



Food Bites

June 2016



Fruit of the Month: Cantaloupe

The cantaloupe was named after the commune Cantalupo in Sabina, in the Sabine Hills near Tivoli, Italy, a summer residence of the Pope. It was originally cultivated about the year 1700 from seeds brought from Armenia, part of the homeland of melons.

Cantaloupes were first introduced to North America by Christopher Columbus on his second voyage to the New World in 1494. The W. Atlee Burpee Company developed and introduced the "Netted Gem" in 1881 from varieties then growing in North America.

Like other melons, cantaloupes have a high water content that can help fend off dehydration, but being packed with H₂O doesn't mean that they're short on other nutritional benefits such as Vitamins C, A, B₆, B₃, B₁ and K as well as potassium, folate, magnesium, and fiber.

Furthermore, as found in recent studies, that cantaloupes have even higher concentrations of the phytonutrient beta-carotene than oranges, even though oranges are brighter in color.



Vegetable of the Month: Carrots

The wild ancestors of the carrot are likely to have originated from Persia (regions of which are now Iran and Afghanistan), which remain the centre of diversity of *Daucus carota*, the wild carrot. A naturally occurring subspecies of the wild carrot, *Daucus carota* subsp.

North American, particularly the parts that would become the Thirteen Colonies, got its carrots with the arrival of the first English settlers in Virginia in 1609. When the English moved into Australia in 1788, carrots were with them there, as well.

Most of the benefits of carrots can be attributed to their beta carotene and fiber content. This root vegetable is also a good source of antioxidant agents. Furthermore, carrots are rich in vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin K, vitamin B₈, pantothenic acid, folate, potassium, iron, copper, and manganese.



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Whole Grain Goodness

Multi-grain, whole wheat, 100% wheat, bran, 7-grain- the options are endless when trying to pick a grain product, but what does it all mean? As many people know, the current recommendation is to make at least half the grain products in your diet whole grains. Whole grains promote heart health, aid in good digestion and may help you maintain a healthy weight. But with all of this labeling deception, how do you know if you are choosing a whole grain product?

When choosing a grain product the best way to determine if it is whole grain is to read the ingredient list. The first ingredient will likely be one of these:

- Whole wheat
- Whole wheat flour
- Whole grain
- Stone ground whole grain
- Brown rice
- Oats/oatmeal
- Quinoa
- Bulgar
- Graham flour
- Wheatberries

Another good rule of thumb is to look for the 100% whole grain or whole grain stamp on the package, as seen on the right. The **100%** whole grain stamp means all of the grains used in the product are 100% whole grain and the product provides at least 16g of whole grains per serving. While the whole grain stamp (without the 100%) indicates that some of the grains used to make this product are whole grain and some are refined grains. These products will include at least 8g of whole grains per serving. Both are great choices!

As whole grain products become more popular, they are also becoming easier to find and less expensive. There are some simple substitutions you can make in your own diet to add the health benefits of whole grains.



Zesty Whole Grain Salad

- 2 cups cooked whole grain rice (brown rice)
- 2 Tbsp oil
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp honey
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 apples, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts (pecans, walnuts)
- 1/2 cup dried fruit (cranberries, cherries, raisins)
- 1 bunch kale or fresh spinach, torn into bite size pieces

1. Cook whole grain rice according to package directions. Cool.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, honey, salt and pepper.
3. Stir in apples, nuts, dried fruit, and whole grain rice into dressing.
4. Toss greens with other ingredients.



Wheat Berry Salad

- 1 1/2 cup hard wheat berries
- 3/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 2 stalks celery, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup tart dried cherries, chopped
- 1 scallion, white and green parts, chopped
- 1/2 cup finely chopped parsley leaves
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste



1. In a large pot combine the wheat berries and enough water to come 2 inches over the wheat berries. Bring to a boil and cook uncovered for 1 hour, or until tender. Drain and let cool. Toast the walnuts in a medium dry skillet over medium-high heat until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes.
2. In a large bowl, combine the wheat berries, walnuts, celery, dried cherries, scallions, parsley, olive oil and lemon juice. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper.

Don't Let Dry Beans Scare You

Beans fit many of my requirements as a mom and dietitian. They are very nutritious, they're inexpensive, and they work well in dishes your family enjoys. They are very convenient and besides draining and rinsing, require no additional cooking. You can find 'no salt added' canned beans, which is great since many of us get more than enough sodium in our diets. And they usually don't cost any more than the regular kind. If you'd rather not use the 'no salt added' kind, rinse the beans to reduce the sodium.

On occasion, I also like to cook dry beans. And some of my family and friends prefer to cook their own beans instead of using the canned versions. Canned beans are an inexpensive source of protein and when buying them dry, they are even less expensive. You might think that cooking dry beans is too much hassle if you haven't tried it before. It does take time but most of that time you don't have to stand over them while they cook. When I cook dry beans, I like to use the Slow Cooker Method.



Here are the steps to success:

1. Spread 1 pound dried beans on a baking sheet and remove any small stones, dirt or withered beans.
2. Put the beans in a strainer and rinse them under running water.
3. Add beans and 8 cups of water to a slow cooker, then cook them on low for 6-8 hours until soft.
4. Serve right away or freeze the beans in 1 ½ cup portions to use later. One and a half cups is about the amount in 1-15 ounce can of beans. How easy is that?!

Beans, Beans the Musical Fruit

There are many benefits to eating beans. They are high in fiber, protein, iron, folate, and potassium. In addition, they are inexpensive so easy on the budget. There's just one little problem...they can cause intestinal gas. And how embarrassing is that! The good news is there are ways to help reduce the amount of intestinal gas caused by eating beans.

- Add beans to the diet slowly over a period of several weeks. This allows your body to adjust to the added fiber provided by the beans. Once you are eating beans on a regular basis, intestinal gas will be less of a problem.
- Chew beans well to help digest them.
- Drink plenty of water and other fluids to help your body handle the extra fiber in beans.
- When preparing dry beans, use the hot (short) soak method of soaking beans. This method reduces many gas-producing substances in beans. Always discard soaking water and rinse beans with fresh water after soaking.



Make Ahead Mexican Rollups

- 1 can black, pinto, or chili beans
- 2 cups frozen corn
- 3 cups instant brown rice, cooked
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 cup salsa
- 2 whole wheat tortillas

1. Place beans in a colander and rinse to reduce sodium. Transfer to a large bowl.
2. Thaw frozen corn in microwave. Drain and add to bowl.
3. Stir in rice, cheese, and salsa.
4. Spoon 1/2 cup filling on each tortilla and rollup.
5. Wrap each burrito tightly in plastic wrap. Freeze in a single layer on a cookie sheet.
6. Seal wrapped burritos in a freezer bag when they are frozen.



Rice and Red Beans

- 1/2 tsp oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
- 2 ribs celery, sliced
- 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 can red beans
- 4 cups instant brown rice, cooked



1. Place oil in large skillet and heat. Add onion and cook until soft.
2. Add garlic, tomatoes, green pepper, celery, and oregano.
3. Cover and simmer until vegetables are crisp tender (about 5 minutes).
4. Add beans and simmer. Stir mixture every once in a while until heated through.
5. Cook rice according to package directions.
6. Spoon the vegetable and bean mixture over rice.

Cheesy Chicken Enchilada Bake

1 pound boneless, skinless, chicken breast
1/2 cup water
1 Tbsp chili powder
1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup frozen corn
1 cup salsa
8 whole wheat tortillas
1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Cut chicken breast into 4-5 chunks. Simmer in a large saucepan with water and chili powder. Cook until internal temperature is 165° F (about 10 minutes).
3. Remove chicken from pan. Shred or cut into small chunks and return to pan. Add beans, corn, and salsa to saucepan. Cook until hot, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat.
4. Spread 1/2 cup of chicken mixture down the center of each tortilla. Roll up and place seam side down in a greased 9"×13" pan.
5. Spread any leftover chicken mixture over the top of the enchiladas.
6. Bake at 375°F for 12-15 minutes.
7. Sprinkle cheese on top of the enchiladas during the last 5 minutes of cooking.
8. Serve immediately.



Winter Black Bean Soup

3 cups black beans, cooked
2 tsp vegetable oil
1/2 cup onion, chopped
1 Tbsp chili powder
1 tsp ground cumin (optional)
1 can Mexican style diced tomatoes
1 cup water
1 Tbsp lime or lemon juice (optional)

Nonfat yogurt or sour cream and cilantro for garnish (optional)



1. Prepare beans as directed on package.
2. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and cook. Stir until onion begins to soften (about 2 to 3 minutes). Add chili powder. Add cumin, if you like. Cook and stir for 1 minute.
3. Add Tomatoes, beans, and water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes (covered).
4. Remove from heat and stir in lime or lemon juice, if desired.

What on Earth is a Legume?

The new Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage us to eat a variety of protein foods including seafood, meat, eggs, nuts, seeds and legumes. You might wonder, 'where in the grocery store would I find the legumes?'

These are actually common foods that you are probably already familiar with. Legumes include beans like kidney beans, lima beans, or pinto beans. They also include peas, lentils and chick-peas.

It is a good idea to eat both animal and plant based proteins. Legumes are nutritious, low cost plant-based protein food. They are typically high in protein and fiber and they're simple to cook. If your family isn't sure about trying legumes, you can mix them with meat in dishes they like. This is a good way to stretch your dollar while introducing new foods gradually. Check out the slow cooker pork chili below, it's a winner!

Here are a few recipes that call for legumes:



Fiesta Skillet Dinner

- 1 can Mexican style tomatoes
- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 1 Tbsp chili powder
- 2 cups cooked chicken, diced
- 1 cup prepared instant brown rice
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

1. Mix the tomatoes, black beans, corn, chili powder, and chicken in a large skillet. Cook over medium heat until heated through.
2. Add the cooked rice and stir thoroughly. Top with shredded cheddar cheese.
3. Serve hot.



Slow Cooker Pork Chili

2 pounds boneless pork butt, roast, or shoulder
1 cup bell pepper, diced
1 cup onion, diced
1 1/2 cup salsa
1 can pinto beans
1 can diced tomatoes

1. Trim visible fat from the pork. Cut into 2" chunks. Place in slow cooker.
2. Add pepper, onion, and salsa.
3. Cook on a low setting for 6 hours or a high setting for 3 hours.
4. Pull the meat apart into shreds with a fork. (You should have about 4 cups).
5. Put half (2 cups) of the shredded pork in the refrigerator or freezer. Freeze pork if it will not be used within 4 days.
6. Return the rest of the pork to the slow cooker. Add pinto beans and diced tomatoes.
7. Cook another 30 minutes until hot.



Butternut Squash Enchiladas

2 1/2 cups butternut squash, cooked
1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
1/2 cup onions, diced
1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped or 3 Tbsp dried cilantro
2 tsp garlic powder
1/2 tsp cumin
1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
8 tortillas
1 cup salsa or 1 can enchilada sauce
1/2 cup Greek yogurt



1. Preheat oven to 375 °F.
2. Mix the squash, beans, onion, cilantro, garlic powder, and cumin in a bowl.
3. Mix 3/4 cup of the cheese into the squash mixture.
4. Put a 1/2 cup strip of filling on each tortilla. Roll the tortilla around the filling. Put the tortilla into a greased 9" x13 " baking dish with the seam down.
5. Cover the tortillas with the salsa or enchilada sauce. Put the rest of the cheese (1/4 cup) on the salsa or sauce.
6. Bake for 25 minutes.
7. Serve each enchilada with 1 tablespoon of Greek yogurt.

BBQ IQ

Get Smart. Grill Safely.

Know the risks and get the tips for safely grilling and enjoying your favorite foods.

Plan to be safe.

Risk: Food poisoning peaks in the summer months when warmer temperatures cause foodborne germs to flourish.

Tip: Check foods on recall list when planning your grill fest. When shopping, buy meat and poultry last, right before checkout. Separate raw meat and poultry from other food in your shopping cart. To guard against cross-contamination, put packages of raw meat and poultry into individual plastic bags.

Keep it clean. Stop the germs.

Risk: Dirty hands and prep surfaces can carry germs.

Tip: Wash hands, kitchen work surfaces, and utensils with soap and water immediately after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry. Also, fill a spray bottle with water and one tablespoon of bleach to keep handy to wipe off surfaces and utensils.

Groom your grill and tools.

Risk: Wire bristles from grill cleaning brushes may dislodge and stick into food on the grill.

Tip: Use a moist cloth or paper towel to clean the grill surface before cooking. If you use a wire bristle brush, thoroughly inspect the grill's surface before cooking.

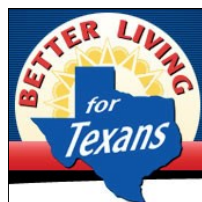
Curb co-mingling.

Risk: Raw meat juices can spread germs to cooked food.

Tip: Place cooked meats on a clean plate and discard marinades and sauces that have come in contact with raw meat juices.



Cook it well. Keep it hot.



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