



Nutrition News - December 2022

Enjoying Healthy Winter Vegetables

Unless you've got your own greenhouse, gardens around here are strictly a spring-summer-fall operation. So what does one do for vegetables when winter arrives?

Some vegetables taste better when harvested in winter. Others, harvested in the fall, can store well all winter if kept in a cool, dark place like a root cellar or even a box in the garage. Winter veggies are a versatile bunch — you can use them in a variety of ways and feature them in all sorts of recipes. They're also nutrient-dense. Roots serve to sustain the plant for long periods of time when photosynthesis is offline, and they sustain the animals and humans who eat them in a similar fashion.

Since winter veggies can be harvested over a wide time frame, it may be possible to pick them on a just-in-time basis, which optimizes their nutrient profile. And like pretty much all vegetables, the winter ones are, in general, good for you, and the more of them you include in your diet, the better. And in a society in which so few people consume enough fruits and vegetables, the winter ones can help provide critical nutrients, including that all-important fiber.

Supply Chain Issues And Winter Nutrition

Until the pandemic, we took it for granted that our local supermarkets would carry things like bananas and tomatoes all year, no matter how cold it got outside the supermarket. While many of those issues have mostly been resolved, we still have the opportunity to search for nutritious food that doesn't need a 6,000 mile journey to get here, nor the compromises in flavor, freshness

and nutritional value required in engineering food that can survive international travel. We've all seen the strawberries in February that look great - until we try to eat one and are underwhelmed.

Locally grown fruits and vegetables don't need as much time and energy to get from the field to your kitchen. That means local food also tends to be fresher.

Winter Crops

Depending on your climate, not all of these vegetables will grow and be available during the winter where you live. Often there are specific regional winter varieties. But this is a basic list of winter vegetables you may find at markets, farm stands, and grocery stores.

- Winter Squash (acorn, butternut, delicata, hubbard, spaghetti and more)
- Carrots
- Lettuce
- Winter Cabbage
- Peas
- Dark Leafy Greens
- Brussels Sprouts
- Potatoes
- Alliums (garlic)
- Beets
- Turnips
- Broccoli

On the back page is one of many recipes featuring the veggies above. Creating nourishing and satisfying plant-based dishes using vegetables grown with the season can be a lovely way to keep you warm and comforted — no matter how cold it gets.

Large print versions of this and other recipes are available at dutchessny.gov/OFAnutrition.

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Recipe: Supergreen Mushroom and Potato Soup

Ingredients

1 cup organic celery (chopped)
 1 cup yellow onion (or white onion)
 1 bunch swiss chard, leaves separated from the stems, stems chopped (about 1 cup chopped stems) and leaves chopped (1–2 cups of leaves)
 4 medium garlic cloves (minced)
 3 cups broccoli (cut into 1" florets)
 2 cups mushrooms (cremini, button or portobello, chopped)
 1 tbsp fresh thyme (minced)
 1 tsp onion powder
 1 tbsp worcestershire sauce (vegan)
 8 cups vegetable broth (unsalted, preferably homemade)
 2 cups red potatoes (or other potato of choice, cut into 1" cubes)

Directions

1

Heat the celery, onion, and Swiss chard stems in a large stockpot on medium-high heat, stirring frequently until the onions are translucent, about 3–5 minutes. Add 1–2 tablespoons of water as needed to deglaze the pot.

2

Stir in the garlic, turn down the heat to medium, and cook for an additional 60 seconds.

3

Stir in the broccoli, mushrooms, thyme, onion powder, and Worcestershire sauce. Cook for 60 seconds.

4

Pour in the vegetable broth, and turn the heat to high. Once the broth is boiling, add the potatoes and lower heat to simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes.

5

Stir in the Swiss chard leaves.

6

Taste for additional seasoning or some salt and pepper, if you'd like.

Substitutions

In place of potatoes, add your favorite (cooked) organic whole grain to step 5, like barley, brown rice, or farro.

Use kale, mustard, or collard greens in place of Swiss chard.

Substitute cauliflower for broccoli.

Use fresh rosemary or oregano in place of thyme.

Prep Ahead

Cut your celery, onion, Swiss chard (separate the leaves and chop the stems), broccoli, and mushrooms ahead of time and store in airtight containers in the refrigerator for up to two days before preparing the recipe.

Storage

Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

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