

Spring Produce

April through mid-June

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (2010) recommends increasing fruits and vegetables in the U.S. diet. In springtime, you can find fresh cool-season fruits and vegetables at farmers markets, roadside stands, and grocery stores across Indiana. Use the following tips to select, prepare, and store these healthy foods.

By Catherine Burlage,
former graduate student,
Department of Nutrition Science,
Purdue University College of
Health and Human Sciences

Reviewed by:

- Laura Palmer, MS, RD,
Extension Specialist,
Purdue University
- Nancy Casada, former
Extension Educator,
Purdue Extension,
Harrison County, Indiana
- Jennifer Dennis, Assistant
Professor of Horticulture,
Purdue University
- Mary Alice Gettings, MS, RD,
LDN, CDE, Nutrition and
Food Safety Educator,
Penn State Extension

Vegetables available in spring in Indiana

Asparagus	Beets	Broccoli	Cabbage
Cauliflower	Collards	Green onions	Kale
Lettuce	Mushrooms	Peas	Radishes
Rhubarb	Spinach	Turnips	

Spinach and broccoli

Select

When selecting spinach, make sure it is free from bruises, cuts, and mold. Spinach should have dark, unblemished leaves and smell fresh.

When selecting broccoli, be sure that it is dark green and not yellow. The florets should be even in color, the leaves should not be wilted, and the stalks should not be fat and woody.



Prepare

Spinach leaves should be washed thoroughly in cool water to remove all grit and then gently dried between paper towels. Spinach can be enjoyed either raw or cooked.

Broccoli should be washed under cool, running water to remove any dirt from the florets. You may also soak broccoli in salt water (one teaspoon of salt dissolved in one quart of water) to drive out any insects that may be



hiding in the florets. Cut off leaves and woody sections of the vegetable and serve raw or cooked.

Store

Keep unwashed spinach in a plastic bag in the crisper section of the refrigerator for up to three to four days. Wash spinach just prior to eating.

Store unwashed broccoli in a plastic bag in the crisper section of the refrigerator for a few days. To allow airflow, make sure the bag is not sealed completely.



Fruits available in spring in Indiana

Peaches

Strawberries (late spring)

Strawberries

Select

When selecting strawberries, make sure they are free from bruises, cuts, and mold. Strawberries should be evenly shaped and not too seedy or white at the tips.

Prepare

Gently rinse strawberries under running water with the green cap still on. Once they have been washed, remove the green cap and enjoy.

Store

Strawberries should be stored between 34 and 38 degrees Fahrenheit for best results. If possible, store them in the plastic container from the store. Under ideal conditions, strawberries can be kept in the refrigerator for up to two to five days.



Spring Recipes

SPRING VEGETABLE SAUTÉ

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/2 cup sweet onion, sliced
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1 potato, cubed
- 3/4 cup carrots, sliced
- 3/4 cup asparagus, sliced
- 3/4 cup green beans
- 1/2 cup radishes, quartered
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon dried dill

Instructions

1. Heat oil in skillet. Add onion and cook for 2 minutes.
2. Add garlic and cook for another minute.
3. Stir in potatoes and carrots. Cover, turn heat to low, and cook until almost tender (about 4 minutes). Add asparagus, green beans, radishes, salt, pepper, and dill.
4. Cook, stirring often, until just tender.

SUNSHINE SALAD

Yield: 5 servings

Ingredients

- 5 cups spinach leaves (packed, washed, and dried well)
- 1/2 red onion (sliced thin)
- 1/2 red pepper (sliced)
- 1 cucumber (whole, sliced)
- 2 oranges (peeled and chopped into bite-size pieces)
- 1/3 cup vinaigrette dressing (“lite,” around 15 calories per tablespoon or less)

Instructions

1. Toss all ingredients together in a large bowl. Add dressing and toss again. Serve immediately.

STIR FRY VEGETABLES AND BEEF

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients

1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
 1 teaspoon soy sauce
 1/3 cup water
 1 cup carrot (sliced)
 2 cups broccoli
 1 bell pepper (chopped)
 1 onion (chopped)
 1 package fresh mushrooms (sliced)
 2 tablespoons oil
 8 ounces sliced beef

Instructions

1. Wash hands and any cooking surface.
2. Mix spices, soy sauce and water; set aside.
3. Wash vegetables. Slice carrots, broccoli and mushrooms. Chop onions and bell peppers.
4. Heat oil in large frying pan and add meat when oil is hot; stir until brown.
5. Push meat to the side and in the middle of the pan add carrots, onions and peppers. Cook them for 1 minute. Add mushrooms and broccoli. Cook until they are tender.
6. Add liquid mixture and cook until bubbly.
7. Reduce heat, cover pan and cook for two more minutes.
8. Serve over whole-wheat pasta or brown rice.

For more information . . .

. . . on safe refrigerator storage:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture Refrigeration and Food Safety:
www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Refrigeration_&_Food_Safety/index.asp

. . . about farmers markets:

- Indiana State Department of Health
 : www.in.gov/isdh/24776.htm
- U.S. Department of Agriculture:
www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets

Other publications in this series

- HHS-755-W, *Summer Produce*
https://mdc.itap.purdue.edu/item.asp?item_number=HHS-755-W
- HHS-756-W, *Autumn Produce*
https://mdc.itap.purdue.edu/item.asp?item_number=HHS-756-W

Sources

- U.S. Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Education Connection Recipe Finder:
<http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/>
- Produce for Better Health Foundation:
www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Five reasons to eat more fruits and vegetables

1. They are naturally low in calories.
2. They are high in vitamins and minerals, which help you to feel energized.
3. They provide fiber to help keep you full.
4. They are healthy whether they are fresh, canned, dried, frozen, or in 100% juice.
5. They taste great!

Jan. 2013

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran.
 Purdue University is an Affirmative Action institution. This material may be available in alternative formats.