



FRESH IDEAS FOR FRESH VEGETABLES

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION- CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS
MAY 2014



Fresh produce has great appeal, for example, who can resist a fragrant vine-ripened tomato? As Idaho schools look for more ways to add attractive, nutritious produce to their menus, new ideas can help. These fresh vegetable preparation sheets can be a helpful resource on things such as yield, preparation, and seasoning tips for vegetables that may be less familiar, and provide fresh ideas for your old favorites.

Today, schools have put a greater emphasis on using local food in meals for a variety of reasons. Purchasing unprocessed produce through farm to school connections is a great opportunity to educate students on where food comes from as well as promote good nutrition. When students make these connections, they are more likely to try new or unfamiliar foods.

As school gardens become more popular, school cafeterias can help promote student efforts by featuring something school-grown on the menu or salad bar when available. If the quantity of the school garden harvest is insufficient to serve the entire school, purchased fresh produce can easily supplement it. This tool can help school food service feature school garden produce with finesse.

BOK CHOY



Bok Choy is most often lightly stir fried or served raw in salads. It can also be added to hot broth for a light soup.

FUN FACT #1:
Bok Choy, also known as Chinese Cabbage, has been grown and cultivated in China for over 5,000 years. Sometimes it is referred to as a "soup spoon" because of the shape of its leaves.

FUN FACT #2:
There are many different varieties. Two common ones are Shanghai, which is green stemmed, and Pak-choy, which is white stemmed.

Bok Choy is in the DARK GREEN vegetable group. It is rich in vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin K, and Folate.

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The front can be used as a marketing tool when featuring a vegetable in a meal. It contains fun facts, some basic nutrition information and can be displayed on the serving line for students to see near the featured vegetable.

BOK CHOY

Safety:	To separate the stalks, trim off the end of the stems and wash with cold water. If using whole or halved, dunk in cold water and shake upside down, repeating until all grit is removed. Use gloves for product that will be served raw. Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross-contamination.
Yield:	For 100 1 cup servings of raw bok choy, purchase 27.7 lbs. The Food Buying Guide (2013) does not list the cooked yield of bok choy , but calculations show a raw to cooked yield of 41%, so 33.8 lbs fresh should yield 100 1/2 cup servings cooked. Verify these measurements in your own kitchen.
Quality:	Bok Choy should have thick, fleshy, firm stalks and glossy, dark-green leaves. There should be no bruised or slimy spots on the stem or leaves. The leafy portion should look fresh, not wilted.
Storage:	Bok Choy should be stored in refrigeration between 32 and 41 degrees, and may keep for up to 5 days.
Preparation:	To prepare Bok Choy, cut the bottom of the plant off to separate the stems like celery. Chop or slice stem ends and chop leafy end. To be used raw as a salad green or cooked. Slice the stem ends lengthwise in oil or broth, and then add the leafy ends to wilt. Do not overcook. Season as is desired. Often, baby bok choy is steamed whole or halved lengthwise to preserve the beauty of the shape.
Seasonings:	Bok Choy is delicious seasoned lightly with Asian flavors, like garlic and sesame, or ginger & soy sauce.



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The back each sheet contains information valuable to food service personnel. It includes sections on safety, yield, quality, storage, preparation, and recommended seasonings tips.

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This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

BROCCOLI



Broccoli is most often served as steamed florets, but it is also delicious roasted, sautéed, and stir fried. It can also be a scrumptious addition to casseroles, soups, and salads.

FUN FACT #1:

If broccoli is not harvested at the correct time, it will turn into a head full of yellow blooms.

Broccoli is a **DARK GREEN** vegetable. It is high in vitamin C and vitamin K, and is a good source of fiber, folate, vitamin A, and Manganese. It also has lots of phytochemicals, like lutein and zeaxanthin.

FUN FACT #2:

Broccoli comes from the Latin word “brachium,” which translates to “branch” or “arm.”



BROCCOLI

Safety:	<p>Wash broccoli thoroughly before preparing. Store at or below 41 °F for no more than 5 days. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross-contamination.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100 1/2 cup servings of raw purchase 20.6 lbs of untrimmed fresh broccoli. For 100 1/2 cup servings of chopped, cooked, purchase 2 lbs. One pound of untrimmed broccoli is 4.8 cup servings.</p>
Quality:	<p>Broccoli should be firm with compact clusters of small flower buds, thin stems, and light green stalks that are about five inches long. The vegetable should not be yellow.</p>
Storage:	<p>Mist lightly with water and store under refrigeration for up to five days.</p>
Preparation:	<p>Broccoli florets are the most used part of the vegetable, but the stem may be eaten as well. Florets and stems should be cut into bite sized pieces before being lightly steamed. Take care not to overcook. Batch cooking is ideal. Shredded broccoli stems are often used as a delicious substitute for cabbage in coleslaw or in crunchy stir fries.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Broccoli goes with Asian (sesame, ginger, soy sauce, garlic) seasonings. Broccoli also goes well with cheese and can be easily added into casseroles or sprinkled with Parmesan cheese.</p>



BOK CHOY



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BOK CHOY

Safety:	<p>To separate the stalks, trim off the end of the stems and wash with cold water. If using whole or halved, dunk in cold water and shake upside down, repeating until all grit is removed.</p> <p>Use gloves for product that will be served raw.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross-contamination.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100 1 cup servings of raw bok choy, purchase 27.7 lbs. The Food Buying Guide (2013) does not list the cooked yield of bok choy, but calculations show a raw to cooked yield of 41%, so 33.8 lbs fresh should yield 100 ½ cup servings cooked. Verify these measurements in your own kitchen.</p>
Quality:	<p>Bok Choy should have thick, fleshy, firm stalks and glossy, dark-green leaves. There should be no bruised or slimy spots on the stem or leaves. The leafy portion should look fresh, not wilted.</p>
Storage:	<p>Bok Choy should be stored in refrigeration between 32 and 41 degrees, and may keep for up to 5 days.</p>
Preparation:	<p>To prepare Bok Choy, cut the bottom of the plant off to separate the stems like celery. Chop or slice stem ends and chop leafy end. To be used raw as a salad green or cooked. Sauté the stem ends briefly in oil or broth, and then add the leafy ends to wilt. Do not overcook. Season it as desired. Often, baby bok choy is steamed whole or halved lengthwise to preserve the beauty of the shape.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Bok Choy is delicious seasoned lightly with Asian flavors, like garlic and sesame, or ginger & soy sauce.</p>



KALE



Kale is a DARK GREEN vegetable. It has about six times the recommended daily value of vitamin K. (Maybe they should call it vitamin Kale!) It is also high in vitamin A, vitamin C, and folate, and is a good source of calcium.

Kale may be served raw in salads or it can be sautéed or steamed as a side dish. Kale tastes great in pasta, hearty soups, pesto sauces, or in stir-fry. Dried kale makes a very delicate crunchy chip.

FUN FACT :

In Scotland being invited to “come to kale” was an invitation to dinner.

Kale is used in many other worldwide cuisines, including Italian, Irish, Chinese, Portuguese, Brazilian, African, German, Danish, and Swedish.

Kale grows best in cool weather and is actually sweeter after a light frost. Kale is a great fall crop for school gardens.



KALE

Safety:	<p>Purchase or obtain leafy greens from a trusted source. Avoid kale that may have been exposed to fresh animal manures during growing or harvest. Rinse leaves in water bath to remove any grit, drain, and allow to air dry. Do not soak. Use gloves with produce that will be served raw.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross-contamination.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100, ½ cup servings chopped, cooked, purchase 17.0 lbs of untrimmed kale. For 100, 1 cup raw chopped servings, purchase 11.6 lbs of untrimmed kale.</p>
Quality:	<p>Choose crisp—never wilted—leaves that are bright and deep in color. The stems should also appear fresh and moist. Smaller leaves are more tender and milder in flavor than larger leaves.</p>
Storage:	<p>Store kale at 41 °F or below in produce bags for 3-5 days. Kale develops a stronger flavor the longer it is stored, so it is best used soon after purchase.</p>
Preparation:	<p>Trim away any bruised leaves. Trim out center stalk only if it is tough. The leaves may be torn into pieces by hand, chopped, or shredded depending upon the desired result. Cooking or serving kale with a little bit of healthy oil, like olive oil, helps the body absorb the fat-soluble nutrients.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>As kale is used in many cuisines, it lends itself to a variety of seasonings, such as Parmesan cheese (Italy), or garlic and soy sauce (Asian). In many European cuisines, it is often served with potatoes or in potato soups.</p>



SPINACH



Spinach is often served raw in salads or sandwiches. It is also enjoyed cooked or sautéed in soups, pastas, and dips.

Spinach is a **DARK GREEN** vegetable. Spinach is high in vitamin A, vitamin K, and is a good source of vitamin C and folate. And for all that goodness, it's very low in calories—one cup of raw spinach only has about 6 calories!

FUN FACT :

Iran was the first place to cultivate spinach, and that was over 2,000 years ago. The popularity of spinach began in the early 1800's in the United States, and the spinach industry also saw a surge in consumption after the cartoon Popeye the Sailor Man was developed in the 1920's. Spinach likes to grow during cool weather and only takes about 4-6 weeks from seed to harvest, so it is a good crop for school gardens.



SPINACH

Safety:	<p>Wash spinach before use and preparation. If it is prepared before being served, store spinach in damp paper towel in a plastic bag and keep refrigerated at 41° F or below for no more than 3-5 days.</p> <p>Purchase or obtain spinach from a trusted source. Avoid spinach that may have been exposed to fresh animal manures during growing or harvest.</p> <p>Use gloves in handling produce that will be served raw.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables than for meat to prevent cross-contamination.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100 ½ cup servings of cooked spinach, purchase 26.4 lbs of ready-to-use fresh spinach leaves.</p> <p>For 100 1 cup servings of raw spinach (NSLP ½ cup credit) purchase 16 lbs of ready-to-use fresh spinach leaves.</p>
Quality:	<p>Look for spinach without damage from insects and other environmental sources. Spinach is often picked or bought in large green bunches; choose ones that are fresh, crunchy, and ones that retain its earthy dark green color. Reject bunches that are yellowed.</p>
Storage:	<p>Dampen a paper towel and loosely wrap Spinach. Spinach can be stored in a plastic bag for a maximum of 3 to 5 days in refrigeration.</p>
Preparation	<p>Spinach should be washed several times before use to rid of any material like dirt and sand. Spinach stems should also be trimmed to a desired length. Discard any unused part of the vegetable.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Spinach can be enjoyed by sautéing with simple ingredients such as, lemon, garlic, and olive oil. It is also delicious fresh in salads with vinegar based dressings.</p>



TOMATO



Tomatoes are often served raw on salads and sandwiches, or can be added to soups, casseroles, and stews. Tomatoes can be baked, broiled, roasted, juiced, blended, boiled, or stewed, and may be used in a variety of dishes.

Tomatoes are rich in vitamin A and vitamin C and are a RED/ORANGE vegetable. Tomatoes are also a rich source of lycopene, an antioxidant which may help prevent disease. Lycopene in tomatoes is enhanced by cooking them.

FUN FACT :

While a tomato is botanically considered a fruit, it is considered a vegetable for culinary uses.

Tomato plants are fun to grow in gardens. They grow best in the summer when it is hot.



TOMATO

Safety:	<p>Wash tomatoes in running water before using them (CDC recommends using water about 10° F warmer than the tomato). Do not soak tomatoes. Discard tomatoes with broken skin.</p> <p>Hold cut tomatoes at or below 41° F. Unrefrigerated cut tomatoes must be discarded within 4 hours.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables than for meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100 ½ cup servings of raw tomato purchase 12 lbs - 15 lbs.</p>
Quality:	<p>Ensure whole product is free from obvious signs of soil and skin damage, such as punctures. Cut away bruised or damaged areas, or do not use the tomato. Fresh whole tomatoes should be chilled before being cut if they will be held.</p>
Storage:	<p>Whole undamaged tomatoes can be stored in a cool dry place (55-65° F) but they are most often held in the chiller. After cutting, hold tomatoes at 41° F or below. Refrigerated cut tomatoes to must be consumed or discarded within 7 days.</p> <p>Vine Ripened garden tomatoes are most flavorful, but have a short storage time.</p>
Preparation:	<p>Wash tomatoes under warm, fresh water. Remove core. Slice in half lengthwise. Tomato seeds may be removed if desired by gently squeezing the fruit and using a spoon. Continue to slice or chop into desired pieces to serve fresh. Whole grape or cherry tomatoes may not need to be cut at all.</p> <p>Tomatoes can also be pureed or chopped and quickly cooked for a fresh tasting sauce or simmered for a long time for a more traditional sauce</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Tomatoes are delicious with Italian seasonings, such as basil, oregano, garlic, and olive oil. They also are great with Mexican/Southwest flavors, such as cilantro, onion, and peppers as a fresh “pico de gallo” salsa.</p> <p>Chopped or sliced fresh tomatoes are a nice addition to sandwiches, salads, pastas, and pizzas.</p>



SWEET POTATOES



Sweet potatoes are a RED/ORANGE vegetable. The deep orange color is beta carotene, which is vitamin A. Sweet potato is one richest source of vitamin A. They also are a good source of fiber, potassium, and vitamin C.

Sweet potatoes are commonly served whole, in large chunks, or mashed. They are always served cooked. They can be baked as thick slices like home fries or thin sliced like chips. They are used in desserts too, like Sweet Potato Pie.

FUN FACT :

Sweet potatoes are one of the oldest known vegetables. In the mid-20th century, the orange sweet potato was introduced into the United States and given the name “yam.” A sweet potato and yam are actually different, but in many places, the names are used interchangeably.

Sweet potatoes need a long growing season, so they are usually grown in the Southern parts of the US.

In Asia and Micronesia typical sweet potatoes are BLUE not orange.



SWEET POTATOES

Safety:	<p>Sweet potatoes should be cleaned before cutting and cooking by using a vegetable brush under running water. Dry with a clean towel.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables than for meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100 ½ cup servings of cooked, mashed sweet potatoes, purchase 36.4 lbs of fresh.</p> <p>For cooked, sliced sweet potatoes, purchase 22 lbs of fresh.</p>
Quality:	<p>High quality sweet potatoes are firm and exhibit an absence of decay. For even cooking, look for a sweet potato with uniform shape.</p>
Storage:	<p>Store uncooked, uncut sweet potatoes in a cool (around 50° F) dry, well ventilated container for up to two weeks. Cut or peeled raw sweet potatoes should be stored at 41° F or below. Cooked sweet potato can be kept up to 7 days under refrigeration or up to 4-6 months in the freezer.</p>
Preparation:	<p>Wash sweet potatoes (see safety section).</p> <p>Peel sweet potatoes if desired. If potatoes are not cooked after peeling, place in a bowl of clean water and refrigerate to keep them from getting dark.</p> <p>To easily peel a boiled sweet potato: drain water and immediately place in cold water.</p> <p>To chop: Peel if desired. Cut in discs or strips. The smaller the cut sweet potato, the faster it will cook/bake.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Baked sweet potatoes are often served with butter. Sweet potatoes can be seasoned with cinnamon or nutmeg. As sweet potato home fries, they taste great seasoned just like French fries.</p>



PUMPKIN



Pumpkin is a RED/ORANGE vegetable. A half cup of pumpkin provides more than a day's worth of vitamin A. It is also a good source of potassium, vitamin C, and fiber.

Typically, we think of pumpkin as a sweetened dessert item, but be sure to broaden your culinary palate and try it in savory soups and roasted. Serve fresh pumpkin cubed and roasted, or purée it and use it in creamy soups, baked goods, or smoothies.

FUN FACT :

Pumpkins are 90 percent water.

Pumpkin seeds can be roasted as a snack.

In early colonial times, pumpkins were used as an ingredient for the crust of pies, not the filling.

Pumpkins are also used as feed for animals.

PUMPKIN

<p>Safety:</p>	<p>Mark any cut raw pumpkin with an in-house “use by” date of 3-5 days and discard if not used by that date.</p> <p>If pumpkin has soft spots or black spots, or is moldy inside, throw it away.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables than for meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
<p>Yield:</p>	<p>42.6 lbs of fresh pumpkin should yield 100 ½ cup mashed pumpkin.</p>
<p>Quality:</p>	<p>Select pumpkins with an intact rind and stem. Pumpkins will not store long if stem is missing or rind has been punctured.</p> <p>Pumpkins should be hard and fully colored (Japanese pumpkin rinds stay dark green) and feel solid.</p>
<p>Storage:</p>	<p>Pumpkins can be stored in a cool dark place for 3 months or longer if the rind and stem stay intact.</p> <p>Store all produce 3-6 inches off the floor. If stored in the chiller, do not store under foods that may drip and cross-contaminate, such as meat.</p>
<p>Preparation:</p>	<p>Select “pie-type” or Japanese Kabocha pumpkins for best results. (Pumpkins raised for decoration are watery and bland.) Rinse the outside of the pumpkin before cutting—using continuous running water. Take care to clean the area that was on the ground. Place it upright, using large chef knife, insert the point beneath the stem and draw down to cut the pumpkin in half. Scoop out seeds. It can now be cut into slices or cubes for steaming or roasting.</p>
<p>Seasoning:</p>	<p>Pumpkin squash is delicious with cinnamon and nutmeg. It also blends well with savory rosemary and sage, or curry.</p>

TIP: If winter squash is hard to cut, you can bake, steam, or microwave the whole squash for about 5 minutes to soften the rind just enough to make it easier to cut. Cut and cook immediately, do not store partially cooked cubes.



CARROTS



Raw carrots can be eaten plain as a snack or an appetizer. Carrots can be sliced, chopped, or grated to add to salads. Slice carrots into carrot sticks and dip into low-fat dressing or other low-fat dip. Carrots can be cooked using many different methods, such as boiling, steaming, roasting, or grilling, and can be eaten as a side dish on their own or cooked with other vegetables. Carrots can be put into soups, stews, casseroles, cakes, and quick breads.

Carrots are a RED/ORANGE vegetable. $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of carrots provides more than one day's worth of vitamin A. The vitamin A comes from Beta Carotene, which is what gives the carrot its orange color. Carrots are also a good source of vitamin K.

FUN FACT :

Carrots are not always orange and can be found in purple, white, red, or yellow. Carrots were the first vegetable to be canned commercially. The carrot is a member of the parsley family. This family includes celery, parsnip, fennel, dill, and coriander. Carrots are even more nutritious cooked. Cooking softens the cells and makes more nutrients available. Eating carrots with a bit of fat, such as olive oil, increases the body's absorption of beta-carotene.



CARROTS

Safety:	<p>Wash carrots before slicing. Store cooked fresh carrots in refrigerator at 41 °F. Reject cracked or split whole carrots, as it is difficult to remove dirt from the cracks.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables than for meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100, ½ cup servings of raw chopped carrots, purchase 19 lbs.</p> <p>For 100, ½ cup servings of cooked sliced carrots, purchase 24.6 lbs.</p>
Quality:	<p>Choose well-shaped, smooth, firm, crisp carrots with deep orange color and fresh, green tops. Avoid soft, wilted, or split carrots.</p>
Storage:	<p>Carrots with removed tops should be stored in the refrigerator in a plastic bag, loosely tied, or knotted for up to 2 weeks. Don't store carrots together with apples or pears. It will make the carrots have a bitter flavor.</p>
Preparation:	<p>Carrots should be scrubbed to remove any dirt on the outer layer. Carrots can also be peeled with a vegetable peeler or carefully using a knife after rinsing.</p> <p>Carrots can be sliced into coins or angled rounds. To cut into sticks or make dices, cut the carrot into 3" long sections, slice in half lengthwise, and lay each half flat on cutting board. Cut lengthwise into sticks. To dice, line up sticks and cut into desired size.</p>
Seasoning:	<p>Cooked carrots taste delicious with Italian seasoning, garlic, dill, ginger, or chives. They are also great with balsamic vinegar or lemon pepper. Raw carrots are great with dips, like lowfat yogurt based ranch dips, or hummus.</p>



BUTTERNUT SQUASH



Butternut squash is a RED/ORANGE vegetable. It is a good source of vitamin A from beta-carotene, which gives it that bright orange color. It is also a good source of vitamin C and fiber.

Butternut squash is often baked or roasted, but can be cubed and steamed also. If sliced thin, it can also be pan fried. Pureed, it is a delicious base to hearty soups.

This versatile, flavorful winter squash can be used as a side dish or a vegetarian main course.

Butternut squash is also very yummy “squashed” or mashed.

FUN FACT :

Winter squash first migrated to Europe from Peru by Spanish Explorer Francisco Pizarro in the early 16th century. Many Europeans referred to squash as “melons.”

In Native American, the word “squash” means “eaten raw” but winter squash are almost never eaten raw.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Safety:	<p>Wash butternut squash before slicing. Store cut squash in the refrigerator. Use cut squash within a week.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables than for meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100 ½ cup servings of cooked, cubed butternut squash purchase 15 lbs. For 100 ½ cup servings of butternut squash, mashed purchase 38 lbs.</p>
Quality:	<p>Choose an unblemished squash that feels heavy for its size with a dull, buff colored skin. Avoid those with green streaks or glossy skin as they are immature. Purchase squash with the stem intact and remove just before preparing.</p>
Storage:	<p>Store whole winter squash in a cool (60-65 °F), dry place, not in the refrigerator. In proper conditions, whole squash with an intact stem can keep for months.</p>
Preparation:	<p>Remove the hard stem. If necessary for the recipe, pare with a sharp vegetable peeler or sharp paring knife. (If roasting in large chunks, leave skin on. It removes more easily after roasting.)</p> <p>Use a chef's knife to separate the top from the bottom of the squash.</p> <p>Cut the larger bottom section in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds using a spoon.</p> <p>Cut the squash into 1 to 1 1/2-inch-thick slices or dice into large pieces. The squash is now ready to be cooked.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Butternut squash is delicious with cinnamon and nutmeg. It also blends well with savory rosemary and sage.</p>

TIP: If winter squash is hard to cut, you can bake, steam, or microwave the whole squash for about 5 minutes to soften the rind just enough to make it easier to cut. Cut and cook immediately, do not store partially cooked cubes.



ACORN SQUASH



Acorn Squash is a part of the RED/ORANGE vegetable group. It is most commonly found in the fall and winter seasons but can be grown all year round. This sweet tasting squash is high in fiber and a good source of vitamins A, C, and B6, magnesium, manganese, potassium, and thiamin.

This winter squash is typically baked and served as a sweet nutty side dish. It can also be stuffed, boiled, or pureed into a creamy soup.

FUN FACT :

The acorn squash, also known as the Danish squash has been a meal time favorite since 4,000 B.C. when it was baked whole in outdoor clay and brick ovens.

ACORN SQUASH

Safety:	<p>Scrub Acorn Squash with a vegetable brush under running cold water before cutting to avoid contaminating the inside of the squash.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables than for meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
Yield:	<p>1 lb whole squash yields 0.7 lb or 2.35 cups of ready to cook pared squash. For 100, ½ cup servings, purchase 42.6 lbs.</p>
Quality:	<p>When purchasing look for a firm squash that feels heavy in the hand. The squash should be dull in color and have green and orange on the rind. The stem should be intact.</p>
Storage:	<p>Store whole & unwashed in a cool (45° F) dry place. Properly stored squash can last up to 3 months. Store cut squash in plastic wrap in the refrigerator and use within a week.</p>
Preparation:	<p>Cut Acorn Squash in half and scoop out seeds and strings with a spoon. For Puree: Roast as a ½ squash with the rind on. Remove soft cooked flesh from rind and mash or puree. For Cubes: After cutting and removing seeds, cut along natural indentation to cube. It is often easier to peel the cubed pieces at this point than peel the whole squash because of its ribbed shape.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Acorn Squash is complimented very well by roasting. It can be sweet or savory, with seasonings such as butter & maple syrup or sage & thyme. For Island-style squash soup, try it pureed with broth, a little coconut milk, and curry powder.</p>

TIP: If acorn squash is hard to cut, you can bake, steam, or microwave the whole squash for about 5 minutes to soften the rind just enough to make it easier to cut. Cut and cook immediately, do not store partially cooked cubes.



PEAS, SHELLED



Peas can be served in a variety of ways. Often, they are served steamed or boiled as a vegetable side dish. They are also a delicious colorful addition to pasta, rice, and potato dishes.

Shelled peas are a **STARCHY** vegetable, and are high in vitamin K. They are a good source of vitamin C, fiber, thiamin, and folate. If a pea pod is left on the vine until after the pods dry up, they are lower in sugar and higher in protein and starch.

FUN FACT :

Peas are green because they are picked when they are still immature. A ripe pea is actually yellow! In the 1600s it became trendy to eat peas while they were still green. Peas like to grow in cool weather and are a good spring crop for school gardens. Fresh peas from the garden are sometimes so sweet and delicious that they get eaten **BEFORE** they make it to the kitchen.

PEAS, SHELLED

<p>Safety:</p>	<p>Peas should be rinsed under running water before shelling. Peas should stay in the pod until the time of use.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
<p>Yield:</p>	<p>For 100, ½ cup servings of fresh green shelled peas, purchase 19 lbs.</p> <p>Fresh peas in shell, like those fresh from a school garden, vary in weight. Weigh after shelling for accurate yield.</p>
<p>Quality:</p>	<p>Peas should be bright green in color and otherwise free of blemishes or yellow. They should be firm to the touch and not rattle if they are shaken. Pods should look full, but not crowded. Pods that are overcrowded or have shells that look dry or wrinkled are too mature.</p>
<p>Storage:</p>	<p>Peas lose sweetness and get starchier the longer they are stored, so use them as soon as possible. Fresh peas may be stored at 41° F for up to one week or 32° F for up to two weeks.</p>
<p>Preparation:</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Open the pod along the seam.</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Peas should be rinsed under running water. Sugar snap peas may be served raw and should be kept in the pod (see Peas with edible pods cooking sheet).</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Peas may be cooked by sautéing, steaming, or microwaving. Lightly steam or blanch shelled peas then quickly chill them in ice water for use on salad bars.</p> </div> </div>
<p>Seasonings:</p>	<p>Peas are delicious with many seasonings, including dill, turmeric, salt & pepper, olive oil, garlic, onion, curry, and mint.</p>

POTATOES



Potatoes are a smooth, starchy vegetable with a subtly sweet taste. They are a very versatile vegetable and can be baked, mashed, used for soups, and to make potato salad.

Potatoes are in the **STARCHY** vegetable group. Potatoes have more Potassium than bananas. They are also high in vitamin C and vitamin B6. They are a good source of fiber, magnesium, phosphorus, and niacin.

FUN FACT :

Idaho farms grow **14.3 BILLION pounds** of potatoes every year. That is more than any other state!

There are over 100 kinds of potatoes sold in the U.S. They come in gold, white, yellow, red, blue, and purple. Idaho likes to grow Russets.

POTATOES

Safety:	<p>Green spots can develop on potatoes if they are exposed to light. Cut these green parts off if they occur.</p> <p>Scrub potatoes before cutting or peeling to prevent contamination. Use cut/peeled potatoes immediately. You can refrigerate cut potatoes for 1-2 days, but with loss of quality.</p> <p>If baking whole, poke them a few times with a fork to let the steam escape.</p> <p>Cooked potatoes need to be chilled before making cold dishes like potato salad.</p> <p>Leftover cooked potato products need to be refrigerated like any other cooked vegetable, including whole baked.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
Yield:	<p>Approximately 5 oz. of raw potato is equal to ½ cup serving. Purchase 37.6 lbs of 120 count (about 6 oz.) for about 100 servings of whole baked potatoes. For peeled, diced potatoes, calculate about 4-½ cup servings per lb, or 24 lbs per 100 servings.</p>
Quality:	<p>Look for potatoes with a smooth, firm texture with no cuts, bruises, or discoloration. Potatoes that are consistent in size will simplify cooking if serving them whole. Large potatoes may be more practical for casseroles where potatoes are sliced or diced.</p>
Storage:	<p>Do not refrigerate uncut raw potatoes, they like it cool, but NOT cold. Keep them out of the light in a dry, cool place, preferably in paper or perforated plastic bags. Never wash potatoes before storing.</p>
Preparation:	<p>Most nutrients are located in, or close to, the skins. If you must peel, only take off the thin outer skin.</p> <p>Steaming or microwaving potatoes will retain most of the nutrients, especially if done with the skins intact.</p> <p>Baked potatoes should not be foil wrapped—this steams them and they lose that desirable grainy baked potato texture.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Potatoes respond well to a number of savory seasonings including garlic, pepper, oregano, rosemary, dill, paprika, cumin, and many others.</p>

- COMMON POTATO DISHES:**
- Baked potato bar
 - Home fries
 - Potato salad
 - Potato bread
 - Mashed potatoes
 - Baked potato soup
 - Potato latkes

ASPARAGUS



Asparagus is in the OTHER vegetable group. It is high in folate and vitamin K and a good source of vitamin C, and vitamin A.

Asparagus is most often served steamed as a vegetable side dish. It is also wonderful served roasted, sautéed, and grilled.

FUN FACT :

Asparagus was first grown in Greece over 2,500 years ago! It was believed in ancient times that asparagus help prevent bee stings and relieved tooth aches. Today it is eaten as a delicious vegetable. In Idaho, the asparagus harvest happens in April and May. Unlike most vegetables, asparagus is a perennial plant. That means it comes back every year without replanting. Because of that, sometimes you'll see asparagus growing wild along irrigation canals in parts of Idaho.



ASPARAGUS

Safety:	<p>Wash asparagus spears before cutting or cooking. Store it under refrigeration for 3-4 days. Sometimes asparagus is stored upright in a small amount of water. Some health inspectors find this risky, so it should be avoided in school food service. Instead, wrap cut ends in a clean damp paper towel and store in plastic.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100, ½ cup servings of cooked drained cuts & tips, you need 41.8 lbs. One pound of fresh asparagus yields 2.4 servings - ½ cup.</p>
Quality:	<p>Look for closed compacted tips and smooth round spears. It should have a rich green color throughout the stalk with a firm upright body. Thick spears may be more tender than thin spears.</p>
Storage:	<p>If possible, asparagus should be stored upright, with the cut ends wrapped in a clean damp paper towel. Put in a plastic bag to maintain moisture and humidity. Keep in the coldest part of the refrigerator.</p>
Preparation:	<p>Trim off about 1 inch of the cut stem ends. Asparagus can be left as whole spears for an elegant presentation or chopped into 1" cuts for easier eating. Steam, blanch, sauté, or roast.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Asparagus is delicious plain or with seasonings. Try a little lemon juice, parmesan cheese, or a light sprinkle of garlic.</p>



CUCUMBERS



Fresh cucumbers add crunchy texture and cool flavor to salads, salsas, and sandwiches. Typically in American cuisine, they are eaten raw although they may also be steamed or sautéed.

Cucumbers are in the OTHER vegetable subgroup. If you leave the peel on, they are a good source of vitamin K, and have some potassium and vitamin C too. They are really, REALLY low in calories.

FUN FACT :

Cucumbers are 96% water. The skin is the most nutritious part, so leave it on, if you can. Cucumbers can be 20 °F lower in temperature on the inside than the outside air. Cucumber vines can produce 25-125 cucumbers in one season. A cucumber's flavor comes from the seeds.



CUCUMBERS

Safety:	<p>Wash thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting, or cooking. Scrub with a clean produce brush and dry with a clean cloth or paper towel. If the cucumber has been waxed, gently scrub until wax is removed. Tip: Even if you plan to peel the cucumber before eating, it is still important to wash it first so dirt and bacteria are not transferred from the knife into the cut cucumber.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
Yield:	For 100, ½ cup servings of unpared, sliced cucumbers purchase 16.2 lbs.
Quality:	<p>When choosing your cucumber you should look for a firm cucumber without soft spots. They should have a solid green color without signs of yellowing or puffiness. Some cucumbers are waxed to preserve moisture. Long slender English cucumbers have a very tender skin and are usually wrapped in plastic to preserve moisture.</p> <p>For school garden raised cucumbers, wrap cucumbers individually in plastic wrap to prevent moisture loss if you need to store them for more than 1 day.</p>
Storage:	Fresh whole cucumbers can be stored under refrigeration for about one week
Preparation:	<p>For maximum nutrition, try to serve cucumber(s) with some of the skin:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1: Rinse and dry the cucumber.2: Score the outer peel lengthwise with a fork or citrus zester to reduce toughness.3: Trim the ends.4: At this point you can slice them into rounds.5: To dice them, cut in half length ways. If desired, the seeds can be removed with a teaspoon.6. Chop as desired.
Seasonings:	Fresh or dried herbs and spices have bold flavors that enhance the taste of cucumbers. Plain cucumbers are delicious sprinkled with tender fresh herbs like dill, cilantro, or parsley. They blend well in salsas or salads with a variety of flavors, such as chili powder, thyme, garlic, pepper, lemon, onion, or turmeric.



GREEN BEANS



Green beans are in the OTHER vegetable group category. They are a good source of vitamin C and vitamin K. They also have fiber, vitamin A, folate, and other nutrients.

Green beans can be served steamed, boiled, sautéed. They also can be blanched and used on a salad bar.

FUN FACT :

Green beans take nitrogen from the air and put it back into the soil, so growing green beans can be good for your school garden soil! Green beans can actually be green, yellow, purple, or speckled. “Haricot vert” is French for green bean. This term often refers to young slender beans served whole.



GREEN BEANS

Safety:	<p>Fresh green beans can be stored in the refrigerator for 3-4 days in a plastic bag. Before cooking or raw use, wash the green beans under running water and trim off the ends. The green beans can be cut into smaller pieces, or left whole.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100, ½ cup servings, purchase 18.2 lbs of whole untrimmed beans.</p> <p>For 100, ½ cup servings, purchase 16.2 lbs of pretrimmed & cut fresh green beans.</p>
Quality:	<p>When choosing or receiving green beans, ensure that the green bean is long, with a straight pod, and has good color. A good way to check for quality is to see if the bean snaps easily when it is bent. Choose green beans that have no decay or blemishes present.</p>
Storage:	<p>For optimum results, untrimmed green beans should be stored in the warmest part of the refrigerator, or in the coolest part of the storeroom, 45-50 ° F, in 85%-95% humidity.</p> <p>Green beans should be stored away from apples and bananas to maintain their freshness longer.</p>
Preparation:	<p>Wash beans and trim off stem ends and tails. Beans can be snapped, cut, or left whole.</p> <p><u>Blanched</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boil or steam for 2-3 minutes and then plunge into ice water until chilled. This softens the beans slightly and brings out the color. Use blanched beans on salad bars, in marinated bean salads, and in stir fry. <p><u>Boiled</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring medium pot of water to a boil and add green beans. Boil green beans for 4-5 minutes uncovered until they are crisp/tender. When complete, drain the green beans from the water. Season to preference and enjoy! <p><u>Steamed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a commercial steamer for 3-5 minutes. Batch cook to insure a quality product is served.
Seasonings:	<p>Green beans are delicious with Italian seasonings and tomatoes, dill, onions, garlic, lemon, sesame and ginger, or just with a little salt and pepper.</p>

ONIONS



Onions are in the OTHER vegetable subgroup. They provide fiber, and vitamin C, and other nutrients.

Onions are a flavor powerhouse. They are often roasted or sautéed with other vegetables as a base for soups and sauces. Onions can be caramelized to mellow and deepen their flavor for use with meats and other dishes. Some sweet mild onions, like Walla Walla, are delicious raw.

FUN FACT :

Commonly used in a wide variety of dishes and cuisines.

To reduce tears when cutting, chill the onion first and then cut off the top and peel the outer layers leaving the root end intact.

The root end has the highest concentration of sulfuric compounds that make your eyes tear.



ONIONS

Safety:	<p>Maintain storage temperature for no longer than 4-8 weeks. Sweet onions, such as Walla Walla, have a much shorter shelf life. Refrigerate cut onions and use within a few days.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100, ½ cup servings cooked onion pieces, purchase 25.4 lbs of fresh mature, whole onions.</p>
Quality:	<p>Purchase firm onions that have dry papery skins. Reject cooking onions that have started to sprout or have soft or moist spots.</p>
Storage:	<p>For best results, store whole cooking onions like potatoes. Keep them cool, but not refrigerated. Keep them in a well-ventilated container, like a mesh bag, and keep them from light. Use within 4 weeks.</p>
Preparation:	<p>To Chop: Cut off the neck end of the onion, leaving the root end intact to hold the onion together. Cut it in half stem to root. Peel outer layer and skin. Place cut side down on board and make about three horizontal cuts of equal distance apart, parallel to the board. Cut down perpendicular to the cutting board and the root about 2 cm apart but do not cut all of the way through. Dice the onion to the root end. Discard root end.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Onions can function as a seasoning and blend with many different cuisines. Here are some traditional flavor combinations:</p> <p>French (mirepoix): Onion, carrots, celery</p> <p>Cajun (trinity): Onions, bell peppers, celery</p> <p>Italian (soffritto): Onions, garlic, fennel</p> <p>Indian: Onions, hot peppers, ginger</p> <p>Mexican: Onions, garlic, hot peppers</p>



RADISH



Commonly served raw in salads; can also be steamed or sautéed. In American cuisine, the bulb is generally eaten raw. The flesh has a crisp texture and peppery flavor.

Radishes are in the OTHER vegetable subgroup. They are round to cylindrical; with color ranging from red to white. Japanese long white radishes are also called Daikon. They are a good source vitamin C, and also provide fiber and folate.

FUN FACT :

The most commonly eaten part of a radish is the root, although the entire plant is edible. The tops can be used as a peppery salad vegetable also. Radishes are one of the fastest vegetables to grow, so they make a great school garden crop. It takes about one month from seed to harvest.



RADISH

Safety:	Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.
Yield:	For 100, ½ cup servings of raw whole radishes, purchase 15.8 lbs.
Quality:	Over-mature radishes or very large radishes may be tough or pithy, reject them. They should be firm with bright color and crisp white flesh. Reject radishes with external damage, large cracks or splits, insect damage, or dry, wilted or spongy appearance.
Storage:	Radishes with the tops removed can be held at least 7 days at 41 °F. They can be stored for 3-4 weeks if held at 32 °F. Keep from freezing.
Preparation:	All produce should be washed before eating, cutting or cooking. Discard radishes that have large splits, cracks, or insect damage. They are difficult to clean thoroughly. Cut away any damaged or bruised areas and discard.
Seasonings:	Radishes are commonly served raw in salads; however they can also be sautéed or steamed, especially in Asian cuisine. Thinly sliced radishes are sometimes used in miso soups or kimchee. Radishes are sometimes made into refrigerator pickles and used as a condiment. In any form, radishes, add a peppery flavor to other dishes.



PEAS WITH EDIBLE PODS



Sugar snap and snow peas are in the OTHER vegetable group. They are a good source of vitamin C and vitamin K, and also provide iron, folate, fiber and vitamin A.

Sugar snap peas and snow peas are often served raw or blanched in salads or steamed and eaten whole. They are a common ingredient in stir fry dishes and can be sautéed.

FUN FACT :

“Snow peas” are the flat ones with immature seeds used a lot in Asian Stir fries. “Sugar snap peas” are the sweet-shelled plump ones with round peas inside. “Garden peas” are the ones that don’t have edible pods.

Only 5 % of peas are sold fresh, most of which are sugar snap peas and snow peas.

Peas are one of the first food crops cultivated by humans.

Snow peas and sugar snap peas like to grow when it is cool, so they make a great school garden crop for early spring.



PEAS WITH EDIBLE PODS

Safety:	<p>Rinse snap peas before cooking or eating raw. Store cooked peas below 41°F for up to 3 days.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables and meats to prevent cross contamination. Use gloves for produce that will be served raw.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100, ½ cup servings of snow peas, purchase 17.6 lbs.</p> <p>For the plumper sugar snap pea, purchase 20.6 lbs.</p>
Quality:	<p>Snap peas should be bright green and without spots. Test for quality by snapping one end. The pod should be crisp.</p>
Storage:	<p>Store fresh snap peas in a bag in the refrigerator for up to 1 week. They can also be blanched and stored frozen for several months.</p>
Preparation:	<p>Edible pod peas are delicious raw or quickly blanched on a salad bar. Blanching can bring out the bright color and sweet flavor. Quickly ice-water chill after blanching. If cooking is desired, they can be steamed for 3-4 minutes. Alternatively, sauté in oil and/or broth with desired seasonings for 2-3 minutes. To maintain their bright color, flavors, and sweetness, do not overcook. Batch cooking is recommended.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Snap peas are delicious just plain, but are also good with garlic, Italian seasonings, and balsamic vinegar. They also go well in dishes with Asian seasonings like sesame and ginger.</p>



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