaking in water. Handle with care as mushrooms will bruise easily.

Preparation: Shiitake mushrooms are frequently mixed with more mellow-flavored mushrooms, such as common white mushrooms, because of their richer taste. Shiitake stems are tough and chewy even after cooking. Discard them and use only the caps.

Mushrooms can be prepared in many ways, including grilling, roasting, baking, frying, or sautéing. Try different seasonings, such as soy sauce, olive oil, ginger, garlic, and thyme. Four ounces of shiitake caps are equal to 1½ cups sliced or chopped.

To Sauté: Rinse and cut off the stems. Slice caps if preferred or leave whole. Cook 8 ounces of mushrooms in 1 tablespoon of oil or butter over medium heat until golden, about 3 to 4 minutes.

To Microwave: Place 8 ounces of thickly sliced caps in a microwaveable bowl. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes on high, stirring once.

To Roast: In a shallow baking dish, toss 8 ounces of mushrooms with 1 tablespoon of oil. Roast at 450° F for about 20 minutes. Stir occasionally.

To Grill or Broil: Lightly brush caps with oil; season with salt and pepper. Grill 4 to 6 minutes on each side, brushing once.

To Freeze: Mushrooms do not freeze well, but if sautéed first, they can be placed in an airtight container and used within two months.

Uses for cooked mushrooms:

- ◆ Toss with freshly cooked pasta and a little olive oil
- ◆ Use as a topping on pizza
- ◆ Spoon on sautéed chicken breasts sprinkled with fresh herbs
- ◆ Serve on grilled steaks, chops, or burgers

Kentucky Shiitake Mushrooms



Sautéed Mushrooms

Use any combination of fresh mushrooms, but remember to remove and discard stems if you include shiitakes.

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1½ pounds fresh mushrooms
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Heat oil in a large skillet. Add mushrooms and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally until tender (mushrooms will release their liquid), 4 to 6 minutes.

Increase the heat to medium-high; add garlic and salt. Cook mushrooms 2 to 3 minutes longer, stirring occasionally until liquid evaporates and mushrooms are light golden.

Yield: 4 servings
Nutritional Analysis: 88 calories, 4 g protein, 2 g fiber, 3.5 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 142 mg sodium.

Stuffed Mushrooms

- 1 pound shiitake or other large, capped mushrooms (about 24)
- 1 tablespoon chopped onion
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 package (12 oz) frozen spinach soufflé (thawed)
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons bread crumbs

Clean mushrooms and discard stems. Sauté onion in butter until soft. Add spinach, cheese, and bread crumbs. Stuff mushroom caps with mixture and bake at 350° F for 15 to 20 minutes. Serve hot.

Yield: about 24 mushrooms
Nutritional Analysis (per 1 mushroom): 30 calories, 2.5 g fat, 1 g protein, 2 g carbohydrate, 15 mg cholesterol, 85 mg sodium.

Kentucky Strawberries

Season: May through June



Nutrition Facts: Strawberries are low in calories and high in nutrients. One cup of strawberries contains 55 calories. Strawberries are a great source of Vitamin C. They also contain Vitamin A, iron, fiber, and folic acid. Folic acid is especially important for childbearing women.

Selection: Choose fully ripened, bright red berries. Strawberries do not ripen after they have been picked. Berries should be plump and have a natural shine and bright green, fresh-looking caps. Use strawberries as soon after picking as possible for the best flavor and highest nutritional value.

Storage: Store strawberries in the refrigerator, covered, unwashed, and with the cap on. Do not crowd. If you have the space, gently spread the berries on a cookie sheet and cover with plastic wrap. Use berries within two to three days.

Handling: Handle strawberries gently. Never remove the caps before washing. The caps prevent water from soaking into the berry, which lessens the flavor and changes the texture.

To wash, cover berries in cold water and lift gently out of the water to drain. Dry by placing berries in a single layer on paper towels. After washing, remove the caps if necessary. Give the cap a gentle twist or use the point of a sharp paring knife or pointed spoon. Pat berries dry with paper towels before serving whole or slices, fresh, or cooked.

Freezer Jam

3 cups fresh strawberries, crushed
5 cups sugar
1 package powdered pectin
1 cup water

Soft and wash fully ripened berries. Drain. Remove caps and stems. Crush berries and place into a large mixing bowl. Add sugar, mix well, and let stand for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Dissolve the pectin in the water; bring to a boil for 1 minute. Add pectin solution to the fruit and sugar mixture and stir for 2 minutes. Ladle the jam into jelly jars or suitable freezer containers, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch headspace. Cover the containers and let stand for 24 hours or until jam is set. Jam can be held in the refrigerator three weeks and frozen up to one year.

Yield: 9 (6 oz) jars
Nutritional Analysis (per 1 tablespoon serving): 45 calories, 0 g fat, 0 g protein, 11 g carbohydrate, 0 mg cholesterol, 0 mg sodium

Strawberry Lemonade

2 pints fresh strawberries
1 cup sugar
3 cups water
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups lemon juice

Place strawberries in container of food processor or blender; process until smooth. Combine sugar and water in a saucepan; cook over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. Combine sugar mixture, strawberries, and lemon juice; mix well. Chill; serve over ice. Garnish with a fresh whole strawberry if desired.

Yield: 6 (8 oz) servings
Nutritional Analysis: 180 calories, 0 g fat, 1 g protein, 46 g carbohydrate, 0 mg cholesterol, 0 mg sodium

Kentucky Summer Squash

Season: June through October



Nutrition Facts: Squash is low in calories, containing only 20 calories per 1 cup raw. It contains Vitamins A and C and is naturally free of fat, cholesterol, and sodium.

Selection: Popular summer squashes include yellow crookneck, yellow straightneck, zucchini, cocozelle, and patty pan. Summer squash should be picked or purchased when small and tender; both skin and seeds are eaten. The peel hold many of the nutrients so do not peel. It should be harvested at 6 to 8 inches in length. Patty pan squash are ready when they are 3 to 4 inches or less in diameter.

Storage: Harvest and place unwashed in plastic bags. Store in the crisper drawer before preparation. The storage life of summer squash is brief; use within two to three days.

Preparation: Summer squash is a mild-flavored vegetable and combines well with herbs and seasonings. Try it with basil, allspice, rosemary, and marjoram. Cook summer squash as a vegetable or use in stews, casseroles, and main dishes. Summer squash can be grilled, steamed, boiled, sautéed, fried, or used in stir fry recipes.

Freezing: Select small squash with small seeds and tender rind. Wash and cut into ½-inch slices. Heat in boiling water for 3 minutes. Cool promptly in cold water and drain. Pack in containers leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Summer Squash Casserole

3 cups summer squash, any type, chopped
1 cup cracker crumbs
1 cup cheese, shredded
2 tablespoons margarine, melted
2 tablespoons onion, chopped
2 large eggs, beaten

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Put in a greased baking dish, cover, and bake at 350° F for 1 hour.

Yield: 6 (½-cup) servings
Nutritional Analysis: 170 calories, 8 g protein, 16 g carbohydrate, 8 g fat, 15 mg cholesterol, 290 mg sodium.

Oven-Fried Squash

Vegetable cooking spray
3 tablespoons herb-seasoned bread crumbs
1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon pepper
2 medium-sized squash (yellow or zucchini), unpeeled
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons water

Preheat oven to 475° F. Spray a nonstick baking sheet with cooking spray. Combine bread crumbs, cheese, garlic, and pepper in a bowl. Set aside. Quarter squash lengthwise and cut each spear in half. Put these in a plastic bag; add oil and water and shake until spears are lightly coated with oil. Roll each spear in crumb mixture until it is lightly coated. Arrange spears on baking sheet in a single layer. Bake uncovered for 7 minutes or until spears are browned and crunchy.

Yield: 4 servings (4 spears each)
Nutritional Analysis: 60 calories, 2 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 3 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 330 mg sodium

Kentucky Winter Squash



Citrus Squash

Season: August through October

Nutrition Facts: Winter squash, which includes acorn squash, butternut squash, pumpkin, and other varieties, are low in fat and sodium. It is an excellent source of Vitamin A and fiber.

Selection: Winter squash should be heavy for its size with a hard, tough rind that is free of blemishes or soft spots.

Storage: Store it in a cool, dry place and use it within 1 month.

Preparation:

To Steam: Wash, peel, and remove seeds. Then cut squash into 2-inch cubes or quarter, leaving rind on (it will remove easily after cooking). Bring 1-inch of water to a boil in a saucepan and place squash on a rack or basket in the pan. Do not immerse it in water. Cover the pan tightly and steam the squash 30 to 40 minutes or until tender.

To Microwave: Wash squash and cut it lengthwise. Place it in a baking dish and cover the dish with plastic wrap. Microwave until tender, using these guidelines:

- ◆ Acorn squash- $\frac{1}{2}$ squash, 5 to 8 minutes; 1 squash, $8\frac{1}{2}$ to $11\frac{1}{2}$ minutes.
- ◆ Butternut squash- 2 pieces, 3 to $4\frac{1}{2}$ minutes.
- ◆ Hubbard squash ($\frac{1}{2}$ -pound pieces)- 2 pieces, 4 to $6\frac{1}{2}$ minutes.

- 2 medium acorn squash
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup unsweetened orange juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup unsweetened apple juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1 tablespoon reduced calorie maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 1 teaspoon lemon peel, grated

Wash squash and cut in half. Remove seeds and pulp. Cut each half crosswise into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch slices, arrange the slices in a greased baking dish, and pour the orange and apple juices over the squash. Bake it covered at 350° F for 30 minutes. Combine the remaining ingredients in a small saucepan and bring the sauce mixture to a boil, stirring constantly. Then drizzle the sauce over the squash and bake uncovered for 15 to 20 additional minutes, basting occasionally.

Yield: 6 servings (3 slices each)
Nutritional Analysis: 130 calories, 1 g protein, 28 g carbohydrate, 2 g fat, 35 mg sodium

To Bake: Wash squash and cut it lengthwise. Smaller squash can be cut in half; larger squash should be cut into portions. Remove seeds and place squash in a baking dish. Bake at 400°F for 1 hour or until tender. Seeds can be toasted at 350°F for 20 minutes.

Kentucky Tomatoes



Season: July through October

Nutrition Facts: Tomatoes are rich in nutrients that promote good health, including fiber, carotenoids, and vitamins, especially Vitamins C and A.

Selection: Choose firm, well-shaped tomatoes that are fragrant and rich in color. Tomatoes should be free from blemishes, heavy for their size, and give slightly to pressure. Three to four medium tomatoes weigh about 1 pound. One pound of tomatoes yields about 2½ cups of chopped tomatoes or 3 cups of wedges or sliced tomatoes.

Storage: Store ripe tomatoes at room temperature and use them within three days. Keep them out of direct sunlight. Place green tomatoes in a paper bag to ripen them.

Preparation: Wash fresh tomatoes in cool running water.

To peel: Place tomatoes in boiling water for about 30 seconds, then transfer them to cold water. Skins will slip off.

To seed: Scrape seeds away from the flesh with a pointed utensil. Avoid puncturing the skin.

To slice: Slice lengthwise to retain the juice. A serrated knife works best.

To broil: Cut tomatoes in half crosswise. Dot them with margarine and sprinkle with an herb mixture. Broil tomatoes until tender and topping is lightly browned.

Fresh Tomato Sauce

5 large ripe tomatoes, peeled
½ cup fresh basil, finely chopped
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 cloves garlic, finely minced
Salt and black pepper, to taste

Finely dice and seed the tomatoes. Stir in basil, olive oil, garlic, and seasoning. Allow mixture to marinate for 30 minutes. Serve at room temperature over 1 pound of cooked pasta. For added flavor, sprinkle each portion with 1 to 2 teaspoons of balsamic vinegar.

Yield: 6 servings

Nutritional Analysis: 88 calories, 1 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 7 g fat, 204 mg sodium.

To bake: Cut tomatoes in half crosswise. Dot them with margarine and season as desired. Bake at 425° F for 10 to 15 minutes.

To stuff: Cut off stem end and scoop out seeds and pulp. Sprinkle the cavity lightly with salt and turn it upside down on a paper towel to drain. Stuff the tomato with your favorite salad or seafood, meat, or pasta.

To microwave: Cut tomato in half crosswise. Dot it with margarine and season as desired. Microwave on high 3 to 4 minutes.

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Herb Tips

- ◆ Fresh herbs taste better than dried herbs.
- ◆ When substituting fresh herbs for dried herbs in recipes, 1 teaspoon dried herb is equal to 1 tablespoon fresh herb.
- ◆ Fresh herbs can be purchased at your local Farmers' Market or grocery store.
- ◆ You can also grow fresh herbs yourself.
- ◆ Adding dried herbs to recipes at the beginning of cooking will promote the best flavor.
- ◆ Fresh herbs should be added at the end of cooking.
- ◆ If using fresh herbs, remember that cooking them for a long period of time can destroy the flavor and color.



Freezing Tips

- ◆ Freezing herbs can help to make them available for cooking whenever you may need them.
- ◆ Basil, dill, chives, mint, oregano, sage, thyme, and tarragon are all herbs that freeze well.
- ◆ How do you freeze herbs?
 - Wash the herb in cool water
 - Pat dry with a paper towel
 - Remove stems on leafy herbs
 - Chop herbs
 - Place in freezer safe plastic bag
 - Seal tightly and freeze

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