



The New American Plate

Veggies

Recipes for a healthy weight
and a healthy life



American
Institute for
Cancer
Research



Veggies

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The word is out that a plant-based diet helps to fight obesity and chronic illnesses such as heart disease, adult onset diabetes and cancer. Many Americans have begun following AICR's advice to fill their plates with two-thirds (or more) vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans and one-third (or less) fish, poultry or red meat. That is, they are trying to take the spotlight off animal protein and push vegetables center stage. To do that, they reduce their serving of meat to no more than three ounces – the size of a deck of cards. Then they add three or more servings of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans. That's the New American Plate.

To make the New American Plate work for you, you need to serve enticing vegetable dishes that can play the starring role in your meals. This brochure contains 22 vegetable recipes that will update your plate for health, taste and variety. It also offers tips for selecting vegetables, seasoning them and making healthy sauces that add to their charisma. All of the recipes offered here are easy and quick. Furthermore, they can be adapted for use with other vegetables. They can help you make eating for a healthy weight and healthy life a novel and exciting experience.

The New American Plate

AICR and its affiliate the World Cancer Research Fund assembled an expert panel of scientists to review what research can tell us about the connection between diet and cancer. The panel reviewed more than 4,500 studies relating to this subject and issued a report entitled *Food, Nutrition and the Prevention of Cancer: a global perspective*. This report clearly shows the link between a predominantly plant-based diet and reduced cancer risk. Eating more fruits and vegetables, exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy weight could cut cancer rates in the U.S. by 40 percent.

Vegetables and fruits contain vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals (unique plant substances) that help the body fight cancer. These substances have names like beta-carotene, lycopene and sulforaphane. They strengthen the body's immune system. Some eliminate free radicals that damage DNA. Others help to get rid of carcinogens.

These plant substances also seem to boost each other's effectiveness. So it is important to eat a wide variety of plant foods, in order to get as many different kinds of phytochemicals as possible. That's why AICR's experts recommend consuming between 5 and 10 servings of vegetables and fruits each day.

Diet and Health Guidelines for Cancer Prevention

1. Choose a diet rich in a variety of plant-based foods.
2. Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits.
3. Maintain a healthy weight and be physically active.
4. Drink alcohol only in moderation, if at all.
5. Select foods low in fat and salt.
6. Prepare and store food safely.

And always remember...

Do not use tobacco in any form.

Proportion

The traditional American plate contains a large piece of meat, a small serving of vegetables and some form of potatoes or rice.



This plate provides too many calories for most people and too few nutrients to prevent chronic illness or help you maintain a healthy weight. It certainly won't help you reach the 5 to 10 servings of vegetables and fruits associated with reduced cancer risk.

To accomplish that, you have to change the proportion of foods on your plate. That is, you have to increase the amount of plant-based foods and decrease the amount of animal-based foods. A healthy proportion to aim for is two-thirds (or more) vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans and one-third (or less) fish, poultry or red meat.

The idea is to let the veggies crowd the animal protein to one corner of your plate. Serving two kinds of vegetables as well as a whole grain like brown rice, kasha or a whole wheat roll is one way to do that. Remembering the “ $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ ” ratio will help you build your body's defenses against chronic disease and maintain a healthy weight at the same time.

Portion Size

Plant foods tend to be rich in nutrients and relatively low in calories. Because they contain a lot of fiber, they tend to fill you up. So a diet high in plant foods can help you manage your weight. If you are concerned about weight loss, don't reach for a diet book that suggests limiting your intake of vegetables, fruits and all the healthy substances they offer. When it comes to weight loss, it's not just *what* you eat, but also *how much* you eat that matters. Reducing your intake doesn't necessarily mean counting calories. It may simply mean reducing the size of the portions on your plate.

Restaurants and food retailers are committed to “value marketing.” They compete by offering customers more food for less money. The “supersized” meals and oversized snacks people buy away from

home tend to confuse them about reasonable portion sizes when they prepare their own meals. Today, Americans eat 148 more calories per day than they did two decades ago. That extra intake could add up to 15 pounds per year.

Look at the chart on page 8 for a list of standard serving sizes published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In contrast with what you usually eat, these serving sizes may seem remarkably small. Many people eat three or more cups of pasta at a sitting. Some restaurants are known to serve six or eight cups on a plate. Yet USDA defines a standard serving size of pasta as one-half cup.

Try an experiment at your next meal. After checking the chart, measure out a standard serving size of the food you're about to eat. Make a mental note of how much of your plate or bowl is covered by this serving.

Next measure out your usual portion size on another plate or bowl. Compare the two. Ask yourself how many standard servings go into the portion you normally eat. If your weight is satisfactory, then you are probably eating the right number of servings to meet your energy needs. If you are overweight, the first thing you should consider is reducing the number of standard servings in your regular portions.

Decrease your portion size gradually. Even small reductions add up to substantial health benefits. If you reduce your servings in stages, you will be less likely to notice the change.

Remember, maintaining the right proportion of plant foods to animal foods is

important to your long-term health. So reduce the portion sizes on your plate, but maintain the “ $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ ” proportion.

A fad diet that has not stood up to rigorous scientific testing is no way to lose weight. Obesity became an epidemic in this country at the same time portion sizes grew enormous. It is likely you can reach a healthy weight on your own by simply reducing the size of the portions you eat and exercising more. If you still do not see your weight gradually moving in a healthy direction, contact your doctor or a registered dietitian for a more individualized plan.

Fad Diets and the New American Plate

You've probably noticed a new wave of fad diets flooding the American marketplace. Behind these quick-fix plans lies the notion that certain kinds of foods – such as sugar, bread and carbohydrates in general – are “bad” or fattening and must be avoided.

But it's not an effective or healthy idea to start changing your meals according to the theory of some bestselling diet book. Sudden, drastic changes to your diet are often difficult to maintain in the long run. Instead, making gradual adjustments will encourage permanent improvements in the way you eat.

Most of these plans overlook the disease-fighting benefits of a diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans. That could raise your risk for chronic diseases like cancer and heart disease. Furthermore, plates that feature healthy portions of plant-based foods tend to be lower in calories and fat than plates recommended by many fad diets. And when it comes to weight management, it is *total* caloric intake that counts, not any kind of magic “protein vs. carbohydrate” formula.

Standard Serving Sizes

Food	Serving	Looks Like
Chopped Vegetables	1/2 cup	1/2 baseball or rounded handful for average adult
Raw Leafy Vegetables (such as lettuce)	1 cup	1 baseball or fist of an average adult
Fresh Fruit	1 medium piece	1 baseball
	1/2 cup chopped	1/2 baseball or rounded handful for average adult
Dried Fruit	1/4 cup	1 golf ball or scant handful for average adult
Pasta, Rice, Cooked Cereal	1/2 cup	1/2 baseball or rounded handful for average adult
Ready-to-Eat Cereal	1 oz. which varies from 1/4 cup to 1 1/4 cups (check label)	
Meat, Poultry, Seafood	3 oz. (boneless cooked weight from 4 oz. raw)	Deck of cards
Dried Beans	1/2 cup cooked	1/2 baseball or rounded handful for average adult
Nuts	1/3 cup	Level handful for average adult
Cheese	1 1/2 oz. (2 oz. if processed cheese)	1 oz. looks like 4 dice

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Selecting and Storing

As a general rule, it is wise to plan ahead and buy only as many vegetables as you will use within the next 3 or 4 days. After that, plan another trip to the store or use frozen or canned veggies. Otherwise, you may end up with limp broccoli and mushy mushrooms that have begun to lose their nutritional value and ideal texture.

Also, for best nutrition, prepare and cook vegetables as close as you can to serving time. Prolonged exposure to light and air can diminish the nutritional value of vegetables.

Try visiting a local farmers market; they are often packed with fresh vegetables that have been picked just a few hours before. Or plant your own vegetable garden. There is nothing more satisfying than eating home-grown ruby red tomatoes or crisp zucchini that you have harvested yourself. And gardening can help you become more physically active.

Here are some guidelines for selecting and storing an array of vegetables.

Asparagus – Choose tender, straight green stalks. Avoid woody stems. Store in plastic bags in the refrigerator crisper for 1 to 2 days. Best season: April to June.

Beets – Purchase small, unblemished beets that have small, fresh leaves and firm stems. Store unwashed in the refrigerator for 1 to 2



weeks. When ready to use, green tops can be removed and saved for another use (see recipe on page 31), leaving an inch or so of stem. Available all year.

Bell Peppers – Peppers should be firm and well shaped with shiny flesh. Avoid limp, soft or wrinkled peppers. Store in the crisper for 3 to 5 days. Available all year.

Broccoli – Look for dark green heads with tightly closed buds. Stalks should be tender yet firm and the leaves should be fresh and unwilted. Avoid yellow buds or rubbery stems. Store in plastic bags in the crisper for up to 5 days. Available all year.

Brussels sprouts – Brussels sprouts often come packed into containers, making it difficult to inspect each sprout. If possible, try to seek a market that sells them loose. If not, inspect those you can see for firm, closely-curved heads with no brown spots, yellow leaves or signs of wilt. In general, the smaller they are the sweeter they are. Do not wash prior to storage. Refrigerate in the original container or plastic bag and use within 5 days. Best season: August through March.

Cabbage – Choose heads that are solid and heavy for their size. Avoid heads with splits or yellowed leaves. Store in the crisper for 1 to 2 weeks. Available all year.

Carrots – Choose well-shaped, firm, bright orange carrots. Avoid those with splits or blemishes. Store in plastic bags in the crisper for 1 to 2 weeks. Available all year.

Cauliflower – Select firm, compact heads with white florets and bright green leaves. Avoid any heads with brown spots or yellowing leaves. Store in the crisper for 4 to 7 days. Available all year.

Celery – Choose celery that has crisp stalks. Leaves should be light or medium green. Avoid limp or yellowed leaves. Store in the crisper for 1 to 2 weeks. Available all year.

Garlic – Choose garlic with firm, plump bulbs and tightly closed cloves. Avoid shriveled, soft, sprouting or moldy bulbs. Store in a cool, dry place with air circulation; do not refrigerate. Available all year.

Green Beans – Search for smooth, crisp pods. Avoid limp, wrinkled or fat, over-mature pods. Store in plastic bags in the crisper for 1 to 2 days. Available all year.

Greens, leafy – Greens for cooking – including spinach, kale and Chinese cabbages (or bok choy) – should be crisp and fresh looking, with good color and no brown spots or yellowing leaves. Store greens in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. They will keep 3 to 5 days, but try to use them as soon as possible. Available all year.

Kohlrabi – Purchase those under 2 ½ inches in diameter. Large kohlrabi tend to be fibrous. Avoid those with soft spots, cracks or a yellowish hue. Store in the refrigerator in an opened plastic bag for up to 3 months. Best season: mid-spring to mid-fall.

Mushrooms – Mushrooms should be firm and relatively clean. Avoid any that are dark or bruised. They can be stored unwashed in an open paper bag or in their original container on a refrigerator shelf for 2 to 3 days. Avoid storing mushrooms in the crisper as they have a tendency to become mushy. Available all year.

Onions – Select onions that do not appear to be ready to sprout. They should be heavy for their size. Store in a cool, dry place; do not store in the refrigerator or near potatoes. Available all year.

Parasnips – Choose young, straight, firm roots without blemishes. Avoid large roots, since they tend to be woody. Store unwashed in a perforated bag in the refrigerator for 1 week. Best season: fall to winter.

Potatoes – Look for firm, well-shaped potatoes. Avoid any that are blemished, sprouted or cracked. Store in a cool, dry place away from sunlight. Keep away from onions. Most potatoes will keep for 2 to 6 weeks at room temperature. Available all year.

Scallions (green onions) – Scallions should have firm, white bulbs with crisp, green tops. Avoid those with withered or yellow tops. Store in plastic bags in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. Available all year.

Shallots – Choose firm, well-shaped bulbs that are heavy for their size. The papery skins should be dry and shiny. Store in a cool, dry place. They will keep for several months. Available all year.

Summer squash (zucchini and yellow or crookneck squash) – The youngest zucchini and yellow squash taste the best. Look for summer squash that is about 5 to 7 inches long. They should be firm and heavy for their size with tight, vivid color, free of brown spots or cuts. Store in a loose bag in the refrigerator. Use within 2 to 5 days. Best season: late spring through summer.

Tomatoes – Choose those that are vine-ripened and fully colored. Tomatoes should feel heavy for their size. Flavor is best preserved when stored at room temperature. Avoid tomatoes from refrigerated sections of the market. Best season: late spring through early fall.

Turnips – Choose small, firm, slightly rounded turnips. Avoid large turnips as they tend to be strong-flavored and woody. Store unwashed in the refrigerator for 1 to 2 weeks. Available all year.



Cooking

Do you remember when the standard for cooking vegetables was over-boiled, mushy green beans and broccoli that was olive green and limp? Or what about limp asparagus smothered in gobs of butter? These old-fashioned cooking techniques masked the true taste of vegetables and added unneeded fat and calories in the process.

Today, we know more about ways to preserve the flavors, colors and nutrients of vegetables. Use the following list of cooking methods as a guide to help you decide how to best prepare each vegetable.

STEAMING preserves more nutrients, flavor and texture than other cooking techniques. To properly steam, place vegetables in a steamer basket above boiling water. Tightly cover the pan to keep in the steam. Cook until vegetables are crisp-tender. The most familiar type of steamer is the metal folding device that can accommodate most pot sizes. Many pasta pots come with steamer inserts that fit snugly. Chinese bamboo steamers are stacked, which enables you to steam many items at once. Steaming is most suitable for small quantities of vegetables, which ensures that the steam can easily reach each piece and can cook them evenly.

BLANCHING involves plunging vegetables into boiling water for 1 to 3 minutes, then quickly transferring them to ice water to stop the cooking process. Unlike prolonged boiling,

this method preserves the color and texture of vegetables. Blanching makes hard vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, asparagus and peppers crisp-tender.

BRAISING is a method of slowly cooking vegetables with only a small amount of liquid, which is then used as a sauce for the vegetable. The braising liquid is either broth or water enhanced for added flavor with chopped tomatoes, onions, garlic or herbs. The best pans for braising are a deep sauté pan with a lid, a heavy, wide casserole dish or a Dutch oven. Braising is best for long-cooking vegetables such as large pieces of carrots, potatoes or eggplant.

STIR-FRYING is a very quick method of cooking vegetables. The heat is kept relatively high and the cut vegetables are tossed continuously over the heat until they are crisp-tender. To make sure all vegetables cook to the proper texture, vegetables should be cut relatively small. Also, cutting long vegetables such as carrots on the diagonal helps them cook faster. A wok is the traditional pan for stir-frying, but a heavy skillet will also work. Make sure the pan is hot or the food will absorb too much oil and will stick. You can also stir-fry using fat-free broth or nonstick spray.

ROASTING is a favorite method to cook winter squash, carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes, eggplant, peppers and tomatoes. The dry heat preserves their flavor better than steaming. Toss vegetables in a little oil or fat-free dressing and then roast at 400 to 450 degrees until tender. It is best to roast vegetables in shallow baking pans. Vegetables should be placed in the baking pan in one layer. If the vegetables are too crowded, they will steam and produce excess moisture, thus diluting the roasted flavor.

GRILLING brings out a slightly smoky flavor in certain vegetables. Sweet peppers, chilies, tomatoes, large mushrooms, potatoes, sweet potatoes and corn are good choices for grilling. Simply brush veggies with a little oil to prevent drying. Or marinate them in a lowfat dressing prior to grilling. Any type of grill will work for grilling vegetables. Large pieces can be placed directly on the rack; use a vegetable basket or skewers for smaller pieces. Keep the temperature between medium and medium-high. Unlike grilled animal meats, researchers believe that grilled vegetables pose little risk of forming carcinogenic substances.

MICROWAVING is best for vegetables that require a long cooking time and for frozen vegetables. Be sure to cover the vegetables with appropriate microwave-safe material and stir or rotate during cooking to prevent drying and uneven hot spots. Microwave most vegetables at high power.



Seasonings

Are salt and pepper the first seasonings that come to your mind? While these staples do indeed add flavor, there is a whole world of taste to be had when you add various herbs and spices to your vegetable cooking. As an added bonus, herbs and spices are derived from plants, so they offer health-protective substances called phytochemicals.

Herbs are the leaves of plants, while spices are the dried aromatic parts – the seeds, flowers, roots and fruits of certain plants and trees. Herbs give food subtle flavors, while spices provide flavors ranging from faint perfume to intense pungency.

Spices are best used within a year of purchase. For the finest taste, buy spices in whole form and grind them in an electric spice or coffee grinder. Since the flavor of spices is best brought out by heat, add spices early in the cooking process.

Herbs can be used either in their fresh or dried form. Dried herbs should be used within a year of purchase. Try to purchase the smallest quantity of each herb that you can. Store dried herbs in airtight containers. Keep dried herbs away from heat and light, as these two elements will reduce the flavor.

Since dried herbs have a more concentrated flavor, double the quantity if you are using fresh herbs instead. Of course, everyone's taste buds differ – feel free to increase or decrease the amount of seasonings as you wish. However, try not to mingle too many different “delicate” and “robust” herbs in one dish, as they each have flavors that should be experienced on their own.

Growing your own fresh herbs can be a fun outdoor activity. All you need is some good soil, sunlight and water. You don't even need a backyard; you can grow herbs in large pots on a deck, patio or sunny windowsill. Start with basil, chives, thyme and parsley and plant more as your interest grows.

The following chart describes common herbs and explains their best uses for vegetable cookery.

Delicate Herbs

Chervil – Delicate, with subtle parsley-licorice taste. Looks like carrot-top leaves. Use in cold food preparation or add at the very end of the cooking process. Excellent with string beans, tomatoes and green salads.

Chives – Light onion or garlic taste. Cut with scissors and add at the last minute of cooking. Excellent with tomatoes, potatoes and green salads.

Cilantro – Also called coriander. Tastes minty and fresh. The root has an intense flavor. Add at the last minute of cooking. Use with peppers, zucchini, yellow squash, tomatoes, eggplant and green salads.

Dill – Delicate taste. Add just before serving. Use leaves with cucumbers, green beans, potatoes, tomatoes and beets.

Mint – Refreshing scent and cool taste. Varieties include peppermint, spearmint, lemon, orange and apple mint. Use with corn, potatoes, eggplant, tomatoes and string beans.

Parsley – Faint, subtle flavor. Flat-leafed variety has a better flavor than the curly type. Excellent in tomato sauces, salads, salad dressings and nearly all vegetables.

Robust Herbs

Basil – Sweet taste. Varieties include sweet, lemon, cinnamon and purple opal basil. Fresh leaves are best used torn and cut to release the flavor. The leaves at the top of the plant are the sweetest. Essential in Italian cooking; excellent with tomatoes, eggplant, zucchini and yellow squash.

Bay Leaf – Pungent, woody herb with sturdy leaves and faint cinnamon taste. Whole leaves dispense more flavor. Remove before serving. Good with tomato-based foods.

Marjoram – First cousin to oregano, with a similar, but more delicate taste. Add at the end of cooking. Use in almost any vegetable dish and in tomato sauces.

Oregano – Intense taste. Use with tomatoes, mushrooms, peppers, summer squash and eggplant.

Rosemary – Needlelike leaves with strong pine scent and flavor. Finely chop fresh leaves and crush dry ones to release flavor. Add to mushrooms, roasted potatoes and tomato dishes.

Tarragon – Mild, licorice taste. French variety has subtle, anise flavor. Best with tomatoes, mushrooms, carrots and in salad dressings.

Thyme – Tiny leaves and minty, tea-like flavor. Varieties include lemon, orange, English and French thyme. Excellent with tomatoes, eggplant, mushrooms, potatoes and summer squash.



Sauces

The days of drowning veggies in high-fat cheese and cream sauces are over. Instead, try creating flavorful, healthful sauces to lightly adorn your favorite vegetables. Keep in mind that a good sauce should simply enhance the vegetable's natural flavor. The vegetable should be the star.

Here are a few quick ideas for uncooked sauces.

Yogurt Mint Sauce: Mix together 1 cup lowfat yogurt, 2 minced garlic cloves, 1 tsp. minced mint leaves (or $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. dried) and salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. Serve with cooked carrots, potatoes or cooked pepper strips.

Orange Sauce: Mix together 3 Tbsp. fresh orange juice, 1 Tbsp. olive oil, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. grated orange zest and salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. Drizzle onto fresh cooked asparagus or cooked beets and serve immediately.

Caper Sauce: Mix together 1 cup lowfat or nonfat mayonnaise, 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard, 2 Tbsp. minced parsley, 1 Tbsp. small capers, 1 tsp. lemon juice and salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. Serve with cooked artichokes or cauliflower.

Creamy Pesto: In blender, mix together 3 garlic cloves, 2 cups firmly packed fresh basil and 1 Tbsp. walnuts. With motor running, slowly add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fat-free, reduced sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth, 1 Tbsp. olive oil and 1 Tbsp. lemon juice. Mix until blended. Add 1 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese and salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste.

Blend again until smooth. Serve with almost any cooked vegetable.

Southwestern Sauce: Mix together 3 Tbsp. fresh lime juice, 1 tsp. olive oil, 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar, 2 minced garlic cloves, 1 Tbsp. minced cilantro or parsley, ½ small finely minced jalapeño pepper (or to taste), and salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. Serve immediately with tomatoes, zucchini, yellow squash, string beans or in a black bean and rice salad.

Recipes

The recipes that follow were created to make the vegetables on the New American Plate more exciting. These seasonings and sauces in no way detract from the healthful impact of the recipes, but they do add considerable flavor and interest. Serve two of these charismatic vegetables with a grain dish, and your family and friends won't even notice the reduced size of the fish, poultry or red meat on their plates.

The number of servings noted at the end of each recipe corresponds to the standard serving sizes listed on page 8. That means serving sizes may be smaller than you are accustomed to. As suggested earlier, you can now decide how many standard servings go into the portion you choose to eat.

Ginger Carrots with Golden Raisins and Lemon

Even finicky vegetable eaters will love this dish. Sweet golden raisins combined with bright orange carrots give it great taste and eye appeal.

½ cup golden raisins
1 ¾ cups hot water
5-6 medium carrots (10-12 oz.)
Boiling water, just enough to cover carrots
2 tsp. finely minced fresh ginger
1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
2 tsp. butter
2 tsp. brown sugar
2 tsp. cornstarch
1 tsp. grated lemon zest
Pinch of salt, if desired

In medium bowl, combine raisins and hot water. Let stand for about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, peel and slice carrots diagonally into ½-inch slices. In medium pot of boiling water, add carrots, ginger and lemon juice. Cook 6 to 7 minutes. Drain.

Drain raisins, reserving ¾ cup liquid; set aside. In skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add brown sugar and cook 30 seconds. Mix together reserved raisin water and cornstarch. Add to butter/brown sugar mixture. Cook about 1 minute, until thickened. Add raisins and carrots and cook 1 minute. Add lemon zest and salt, if desired. Serve immediately

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 155 Calories, 2 g Total Fat (1 g Saturated Fat), 35 g Carbohydrates, 2 g Protein, 3 g Dietary Fiber, 30 mg Sodium.

Recipes continue on page 24

The New American Plate

Veggies

$\frac{2}{3}$ (or more)
vegetables,
fruits,
whole grains
and beans

$\frac{1}{3}$ (or less)
animal
protein



Start reshaping your diet by looking at your plate. Is the greater proportion of your meal plant-based? Are your portion sizes appropriate to your activity level? The vegetable recipes starting on page 20 offer great flavors with fewer calories. For a healthy weight and life, put lots of them on your plate and cut back on animal-based foods.

Roasted Asparagus with Garlic

Roasting preserves the flavor and color of asparagus without making it tough or stringy.

- 1 lb. fresh asparagus (medium width)
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Lemon wedges, as garnish

Preheat oven to 500 degrees. Rinse asparagus and break off tough ends.

In shallow roasting pan, place asparagus and coat with oil. Sprinkle with garlic and salt and pepper, to taste.

Roast uncovered for 6-8 minutes (depending on width of spears), shaking pan occasionally. Serve with lemon wedges.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 47 Calories, 3 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 5 g Carbohydrates, 4 g Protein, 1 g Dietary Fiber, 3 mg Sodium.

Sesame Spinach

The crunchiness of toasted sesame seeds adds a nice contrast in texture to the soft spinach. Even Popeye's spinach didn't taste this good.

- 3 lbs. fresh spinach, preferably baby spinach leaves
- 1 Tbsp. sesame seeds
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Rinse spinach well and discard stems. Heat large skillet and add spinach with water still clinging to leaves. Cover and cook over medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Uncover and cook 2 more minutes until wilted, stir-

ring often. Drain in colander. Squeeze out excess water.

In small pan, place sesame seeds. Toast over medium heat for 1-2 minutes (keep them moving) until seeds are lightly brown. Set aside.

In large skillet, heat sesame oil over medium heat. Add garlic and sauté for 30 seconds. Add spinach, sesame seeds and salt and pepper, to taste. Cook 1 minute. Serve.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 102 Calories, 2 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 12 g Carbohydrates, 10 g Protein, 3 g Dietary Fiber, 269 mg Sodium.

Bok Choy with Sautéed Mushrooms and Shallots

Serve this delightful vegetable dish with brown rice and grilled marinated salmon.

- 2 tsp. canola or olive oil
- 1 package (8 oz.) sliced mushrooms
- 2 shallots, minced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 ½ pounds bok choy, rinsed and chopped into 1-inch pieces
- 2 tsp. lite soy sauce
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

In large skillet or wok, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms, shallots and garlic and stir-fry until mushrooms darken, about 5 minutes.

Add bok choy and stir-fry for about 8-10 minutes until tender. Sprinkle with soy sauce, lemon zest and salt and pepper, to taste. Serve.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 60 Calories, 3 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 7 g Carbohydrates, 4 g Protein, 2 g Dietary Fiber, 197 mg Sodium.

Baked Greek Tomatoes

Make this dish in the summer when tomatoes are at their peak flavor. Sprinkled with aromatic herbs and Parmesan cheese, these tomatoes are terrific.

- 2 large ripe tomatoes, halved
- 1 slice whole wheat bread, crusts removed
- 2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 garlic clove, finely minced
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp. dried basil
- 1/2 tsp. dried thyme
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Gently squeeze tomatoes or use a spoon to remove seeds.

In blender or food processor, make crumbs of bread. In small bowl, combine bread crumbs, cheese, garlic, oil, oregano, basil, thyme and salt and pepper, to taste.

Spoon crumb mixture into each halved tomato.

In casserole dish, bake tomatoes uncovered for 25-30 minutes, until tomatoes are soft, but not mushy, and topping is golden brown.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 62 Calories, 3 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 8 g Carbohydrates, 3 g Protein, 2 g Dietary Fiber, 103 mg Sodium.

Broccoli with Hazelnuts

Pairing nuts with vegetables provides a double dose of nutrition. Just a small amount of nuts makes this vegetable dish something special.

2-3 Tbsp. coarsely chopped hazelnuts

Boiling water

1 lb. broccoli, stems peeled and sliced thin and florets separated

2 tsp. sesame oil

2 scallions, thinly sliced

2 garlic cloves, finely minced

2 tsp. lite soy sauce

In small skillet, toast hazelnuts over medium-high heat for 3-4 minutes, until lightly browned. Set aside.

In large pot of boiling water, add broccoli and blanch for 4 minutes. Rinse with cold water and drain.

In large bowl, combine oil, scallions, garlic and soy sauce. Add broccoli and toss well. Top with hazelnuts. Serve at room temperature.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving: 54 Calories, 3g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 5 g Carbohydrates, 3 g Protein, 3 g Dietary Fiber, 88 mg Sodium.

Triple Mushroom Sauté with Toasted Walnuts

If one is good, then three must be better. Portobello, shiitake and white mushrooms blend together in a mélange that almost melts in your mouth.

2 Tbsp. walnuts

1 tsp. olive oil

2 cups thinly sliced portobello mushrooms, stems removed (about 1-2)

2 cups thinly sliced shiitake mushrooms, stems removed (about 6)

2 cups thinly sliced white mushrooms, stems removed (about 6)

2 Tbsp. minced parsley

2 garlic cloves, minced

- 1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. lite soy sauce

In small skillet, toast walnuts over medium heat for 2-3 minutes, until lightly browned. Remove from heat and set aside.

In large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and cook, without stirring, about 2 minutes. Begin stirring, add parsley and garlic and sauté for 3-5 minutes, or until mushrooms release their liquid and begin to darken.

In small bowl, combine balsamic vinegar, sugar and soy sauce. Add to mushrooms and cook for 1 minute.

Top mushrooms with walnuts and serve.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 75 Calories, 4 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 10 g Carbohydrates, 3 g Protein, 1 g Dietary Fiber, 55 mg Sodium.

Tri-colored Peppers with Herbs

This dish is almost too pretty to eat, but you won't be able to resist the flavors and aromas enhanced by these fresh herbs.

- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 1 medium red bell pepper, cut julienne (see note)
- 1 medium yellow pepper, cut julienne
- 1 medium orange pepper, cut julienne
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp. balsamic vinegar or sherry
- 1 Tbsp. fresh basil, minced (or 1 tsp. dried)
- 1 tsp. fresh oregano, minced (or 1/2 tsp. dried)
- 1 tsp. fresh thyme, minced (or 1/2 tsp. dried)

- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

In large skillet or wok, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add peppers and sauté for 3-5 minutes, or until crisp-tender.

Add garlic and sauté for 2 more minutes. Add balsamic vinegar, basil, oregano, thyme and salt and pepper, to taste. Cover and steam 1 minute. Serve.

Note: Julienne means to cut into very thin, matchstick strips.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 57 Calories, 3 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 8 g Carbohydrates, 1 g Protein, 1 g Dietary Fiber, 3 mg Sodium.

Stir-fried Kale with Slivered Carrots

So often used as a garnish, kale now gets the full treatment it deserves as a nutritious, delicious vegetable.

- 3/4 lb. fresh kale
- Boiling water
- 2 tsp. canola oil
- 2 carrots, peeled and cut julienne (see note)
- 1-2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Pinch cayenne pepper, if desired

Rinse kale and remove stems, including large stem running through center of each leaf. Place a few leaves on top of each other and cut into thin strips. Repeat until all kale is cut. Add kale to pot of boiling water and boil uncovered 10 minutes. Drain and set aside.

In large skillet, heat oil over medium heat.

Add carrots and sauté 2 minutes. Add garlic and sauté 1 more minute. Add coriander, salt and pepper, to taste, and cayenne, if using. Cook for 15 seconds. Add kale and cook 1-2 minutes. Serve.

Note: Julienne means to cut into very thin, matchstick strips.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 81 Calories, 3 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 13 g Carbohydrates, 3 g Protein, 3 g Dietary Fiber, 57 mg Sodium.

Provençal Zucchini and Yellow Squash Medley

When you take a bite of this dish, you might think of a sunny garden somewhere in the south of France.

- 2 tsp. olive oil
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 1 large zucchini, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 large yellow squash, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 garlic cloves, finely minced
- 1 tsp. herbs de Provence (see note)
- ½ cup halved cherry tomatoes
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup crumbled reduced fat feta cheese

Preheat oven broiler. In large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and sauté 3 minutes. Add zucchini and yellow squash and sauté 5-6 minutes. Add garlic and sauté 2 more minutes.

Add herbs de Provence, cherry tomatoes and salt and pepper, to taste. Transfer vegetable mixture to casserole dish. Sprinkle with feta cheese.

Place casserole under broiler for a few minutes, until feta cheese melts. Serve.

Note: Herbs de Provence is a mixture found in the spice section of most supermarkets. It is a blend of dried basil, fennel seed, marjoram, rosemary, sage, summer savory and thyme. If unavailable, substitute one or two of these herbs to equal 1 tsp.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 62 Calories, 3 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 7 g Carbohydrates, 3 g Protein, 2 g Dietary Fiber, 98 mg Sodium.

Roasted Beets with Dill Dressing

Although the cooking time may be a bit long, the preparation is a breeze. While the beets cook, you can prepare the rest of your meal. Be sure to rinse your hands and cutting board thoroughly after working with beets to prevent pink stains.

- 4 medium beets
- 1 tsp. olive oil

Dressing:

- 2 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 2 tsp. minced fresh dill
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- ¼ tsp. sugar
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Detach beets from their stems and retain for another use. (see note)

Wash each beet and coat with olive oil. Place beets, whole, on baking sheet and roast uncovered for about 1 hour.

Remove beets from oven and let cool slightly. Peel and cut into quarters.

Combine dressing ingredients and serve with roasted beets.

Note: Beet Greens with Onions: Wash beet greens to remove dirt. Chop and cook as you

would spinach. In nonstick skillet, sauté $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped onion in nonstick spray. Add beet greens with water still clinging to leaves. Cover and cook on medium-high heat for about 4 minutes, until beet greens have wilted. Add salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 83 Calories, 4 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 12 g Carbohydrates, 2 g Protein, 3 g Dietary Fiber, 96 mg Sodium.

Asian Stir-fried Vegetables

This recipe requires some slicing, mincing and chopping, but the result is a delicious powerhouse of phytochemicals. A food processor or another pair of hands will help. This stir-fry is a basic recipe, so vary it according to your own tastes. Use your favorite vegetables and add a few new ones to expand your repertoire.

- 1 tsp. canola oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. minced fresh ginger
- 3 scallions, minced
- 2 carrots, peeled and sliced on diagonal into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- $\frac{1}{2}$ large red pepper, sliced into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch strips
- 1 celery stalk, sliced on diagonal into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch pieces
- 1 cup fresh snow peas, trimmed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup canned sliced water chestnuts, drained
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fat-free, reduced sodium chicken or vegetable broth, divided
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. lite soy sauce
- 2 tsp. honey or sugar
- 2 tsp. cornstarch
- 2 Tbsp. sliced almonds, toasted

In large nonstick skillet or wok, heat oil

over medium-high heat. Add garlic, ginger and scallions and stir-fry 1 minute. Add carrots and pepper and stir-fry 2 minutes. Add celery and stir-fry 2 minutes.

Add snow peas and water chestnuts. Stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup broth. Cover and steam 2-3 minutes. Snow peas should be bright green and crisp.

Meanwhile, in measuring cup, combine remaining broth, soy sauce, honey and cornstarch. Add sauce to vegetables and cook 1-2 minutes, until sauce thickens. Top vegetables with sliced almonds. Serve immediately.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving: 68 Calories, 2 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 11g Carbohydrates, 2 g Protein, 2 g Dietary Fiber, 223 mg Sodium.

Classic Ratatouille

This recipe uses far less oil than a traditional ratatouille recipe. Serve chilled in the summer months, and serve warm on frosty winter nights. Leftovers freeze well.

- 1 small eggplant, peeled if desired, top removed
- Salt
- 2 tsp. olive oil, divided
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 small red pepper, seeded and chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 medium tomatoes, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 2 small zucchini, halved lengthwise and cut crosswise into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch strips
- Nonstick cooking spray
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. dried thyme
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. dried oregano
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Pinch of cayenne pepper, if desired

Cut eggplant into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cubes. Place eggplant in colander, sprinkle with salt, and cover with bowl. Let stand for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour.

In large skillet or Dutch oven, heat 1 tsp. oil over medium-high heat. Add onions and bell peppers and sauté 5 minutes. Add garlic and tomatoes and sauté 3 minutes. Remove mixture from pan and set aside.

Heat remaining oil and add zucchini to skillet. Sauté on medium-high heat for about 7 minutes. Remove zucchini and place with other vegetables. Quickly rinse salt from eggplant. Dry with paper towel. Spray clean skillet with nonstick spray. Sauté eggplant on medium heat for about 1 minute. Add reserved vegetables to eggplant. Stir in thyme, oregano, black pepper and cayenne pepper, if using, and cook 5 minutes. Serve.

Makes 10 servings. Per serving: 47 Calories, 1g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 9 g Carbohydrates, 2 g Protein, 3 g Dietary Fiber, 124 mg Sodium.

Creole Okra

Okra soaks up the flavors of tomatoes, garlic and herbs in this tantalizing dish. You may use frozen okra if fresh is unavailable.

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ small onion, diced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ small green pepper, diced
- 1 ripe tomato, seeded and coarsely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. fresh okra, sliced into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. dried thyme
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Pinch of cayenne pepper, if desired

In medium skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic and sauté 3 minutes, stirring frequently. Add green pepper and sauté 3-4 minutes.

Add tomatoes and okra. Cover and cook over low heat 10-15 minutes, until okra is soft. Add oregano, thyme, salt and black pepper, to taste, and cayenne pepper, if using. Cook uncovered about 1 minute. Serve.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 39 Calories, 1g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 7 g Carbohydrates, 1 g Protein, 2 g Dietary Fiber, 7 mg Sodium.

Jicama and Orange Salad

Here's a recipe you don't even have to cook. Crunchy slices of jicama combine with sweet carrots and oranges for a cool, refreshing salad.

- 1 small or medium jicama, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch x 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch sticks
- 2 carrots, peeled and coarsely grated
- 2 small oranges, peeled and sliced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. orange juice
- 1-2 Tbsp. honey
- 2 tsp. lime juice
- Salt, to taste

In medium bowl, mix jicama, carrots and oranges.

In small bowl, combine oil, orange juice, honey, lime juice and salt, to taste. Mix well. Pour over jicama mixture. Chill and serve.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving: 90 Calories, 1 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 19 g Carbohydrates, 1 g Protein, 7 g Dietary Fiber, 13 mg Sodium.

Sweet Brussels Sprouts

These “little cabbage heads” are simply prepared with shallots and a touch of nutmeg. The sweetness of the shallots tempers the natural taste of Brussels sprouts.

- 10 oz. fresh Brussels sprouts
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 2 small shallots, thinly sliced
- ½ cup fat-free, reduced sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth
- ⅛ tsp. ground nutmeg
- Salt, to taste

Remove any yellow leaves from sprouts. Trim bottoms and with tip of knife, make an X in stem end. This will help sprouts to cook evenly.

Place steamer basket inside pot. Add about 2 inches of water. Place sprouts on steamer. Cover and steam on high heat about 10 minutes, until crisp-tender. (Sprouts can also be steamed in microwave oven, in microwave-safe cookware.)

Meanwhile, in medium skillet, heat oil. Add shallots and sauté about 2 minutes.

When sprouts are done, add to shallots. Add broth. Cover and cook over medium heat 2 minutes. Remove cover and cook 1-2 minutes, until broth is absorbed. Season with nutmeg and salt, to taste.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 51 Calories, 2 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 6 g Carbohydrates, 3 g Protein, 3 g Dietary Fiber, 90 mg Sodium.

Whipped Rutabaga

Rutabaga and potatoes combine together beautifully for a wonderful variation on mashed potatoes.

- ½ lb. rutabaga, peeled and cut into 8 pieces
- 1 medium russet potato, peeled and cut into 8 pieces
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- ⅓ - ½ cup warm lowfat milk (see note)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Pinch of nutmeg

In large saucepan, place rutabaga and enough water to cover. Bring to boil. Cover and cook over medium heat 10 minutes.

Add potato to pan and cook 15-20 more minutes. (You may need to increase temperature when you add cold potatoes to pan.) Cook until rutabaga and potato are tender.

Drain vegetables from pan and place in bowl. Add olive oil and mash with potato masher or electric mixer. Slowly add milk, as desired, and whip to desired consistency. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg, to taste.

Note: To warm milk, place in microwave-safe container and heat for 1 minute on high power.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 72 Calories, 2 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 12 g Carbohydrates, 2 g Protein, 2 g Dietary Fiber, 22 mg Sodium.

Braised Kohlrabi

For this dish, only the large bulb is used. The leaves can be used as you would turnip greens for a separate recipe.

- 1 tsp. butter
- 1 ½ lbs. kohlrabi, peeled and cut into ¼-inch strips

1 ½ cups fat-free, reduced sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

In nonstick medium skillet, heat butter over medium heat. Add kohlrabi and sauté 5 minutes.

Add broth, bring to boil, cover and lower heat. Cook for 15-20 minutes, until kohlrabi is tender. Cover may be removed during last 5 minutes, until liquid is absorbed. Add pepper, to taste. Serve.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 31 Calories, 1 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 5 g Carbohydrates, 2 g Protein, 3 g Dietary Fiber, 232 mg Sodium.

Green Beans with Tomatoes and Herbs

Jazz up plain green beans with ingredients you probably have on hand.

1 tsp. olive oil

2 garlic cloves, finely minced

1 small onion, minced

1 large ripe tomato, diced or ½ can (14 oz.) diced tomatoes

1 tsp. minced fresh basil (½ tsp. dried)

1 tsp. minced fresh oregano (½ tsp. dried)

¾ pound trimmed green beans

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

In nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add garlic and onion and sauté for 5 minutes. Add tomato, basil and oregano. Cook 2 minutes. Add green beans. Cover and cook 6 minutes. Add salt and pepper, to taste.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 54 Calories, 2 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 10 g Carbohydrates, 2 g Protein, 3 g Dietary Fiber, 7 mg Sodium.

Cauliflower with Tarragon Vinaigrette

Drizzling a lowfat dressing over a steamed vegetable is an easy way to add flavor.

Boiling water

Salt

1 small head cauliflower (washed and leaves removed)

2 Tbsp. tarragon vinegar or white wine vinegar

2 tsp. olive oil

1 tsp. Dijon mustard

½ tsp. minced tarragon

1 garlic clove, minced

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Set steamer basket in about 2 inches of very lightly salted boiling water in pot large enough to hold whole head. Set head firmly upright on basket and cover pot, or if head protrudes, cover with foil. On high heat, steam cauliflower for 11-15 minutes, until tender, checking water level and adding more if necessary.

Remove cauliflower from steamer and place in colander to drain.

In small bowl, combine remaining ingredients. Drizzle mixture over cauliflower. Serve warm or cold.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 59 Calories, 2 g Total fat (<1g Saturated Fat), 8 g Carbohydrates, 3 g Protein, 3g Dietary Fiber, 76 mg Sodium.

Red Cabbage with Apples

- 2 cups apple juice or cider
- 2-4 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- ½ tsp. allspice
- 3 cups shredded red cabbage
- 1 cup grated red apple
- Pinch of salt

In medium saucepan, bring apple juice, vinegar and allspice to a boil. Add cabbage, apple and salt. Simmer, uncovered for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve warm or cold.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 96 Calories, <1 g Total Fat (0 g Saturated Fat), 24 g Carbohydrates, 1 g Protein, 3 g Dietary Fiber, 85 mg Sodium.

Snow Peas with Cashews

- 1 tsp. canola oil
- 1 tsp. dried orange peel
- 3 cups snow peas, rinsed and drained
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1-2 Tbsp. toasted cashew nuts, finely chopped

In nonstick skillet, heat oil. Add orange peel and cook over low heat for 2 minutes. Add snow peas and salt and pepper, to taste. Return heat to medium. Stirring constantly, cook 3 to 4 minutes or until bright green and crunchy. Sprinkle with cashews. Serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 66 Calories, 2 g Total Fat (<1 g Saturated Fat), 8 g Carbohydrates, 4 g Protein, 3 g Dietary Fiber, 5 mg Sodium.

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