

Autumn Produce

September through November

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (2010) recommend increasing fruits and vegetables in the U.S. diet. As summer fades into fall, cool-season crops are once again in season. You can find fresh 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.

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Vegetables available in autumn in Indiana

Basil and fresh herbs	Beets	Broccoli	Brussels sprouts
Cabbage	Carrots	Cauliflower	Collard Greens
Green beans	Lettuce	Lima beans	Mushrooms
Onions	Potatoes	Pumpkins	Radishes
Spinach	Sweet potatoes	Turnips	Winter squash

Pumpkins and winter squash

Select

Select pumpkins that are mature, firm, and rich orange. To test for maturity, press your thumbnail against the skin. Mature pumpkins have a tough skin that can't be punctured easily with your fingernail.

Avoid cracked, decayed, or badly scarred pumpkins.

Choose winter squash that

are firm, heavy for their size, and have dull, not glossy, rinds. The rinds should be hard. Avoid winter squash with signs of decay, as this may indicate moldiness.



Prepare

Pumpkins can be prepared in many ways. To roast in the oven, cut pumpkin in half, scoop out the seeds and strings, and bake at 325°F with



cut side down until pumpkin skin pierces easily (an hour or two). Once pumpkin is cool, scoop out flesh from skin. Discard skin. Mash or puree pumpkin flesh to use for your favorite recipes. The seeds can be roasted on a shallow baking sheet at 250°F for 10-15 minutes. Salt if desired.

Winter squash can also be prepared in a variety of ways. To roast, pierce the squash near the stem with a knife to allow steam to escape. Bake in the oven at 350°F for 45 minutes to one hour, until a knife can be easily inserted near the stem. Cut out a small circle around the stem, remove this piece from the squash, and scoop out the seeds and fibrous material in the cavity.



Store

Store whole, mature pumpkins in a dry, airy place with 60–70 percent humidity for up to several months. Handle pumpkins carefully to avoid surface damage, which will lead to decay. Pumpkins showing any kind of spoilage should be thrown away.

Winter squash has a much longer storage life than summer squash. Depending upon the variety, it can be kept from one week to six months. The ideal temperature for storing winter squash is 50-60°F (about 10-15°C).

Fruits available in autumn in Indiana

Apples	Cantaloupes	Grapes
Pears	Raspberries	Watermelons

Apples and watermelon

Select

Select apples that are free from bruises and firm to the touch.

Look for watermelons that are evenly shaped with no bruises, cracks, or soft spots. Watermelons that are heavy for their size tend to be juicier. Usually a firm, yellowish underside is a good indicator of ripeness.

Prepare

Apples should be washed thoroughly under running water and then directly eaten or sliced. If apples are sliced, dipping the slices in a vitamin C–fortified apple juice will help prevent browning.

Watermelon should be washed well in the sink under running water or with a wet cloth before cutting. Once washed, watermelon can be cut as desired, cubed, or sliced.

Store

Apples should be stored in the refrigerator to slow ripening and maintain flavor. They should be stored away from foods with strong odors to prevent them from absorbing these odors.

Watermelon can be kept in the refrigerator for up to one week, but it is best eaten fresh since the flesh deteriorates rapidly.



Autumn Recipes

PUMPKIN BREAD

Yield: 32 servings

Ingredients

- 1 can pumpkin (15 ounce)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup yogurt, plain lowfat
- 1 1/2 cup flour (all purpose)
- 1 1/2 cup whole-wheat flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup raisins

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat together pumpkin, sugar, oil, and yogurt.
3. In a medium bowl, combine the flours, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt; add to pumpkin mixture, stirring until just moistened.
4. Stir in raisins.
5. Pour into two greased 9x5x3-inch loaf pans and bake for about 1 hour.
6. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes; remove from pan and cool completely.

APPLE CRISP

Yield: 8 servings

Ingredients

- 4 apples (medium)
- 1/4 cup oatmeal (quick cooking)
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1/4 cup margarine

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Grease the bottom and sides of square pan.
3. Remove the cores from the apples. Slice the apples.
4. Spread the sliced apples on the bottom of the pan.
5. Cut the margarine into small pieces and put in a medium-sized bowl.
6. Add the oatmeal, flour, brown sugar, and cinnamon.
7. Using two knives, cut the margarine into the mixture until it looks like small crumbs.
8. Sprinkle the mixture over the top of the apples.
9. Bake in the oven for about 20 minutes.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH WITH BLACK BEANS

Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients

- 1 butternut squash (small)
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 onion (small, chopped)
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 cans black beans (16 ounces each, rinsed and drained)
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano

Instructions

1. Heat the squash in the microwave on high heat for 1–2 minutes. This will soften the skin.
2. Carefully peel the squash with a vegetable peeler or small knife.
3. Cut the squash into 1/2-inch cubes.
4. Peel and chop the onion.
5. In a large pan, heat the oil. Add the onion, garlic powder, and squash.
6. Cook for 5 minutes on medium heat.
7. Add vinegar and water. Cook on low heat till the squash is tender, about 10 minutes.
8. Add the beans and oregano. Cook until the beans are heated through.

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-754-W, *Spring Produce*
https://mdc.itap.purdue.edu/item.asp?item_number=HHS-754-W
- HHS-755-W, *Summer Produce*
https://mdc.itap.purdue.edu/item.asp?item_number=HHS-755-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/
- National Watermelon Promotion Board:
www.watermelon.org/kids_recipes.asp
- The George Mateljan Foundation:
www.whfoods.org/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=63#purchasequalities

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!

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