



**Fresh
Produce
Bundle
\$15**

December 2023


Simply Produce

Add Fruits and Veggies to Meals this Winter

Winter is a wonderful season for spending time with friends and family and enjoying delicious holiday meals. However, amidst all the festivities, it is easy to forget about the importance of including fruits and vegetables in your eating plan. As an adult, it is recommended that you consume 1 ½ - 2 cups of fruit and 2 - 3 cups of vegetables each day.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are usually plentiful during the summer months when more are in season. When winter arrives, the availability of fresh produce diminishes. Don't fret, there are ways to eat healthy that won't break your budget. Here are helpful tips for incorporating fruits and vegetables into your winter meals:

1. When you are asked to prepare a dish for a holiday gathering, opt for something that features fruits or vegetables. Bringing a fruit salad or roasted broccoli to a family event ensures you have a healthy option to eat.
2. Take a spin on a traditional dish you like to prepare by making it a bit healthier. Try cutting back on the amount of sugar or butter used in the recipe or swap it out for a different ingredient. Consider using olive oil instead of butter, as it contains unsaturated fats that benefit heart health. Additionally, try incorporating vegetables into the dish. For instance, add tomato salsa as a topping for chicken or toss extra carrots into a soup.
3. Eat filling fruits or veggies as a snack! With many delicious foods available during the winter months, it is easy to overeat. To avoid this, try having a fruit or vegetable as snack before your meal.
4. Fill your plate with fruits and vegetables first. It is recommended that half of your plate should be filled with fruit and vegetables.

Adding enough fruits and vegetables into each meal can be challenging, but there are ways to manage. Ensuring that you prioritize consuming fruits and vegetables throughout the entire year is a great habit that provides your body with the necessary vitamins and minerals for it to thrive! 

Source: food.unl.edu

**Simply Produce
Ellsworth
County
increases access
to fruits and
vegetables while
encouraging
shopping local.
Call Gene's
Heartland
Foods in
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Produce Spotlight: POMEGRANATE

Most of us are familiar with pomegranate juice sold in the grocery store where the work of extracting the juice has been done for you. But it's the time of year when pomegranates are in season, so their price is low.

The edible portion of the fruit includes the seeds and the juice filled sacks (arils) that cover them. They can be used as a garnish in fruit cups, salads, desserts, and as a snack. The juice is used to make jellies, puddings, desserts, and drinks. Grenadine is made from pomegranate.

HOW TO BUY:

When ripe, the outer skin of the pomegranate becomes soft and can be scratched under gentle pressure. The shape changes with the sides becoming slightly squared; it will look flat on the sides. Pomegranate color ripens to a deep red shade on the outside. Before ripening, the skin is hard, tight, and cannot be easily scratched. Unripe pomegranate fruit is round in shape, much like an apple. Once a pomegranate is picked, it stops ripening but will develop more flavor in storage. Select pomegranates that are heavy for their size, with taught, glossy, unbroken skin. Avoid pomegranates with blemished skin.

STORAGE TIPS

Pomegranate keeping quality is similar to that of apples. Unwashed, whole fruit can be stored in a resealable plastic bag in the refrigerator for as long as 2 months, or in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place, out of direct sunlight for up to 1 month. Fresh seeds or juice will keep in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Seeds can be frozen for later use. To freeze, spread the seeds on a wax paper lined baking sheet in a single layer. Place in the freezer for no more than 2 hours, then transfer to an airtight container for storage. Frozen arils can be kept in an airtight container in the freezer for up to 3 months.

HOW TO REMOVE THE SEEDS

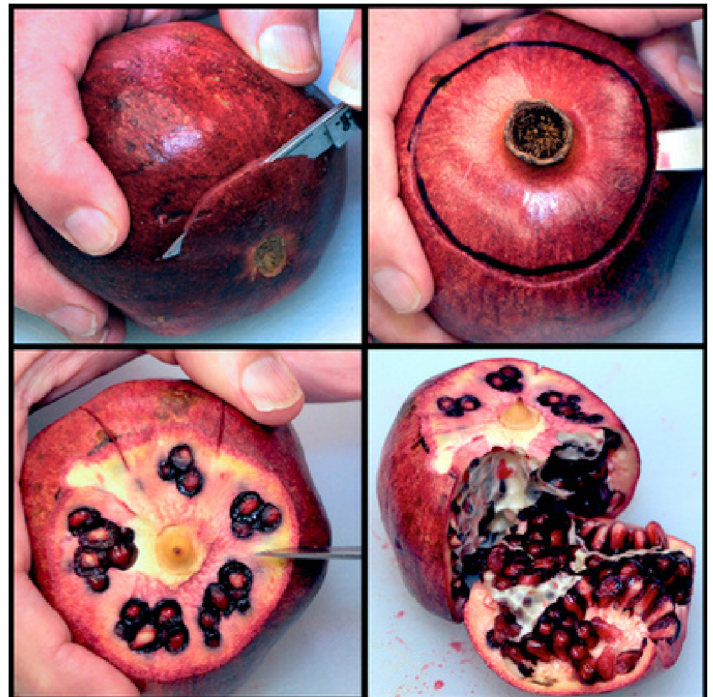
Rinse pomegranates thoroughly before preparing. Slice off a piece of the skin on the stem end to create a flat surface (upper left).

Ring the blossom end to remove a "cap" of the skin and expose the interior of the fruit (upper right).

Make shallow cuts from the top to the bottom, without cutting through the pomegranate, along each side of the segments (lower left).

Immerse in a bowl of water for 5 minutes (not shown). Hold under water and pull the fruit apart (lower right) to expose the seeds, which are then easily removed from the supporting tissue. The seeds will sink to the bottom of the bowl, but the rind and membrane will float. The membrane is edible and can be kept or discarded along with the rind.

Pour seeds into a fine strainer, drain, and pat dry. (Pulling apart under water is not necessary, but does avoid the pomegranate spraying you with juice when prying the seeds from the membrane.) 🍷



Source: KSRE & University of Florida



Mental Health Minute

Restful, restorative sleep is vital to your overall health. It affects every type of tissue and system in the body including your brain, heart, and lungs, as well as your metabolism, immune function, mood, and disease resistance. Sleep allows your brain and body to slow down and engage in the process of recovery and renewal. Adults need seven to nine hours of sleep, and children and teens need even more.

Adequate sleep and quality of sleep are as essential to survival as food and water. Without proper sleep, your brain can't form or maintain the pathways that let you learn and create new memories, plus it is more difficult to concentrate and respond quickly. 🍓

Source: KSRE

WEEKLY STRESS & RESILIENCY TIP: PUT THOUGHT INTO YOUR SLEEP

Getting proper sleep is essential for your mental health. Putting thought into your sleep routine and environment, such as getting comfortable bedding, getting plenty of sleep, etc., can make a big difference.



K-STATE
Research and Extension

Stress and
Resiliency Team

Source: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/wellbeing/>

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available for 24/7 support by calling or texting 988.

Simply Produce



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Midway District

Ordering/Distribution Dates

Watch local media or check with the store for additional dates!

Place Orders: 1/12 (8am) - 1/17/24(Noon)

Pick up Basket: 1/19/24 (Noon - 12:45pm)

Place Orders: 2/9 (8am) - 2/14/24 (Noon)

Pick up Basket: 2/16/24 (Noon - 12:45pm)

Place Orders: 3/8 (8am) - 3/13/24(Noon)

Pick up Basket: 3/15/24 (Noon - 12:45pm)

Place Orders: 4/12 (8am) - 4/17/24 (Noon)

Pick up Basket: 4/19/24 (Noon - 12:45pm)

For more information, contact

Jessica Kootz at Midway Extension District, 785.472.4442 or by email at jessicak@ksu.edu

Produce basket distribution utilizing local retail venues is designed to increase access to healthy fruits and vegetables for consumers, while stimulating positive economic impact and building regional food system sustainability.



Apple Spinach Salad

Serves: 6

Serving Size: 1/2 Cup



Ingredients:

- 4 cups spinach leaves
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 1/2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup red onion, chopped
- 1 medium tart apple, cut into bite-sized chunks
- 1/4 cup pomegranate seeds, raisins*, or dried cranberries

(Note: Raisins were used for the nutritional analysis.)

Nutrition Information Per Serving:

Calories: 90.6

Total fat: 4.6 g

Saturated fat: 0.4 g

Cholesterol: 0 mg

Sodium: 114.3 mg

Total carbohydrates: 12.5 g

Dietary fiber: 1.5 g

Protein: 0.9 g

Total sugar: 9.2 g

Source: umn.edu

Directions:

1. Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water.
2. Wash spinach thoroughly. Pat dry or spin in a salad spinner.
3. Tear spinach into bite-sized pieces and place in a large bowl. Set aside.
4. In a small bowl mix oil, vinegar, sugar, and salt.
5. Add the apple, onion, and dried fruit to the oil mixture and toss to coat apples. Let stand ten minutes.
6. Combine ingredients together in the large bowl of spinach and serve.
7. Refrigerate any leftovers within 2 hours of serving.
8. Consume or throw out food within 4 days of preparation.

Tips and Variations:

- The spinach and oil/vinegar mixture can be prepared ahead and stored separately in the refrigerator.
- To keep the apple from getting brown, cut the apple and add to the oil/vinegar mixture then assemble the salad just before serving. The vinegar in the dressing keeps the apple from browning.
- For a complete meal, add slices of baked or grilled chicken breast and serve with a slice of whole wheat bread and a glass of skim milk.
- Add feta or walnuts for additional flavor!

Simply Produce 

Simply Produce Ellsworth County brought to you by:

Ellsworth County Medical Center

785.472.3111



Gene's Heartland Foods, Ellsworth

785.472.4111



Grow Ellsworth County

785.472.9204



Midway Extension District

785.472.4442



Thank you for shopping local!