

Top 10 Healthy Ways to Cook Fruits & Vegetables

10 Bake

- sweet potato fries by cutting into slices, season with olive oil, cayenne pepper and a dash of salt.
- peaches for a sweet snack, slice in half, drizzle with honey and sprinkle with ginger and pecans.
- cauliflower pieces tossed in olive oil and sprinkled with salt.
- an apple for dessert, fill the core with dried fruit and nuts.



9 Boil

- winter squash and season with a sprinkle of cinnamon and a drizzle of olive oil.
- apples or pears with lemon juice and cinnamon; mash up and serve warm or chilled.
- turnips and potatoes; mash them together and season with salt and pepper.
- kale, and add a handful of chopped currants, salt and pepper.

8 Steam

- favorite vegetables with citrus juice and zest added to the water to create bold, new flavors.
- a medley of vegetables and season with some herbs.
- cabbage, and season with caraway seed, salt and pepper.
- green beans with chopped onion and a clove of garlic.

7 Stir-Fry

- pineapple and mango in a honey ginger sauce for a perfect topping to plain yogurt.

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did you know...

- ▶ Nearly 20% U.S. households with children lack access to foods that meet the nutritional requirements for an active, healthy lifestyle.
- ▶ According to a new study the number of households with children who had severely low levels of food security nearly doubled between 2003 and 2010.
- ▶ Children raised in low or very low food secure households are as much as 1.5 times more likely to be obese.
- ▶ A new study shows children who are aerobically fit have a better academic performance, especially in math, than children who are unfit or overweight.
- ▶ Yoga improves skill development, muscular strength, muscular endurance and flexibility.

Sources: HealthlineNews, Pubic Library of Science, YoKids.org, Journal of the American Osteopathic Association, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey

Quotable Quotes

“When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed.”

– Maya Angelou

INSIDE:

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- ◆ Recipes for Gift Giving

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Top 10 Healthy Ways to Cook Fruits & Vegetables

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- zucchini, yellow squash, tomatoes and mushrooms with olive oil and herbs; add diced jalapeno for an extra kick.
- broccoli in olive oil and chopped garlic; add a dash of soy sauce or some capers for extra zip.
- onions, peppers, zucchini, corn and jicama and throw in some red or black beans and your favorite salsa.

6 Sauté

- pear and apple slices in a skillet with a little butter until tender, add marmalade and orange slices, serve warm.
- cauliflower with nutmeg and oil after pre-steaming for a tasty twist on an old veggie.
- spinach with garlic and olive oil.
- zucchini, yellow squash, peppers, onion and garlic, season with salt, pepper and a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese.

5 Roast

- red peppers in the oven at 450°, turning every 15 minutes until done (blackened skins); peel off the skin and slice, then drizzle in oil and garlic and chill for any salad, sandwich or antipasto dish!
- whole red potatoes in the oven after tossing them in a mixture of olive oil, garlic and rosemary.
- winter vegetables such as parsnips, turnips, rutabagas, beets and sweet potatoes; cut in large pieces, coat lightly with olive oil, sprinkle with your favorite herbs and roast at 425° for 30-40 minutes.
- brussels sprouts drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with salt.

4 Grill

- mushrooms, bell peppers, onions, eggplant and zucchini for perfect veggie kabobs.
- corn on the cob, just peel and coat in a mix of seasonings such as oregano, chili powder and salt with a touch of butter to help it stick, wrap in aluminum foil and grill until tender.

- pineapple, peaches or mango for a yummy dessert.
- asparagus and add to a salad of mixed greens, roasted peppers and toasted nuts.

3 Stew

- cabbage with tomatoes and garlic.
- classic vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, green beans, celery and onions in tomato sauce; add canned beans for a hearty dish.
- corn, onions, peppers, celery and salsa.
- canned tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and chickpeas; add oregano and top with sliced olives.

2 Blanch

- raw almonds in water for 15 seconds and peel for a new twist on a healthy snack.
- broccoli and cauliflower to use on a vegetable platter.
- broccoli rabe in salted water to reduce bitterness.
- carrots, cauliflower, green beans, asparagus and broccoli and marinate in your favorite vinaigrette and serve cold.

1 Microwave

- any of your favorite chopped veggies in a bowl with an egg or two for a quick, nutritious breakfast.
- cranberries and orange zest with a little sugar and water to make a sweet cranberry relish.
- spaghetti squash halved lengthwise, seeded and placed face down in a dish with water; then scoop out squash and serve like spaghetti with tomato sauce and Parmesan cheese.
- a potato and top with broccoli and a sprinkle of cheese.

— Adapted from: *Fruits and Veggies More Matters*

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Greener Toy Shopping Tips

GREEN GIFTS are produced with the environment and workers in mind; they are not made from or grown with toxic chemicals and they will be enjoyed by the recipient for years to come. Avoid gifting items this year that may be made from harmful materials such as PVC plastic, cotton with chemical finishes or food and drink with pesticide residues.

- **Books make wonderful gifts—even when they're used.** Amazon has an extensive used collection on-line and of course there's always the local used book store, too.
- **Say no to disposables.** Choose toys made to last. They may cost more, but disposable toys break easily and waste your money!
- **Give activities.** Take children to a play or a favorite restaurant, or sign them up for that gymnastics class. Time together and special activities make wonderful, non-toxic gifts!
- **Rediscover game night.** It's an easy way to enjoy family time. Share your beloved childhood games—chess, checkers, backgammon, Scrabble, bingo, Life, Yahtzee, Uno, and, of course, cards. Remember to keep small pieces away from little hands and mouths.
- **Encourage outside play.** Children love and need to play outdoors. Encourage them to head for fresh air with fun outdoor equipment like sleds, soccer and dodge balls, roller skates, skateboards, bikes, jump ropes and even pogo sticks! Give helmets, too, and make sure the kids wear them.
- **Think twice about battery-operated toys.** Batteries contain heavy metals, so the fewer we use the better! If you must, grab some rechargeable batteries and a charger.



- **No cheap jewelry.** Some baubles contain the toxic metals lead or cadmium, and plenty of children (young and old) chew and even swallow them. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has advised parents to throw out their kids' cheap jewelry because the odds are high it contains toxic substances.

- **Choose arts and craft supplies carefully.** Many contain toxic chemicals. Read labels closely—but keep in mind that these products aren't sufficiently regulated, tested or labeled to ensure safety for children. Here are a few to watch out for:

- **Paint.** Paints should be water-based and colored with natural, non-metal pigments. Oil paints contain toxic solvents.
- **Clay.** Don't buy polymer clays that stay soft at room temperature or can be hardened in a home oven—they're made from PVC (polyvinyl chloride) and often contain phthalates.
- **Coloring.** Common crayons often contain paraffin wax, a petrochemical product. Look for alternatives like soy and beeswax. Don't buy dry-erase and permanent markers, which contain solvents. Avoid plastic-encased crayons. Skip scented markers: scents encourage kids to sniff them, but those fragrances contain chemicals that are not listed on the label.

Raise a greener generation. Adults have an opportunity to shape the next generation's holiday traditions—and tamp down commercialism. Some ideas: draw names for large families so there are fewer gifts to give, agree to a dollar limit and shop at resale shops.

— Adapted from
www.ewg.org/enviroblog

A pot of soup and a freshly baked corn bread is not the kind of present you can easily wrap—but a beautiful jar of homemade mix is! Plus, you can make a lot of presents at once and a healthy meal for yourself too!



Striped Soup Mix

- Dried peas, beans, and lentils 7 one-pound bags
(pink, black, white, lima, kidney, navy, red or pinto beans; green, brown or red lentils; black-eyed peas; green or yellow split peas)
- Bay leaves 7
- Garlic cloves, not peeled 7
- Pint-sized canning jars 7

1. Carefully layer the beans in the jars, using ¼ cup of each type of bean.
2. Put 1 bay leaf and 1 clove of garlic in each jar, and screw on the lids.
3. Add a ribbon and a recipe card that says:

Recipe Instructions: 1) Take out the bay leaf and garlic. 2) Rinse the beans with cold water and then put them in a large pot. Cover them with fresh cold water and soak them overnight. 3) Drain the beans, add them back into the pot with 6 cups fresh water or chicken stock, one 14-ounce can chopped tomatoes, 1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped and the bay leaf. 4) Bring to a boil, then turn the heat to low and simmer gently until all the beans are tender, about 2 hours. 5) Add salt and pepper to taste.

— Chopchopmag.org



Homemade Cornbread Mix

- Flour 1 cup
- Cornmeal 1 cup + 2 Tbsp
- Dry milk powder ½ cup
- Sugar ¼ cup
- Baking powder 2 tsp
- Baking soda ½ Tbsp
- Salt ¾ tsp

1. In a large bowl, mix all ingredients.
2. Transfer mixture to a quart size jar. Cover jar tightly with lid.
3. Add a ribbon and a recipe card that says:

Recipe instructions: 1) Preheat oven to 425°F. 2) Grease an 8-inch square baking pan. 3) Pour dry mix into a large bowl. 4) In a second bowl, combine one egg, 1 cup of water and 2 Tbsp of oil. 5) Add the liquid ingredients to the dry ingredients and stir well. 6) Pour into prepared pan and bake 20 to 25 minutes until top is golden brown.

— North Dakota State University Extension

Food Q: What do snowmen eat for breakfast?
Funny A: Snowflakes!

Activity Corner

REINDEER FACES ACTIVITY



This healthy holiday sandwich is as much fun to eat as it is to make!

Combine canned, drained tuna, salmon or chicken with a little mayonnaise. Let the children help by taking turns breaking up the meat and mixing it until smooth.

Cut slices of whole wheat bread into large triangles, and spread the bread with the salad mixture.

Create a reindeer by decorating each triangle with 2 olives for eyes, two pretzel twists for the antlers and a grape tomato for the bright, red nose!

— Nutritionforkids.com

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