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Garden Vegetables: Artichoke, Asparagus, Bell Pepper, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Cantaloupe, Carrots, Cauliflower, Greens, Lettuce, Potato, Spinach, Squash, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Watermelon

Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University

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Artichoke

The artichoke was known to both the Greeks and the Romans.

Wealthy Romans enjoyed artichokes prepared in honey and vinegar, seasoned with cumin.

It was not until the early 20th century that artichokes were grown in the United States.

Artichokes should be firm, compact, heavy for their size and have an even green color. Artichokes are actually a flower bud — if allowed to flower, blossoms measure up to seven inches in diameter and are a violet-blue color.

Artichokes are vegetables which grow as flower buds on plants.

All artichokes commercially grown in the United States are grown in California. Castroville, California claims to be the “Artichoke Capital of the World.”

NUTRITION FACTS
• Fat free
• Cholesterol free
• Low in sodium
• Good source of fiber and vitamin C
• High in potassium and folate

USES
Artichokes can be boiled, steamed, microwaved or sautéed. They can be eaten whole or added to other dishes. Small artichokes are good for pickling, stews and casseroles; medium size are good for salads; and large size are good for stuffing.

VARIETIES
There are more than 140 artichoke varieties. Artichokes can range in size from small artichokes—2 or 3 ounces each—to jumbo artichokes which can weigh as much as 20 ounces each.

Artichokes are not usually grown in South Dakota.
Artichoke and Spinach Lasagna

**Ingredients:**
- 9 uncooked lasagna noodles
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can low sodium vegetable broth
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed, drained and squeezed dry
- 1 (28 ounce) jar tomato pasta sauce
- 3 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 (14 ounce) can of artichoke hearts, drained and chopped

**Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Spray a 9x13 inch baking dish with cooking spray.
3. Bring 6 quarts water to a boil in a large pot. Add 2 teaspoons of salt. Add noodles and cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until tender but still firm to the bite; drain.
4. Spray a large skillet with cooking spray and heat on medium-high.
5. Cook onion for 3 minutes, or until onion is tender-crisp.
6. Stir in broth, garlic and rosemary; bring to a boil.
7. Stir in artichoke hearts and spinach; reduce heat, cover and simmer 5 minutes.
8. Stir in pasta sauce.
9. Spread 1/4 of the artichoke mixture in the bottom of the prepared baking dish; top with 3 cooked noodles. Sprinkle 3/4 cup mozzarella cheese over noodles.
10. Repeat layers 2 more times, ending with artichoke mixture and mozzarella cheese.
11. Bake, covered with foil, for 40 minutes.
12. Uncover, and bake 15 minutes more, or until hot and bubbly.
13. Let stand 10 minutes before cutting.

**Nutrition Facts per Serving:**
Serves 9
- 250 Calories, 6g fat, 20mg Cholesterol, 870mg Sodium, 33g Carbohydrates, 2g Fiber, 4g Sugar, 18g Protein

**Sources:**
http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/vegetables/globeart.html,

Rinse well under running water. Trim the stem even with the base of the bud. Remove any dried or tough lower bracts (leaves). Artichokes are cooked whole using a large saucepan. The buds should be placed upright in the pan with water added to a depth of two to three inches. Cover the pan. Cook at a strong boil for 35 to 45 minutes, or until the bracts can be easily pulled off the bud.

Artichokes are eaten by pulling the lower bracts off first and working toward the center of the bud. The base of each bract is eaten by biting and scraping with the teeth, usually after dipping it in a sauce. Once the outer bracts have been removed, the “choke,” a fuzzy, spiny center is exposed. This should not be eaten. Remove this center by using a spoon to scrape it out. Below it is the “artichoke heart,” the most desired part of the vegetable.
Asparagus

Many Greeks and Romans not only enjoyed the taste of asparagus but also believed it possessed medicinal properties (from healing toothaches to preventing bee stings). Asparagus gained popularity in France and England in the 16th Century and was then introduced to North America.

In the United States, 50% of asparagus is grown in California. Asparagus season is early spring.

VARIETIES
Asparagus can be found in two varieties. Green asparagus is the most common in the United States, while white asparagus is more popular in Europe. White asparagus is grown under the soil.

Some asparagus is grown in South Dakota.

NUTRITION FACTS
• Fat free
• Cholesterol free
• Sodium free
• Good source of fiber
• Good source of vitamin C and A
• High in folate

USES
Asparagus is good steamed, stir-fried or cooked in the microwave. It can be used in salads, pasta dishes, stir fries or eaten cold with your favorite dip.

Developed by University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County’s Nutrition Education Program. This materials was funded in part by USDA’s Food Stamp Program and EFNEP. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact: 1-800-430-3244.
The flavor of asparagus matches well with olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper, fresh chives, savory, thyme, and tarragon to enhance the flavor of cooked asparagus.

**Ingredients:**

**Sautéed Asparagus with Mushrooms**
- 1 pound asparagus, trimmed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme, chopped or 1/2 teaspoon dried
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste

**Directions:**
1. In a large skillet, bring 2 inches of water to a boil with a teaspoon salt. Prepare a bowl of ice water and set aside.
2. Add asparagus to the boiling water and cook 4 to 5 minutes or until barely tender but still firm. Using a slotted spoon or tongs, remove the spears to the ice water bath. Leave in ice water 5 minutes or until cool. Drain and set aside. Discard cooking water.
3. Using the same skillet, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms, asparagus, thyme and salt and pepper to taste.
4. Cook until mushrooms are wilted and the asparagus is just heated through, about 3 to 4 minutes. Serve warm or chilled.

**Nutrition Facts per Serving:** Yields 4 servings.
- 70 Calories, 5g Fat, 0mg Cholesterol, 0mg Sodium, 5g Carbohydrates, 2g Fiber, 2g Sugar, 3g Protein

**Sources:** [http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/asparagus.cfm](http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/asparagus.cfm), [http://www.flickr.com/photos/elegantemily/3023091481/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/elegantemily/3023091481/)

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When buying asparagus look for solid tips and smooth green stems that are even in color down the length of the stem. Check the cut stem end for any signs of drying and always avoid wilted spears. Pencil thin or thick stems can both be delicious. Thinner stems are not a sign of tenderness. Select the same size stalks for even cooking.

Asparagus comes in many colors including white, violet-green, pink and purple. If you must store asparagus, treat it as you would treat a cut flower. Trim the stems and stand them in a glass with one to two inches of water. Cover with a plastic bag and refrigerate for 2 to 3 days or until ready to use.

Cook asparagus as soon as possible for best flavor. Spears start to lose flavor and moisture as soon as they are harvested. To prepare, rinse well under cool running water. Peeling asparagus is a lot of work and many cooks prefer breaking the tough ends. To use this method, hold the top half of an asparagus spear in one hand and the bottom half between the thumb and forefinger of the other hand. Bend each spear until it snaps in two pieces. The spears will naturally break where the tender part meets the tough end. Although this method produces a lot of waste, the tougher bottoms can be saved for soup or stock.

Asparagus can be eaten raw, steamed, boiled, grilled, roasted or added to casseroles and salads. The key to perfectly cooked asparagus is "cook it briefly."
Bell peppers come in a variety of colors, sizes and shapes. Their skin should be firm and the stem should be fresh and green. Take out the seeds on the inside before eating.

Peppers were originally grown in Central and South America.

Peppers can be grouped into two broad categories—sweet peppers (which are mild) and chile peppers (which are hot).

Bell peppers are the most common sweet pepper.

California and Florida grow about 78% of the bell peppers grown in the United States.

Bell peppers can be found in a rainbow of colors and can vary in flavor. The variety of the pepper plant and the stage of the ripeness determine the flavor and color of each pepper. For example, a red bell pepper is simply a mature green bell pepper. As a bell pepper ages, its flavor becomes sweeter and milder.

Many bell peppers are grown in South Dakota.

NUTRITION FACTS
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Low Sodium
- Very high in vitamin C
- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of beta-carotene

USES
- Peppers are good to eat raw or with vegetable dip. Use a variety of colored peppers in your salads. Add cooked peppers to your pasta, Chinese, or Mexican dishes.

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FS942: 25 at $.79 each. January 2008
Stuffed Green Peppers

Ingredients:
- 6 medium green peppers
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil
- 1 16-ounce can kidney beans
- 2 cups cooked rice, brown or white
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese

Directions:
1. Cook the rice and set aside.
2. Remove top and seeds from green peppers.
3. Steam the peppers in a microwave-safe dish by placing them in 2 inches of water and covering with a lid or plastic wrap. Microwave on high for about 5 minutes.
4. To make filling, cook onion and celery in oil until slightly soft.
5. Add beans, rice, parsley, garlic and pepper.
6. Place green peppers on a baking pan.
7. Spoon 1/2 cup of hot filling into each pepper.
8. Top with grated cheese.
9. Bake at 350 degrees F for 10 to 15 minutes. (You can make this recipe ahead, cover and refrigerate until ready to bake; then bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes.)

Serves: 6 (1-cup servings)

Nutrition Facts per Serving:
250 Calories, 9g Fat, 10mg Cholesterol, 330mg Sodium, 35g Carbohydrates, 9g Fiber, 5g Sugar, 10g Protein

Sources:
http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/peppers.cfm, http://umaine.edu/publications/4181e/
Broccoli

Broccoli has been around for more than 2,000 years and was first grown in Italy. The name broccoli comes from the Latin word brachium, which means "branch" or "arm." Americans have grown broccoli for over 200 years.

Broccoli is a member of the cabbage family that may help prevent certain types of cancer. Broccoli has as much calcium per ounce as milk.

Fresh broccoli contains more nutrients than frozen broccoli.

VARIETIES

There are many varieties. In the United States, the most common type of broccoli is the Italian Green Sprouting variety.

Some broccoli is grown in South Dakota.

NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Low sodium
- Good source of vitamin A and vitamin C
- Good source of folate, iron, calcium and fiber

USES

Steam broccoli or eat it raw with your favorite dip. Add broccoli to salads, soups, stews, casseroles and stir-fries.

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Herbs and spices that enhance the flavor of broccoli include basil, dill, garlic, lemon balm, marjoram, oregano, tarragon and thyme.

**Steamed Broccoli with Lemon-Dill Dressing**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 bunch broccoli (about 2 pounds)
- 3 carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch strips

**Lemon-Dill Dressing**
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- Grated or minced rind of one lemon
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper (optional)
- 1 teaspoon dried dill weed or 3 teaspoons fresh dill

**Directions:**
2. Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil while preparing the vegetables.
3. Rinse, trim stems from broccoli and peel, cut into 2-inch strips.
4. Cut florets into small uniform pieces and set aside.
5. Prepare carrots and set aside.
6. When water is boiling add carrots and broccoli stems.
7. Cook for one minute.
8. Add broccoli florets and boil two minutes longer.
9. Do not over cook.
10. Drain, and rinse under cold running water, drain again.
11. Place in a large bowl and gently toss with dressing. Serve immediately.

Makes 6 Servings

**Nutrition Facts per Serving:**
- 200 Calories
- 15g Fat
- 0mg Cholesterol
- 70mg Sodium
- 14g Carbohydrates
- 5g Fiber
- 5g Sugar
- 5g Protein

Sources: [http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/broccoli.cfm](http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/broccoli.cfm)
Brussels sprouts were named after the capital of Belgium where it is thought they were first grown. They are one of the few vegetables that originated in northern Europe. French settlers in Louisiana introduced Brussels sprouts to America.

Most Brussels sprouts are grown in California. They are available all year long, but their peak growing season is fall to early spring. They taste best when harvested after a light frost.

Brussels sprouts are a member of the cabbage family, which may help prevent certain types of cancer.

There are many varieties of Brussels sprouts.

Some Brussels sprouts are grown in South Dakota.

Brussels sprouts look like little heads of cabbage. They are similar in taste to cabbage, but are slightly milder in flavor and denser in texture.

Brussels sprouts are vegetables which grow as small leafy heads on plant stems.

Nutrition Facts
- Fat free
- High in potassium
- High in vitamin C
- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of fiber

Uses
- Brussels sprouts can be steamed, boiled, or microwaved. They make a tasty addition to soups, stews and casseroles.

Primary Source: 5 to 9 a Day for Better Health program at www.5aday.gov and www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5aday • Designed by: Vicki Jedlicka, UNL Extension in Lancaster County

VARIETIES

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Brussels sprouts should be firm, green, not yellow, compact and about 1 inch in diameter. The fresher the sprouts, the better the flavor. Refrigerator storage should not be more than a day or two. Remove any bruised outer leaves. Store fresh unrisen sprouts in plastic bags in the vegetable bin of the refrigerator.

Cooking Brussels sprouts goes well with these herbs: basil, caraway seed, dill, mustard seed, sage, thyme, curry powder, nutmeg, garlic salt, cumin, marjoram, or savory.

Braised Brussels Sprouts with Mustard Butter
Ingredients:
- 1 pound small, firm, bright green Brussels sprouts
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 tablespoons melted margarine
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- Ground black pepper to taste

Directions:
1. Check each head, peel off any loose or discolored leaves.
2. Using a paring knife, cut an X through the core end of each head.
3. Place sprouts, water and salt in a 2-quart saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
4. Lower heat, cover and simmer. Shake pan once or twice during cooking to roll the sprouts.
5. Cook until just tender 8 to10 minutes.
6. Test for doneness by piercing with a paring knife tip at the stem end. It should enter the sprout with a slight resistance. Drain well.
7. Melt butter in a large skillet on medium heat.
8. Stir mustard into butter until smooth.
9. Cook, stirring constantly, until smooth and creamy, about 30 seconds.
10. Add sprouts to skillet, coating well with the butter mixture.
11. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve.

Serves 3 to 4.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving:
140 Calories; 8g Fat; 0mg Cholesterol; 16g Carbohydrates; 6g Fiber; 3g Sugar; 5g Protein

Rinse Brussels sprouts well under running water. The key to cooking Brussels sprouts is in not overcooking them. The leaves cook faster than the core, so cut an X in the bottom of the stem for even cooking when cooking the sprouts whole. When Brussels sprouts have lost the bright green color they are overcooked and have lost much nutritional value. Depending on size, cooking time should not be more than 7 to 10 minutes whether you are steaming, braising or boiling. Select sprouts of even size for cooking. Large sprouts should be cut in half.
Cabbage is a cheap and widely used food. It may help reduce the risk of certain cancers. Cabbage needs to be kept cold so it retains its vitamin C.

**VARIEDIES**

There are at least 100 types of cabbage grown in the world. The most common varieties in the United States are Green, Red and Savoy. Chinese varieties are also available. The two most common Chinese varieties are Bok Choy and Napa.

Cabbage originated nearly 2,000 years ago in the Mediterranean region. Cabbage was introduced to America in 1541-42 by French explorer Jacques Cartier, who planted it in Canada. Cabbage heads are solid, glossy and light green or purple in color. The stem end should look healthy, trimmed and not dry or split.

**USSES**

Raw cabbage is delicious in salads or as coleslaw. It can be steamed, boiled, microwaved or stir-fried. It can also be added to pasta, soups or stews. Sauerkraut is made from cabbage.

**NUTRITION FACTS**

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Rich in vitamin C
- Good source of fiber

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Steamed cabbage can be seasoned with anise, basil, caraway and celery seeds, dill, mustard, fennel, nutmeg, oregano, black pepper, savory and tarragon.

Braised Green Cabbage with Garden Vegetables

**Ingredients:**
- 1 head green cabbage (about 2 1/2 lbs), shredded
- 1 medium onion, chopped or 4 green onions chopped with green tops
- 1 medium bell pepper, cut into 1/2 inch squares
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 cup olive oil or peanut oil
- 1 cup water or chicken stock
- Salt and pepper to taste

**Directions:**
1. Cut cabbage into quarters and shred thinly.
2. Chop onions and bell pepper and set aside.
3. Use a large (5 quart) pan with lid. Heat pan over medium high heat for a few seconds until hot. Add oil to hot pan, immediately add onions and bell peppers and stir for about one minute.
4. Add one half of the shredded cabbage, stir for another 30 seconds.
5. Add crushed red pepper and garlic powder, continue to cook and stir for 15 seconds.
6. Add two handfuls of cabbage stirring for about 30 seconds, continue adding the remaining cabbage and stirring at 30 second intervals until all of the cabbage is in the pot.
7. Add water or chicken stock, cover immediately and continue cooking for 10 minutes. Stir occasionally to keep from sticking. Add more water if necessary.
8. When cabbage is done, almost all of the liquid will have cooked away.

Makes six servings.

**Nutrition Facts per Serving:**
- 160 Calories; 10g Fat; 0mg Cholesterol; 45mg Sodium; 14g Carbohydrates; 5g Fiber; 8g Sugar; 3g Protein

**Sources:**
Cantaloupe
In the United States, cantaloupe are commonly called muskmelon.

Many melons originated in the Middle East. Ancient Egyptians and Romans enjoyed cantaloupe. Melon seeds were transported to North America by Christopher Columbus and eventually Spanish explorers grew them in California.

Cantaloupe is a fruit which grows on vines.

Many melons originated in the Middle East. Ancient Egyptians and Romans enjoyed cantaloupe. Melon seeds were transported to North America by Christopher Columbus and eventually Spanish explorers grew them in California.

Cantaloupe is a melon. Other melons includes honeydew and watermelon. Melons are in the same family as squash and cucumbers.

VARIETIES
There are two main types in the US; the smooth round "Western" type and the larger "Eastern" type with deep indentations.

Many cantaloupe are grown in South Dakota.

NUTRITION FACTS
• Fat free
• Cholesterol free
• Sodium free
• Good source of potassium and folate
• High in vitamin A and vitamin C

USES
Cantaloupe is delicious raw. It is usually sliced or cut into chunks. Add cantaloupe to fruit salads, fruit soups or salsa. Serve as a dessert with some ice cream and chocolate sauce.

Primary Source: 5 to 9 a Day for Better Health program at www.5aday.gov and www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5aday • Designed by: Vicki Jedlicka, UNL Extension in Lancaster County

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Cantaloupe

Enjoy fresh cantaloupe by itself or mix with various fruits to form a delicious fruit salad.

Cantaloupe Cooler:
Ingredients:
- 1 ripe cantaloupe
- 2 ½ cups cold orange juice
- 1 Tablespoon artificial sweetener (Splenda, Equal, etc.)
- Crushed ice

Directions:
1. Cut melon in half. Scoop out seeds, remove rind and discard.
2. Cut melon into 1-inch cubes. Use a blender, food processor, or hand mixer to blend the melon cubes with ½ cup orange juice until smooth.
3. Pour mixture into pitcher and stir in the remaining orange juice and the sweetener.
4. Stir until sweetener is dissolved.
5. Pour into glasses filled with crushed ice.

Nutrition Facts per Serving:
50 Calories; 0g fat; 0mg cholesterol; 10mg sodium; 13g Carb; 1g Fiber; 5g Sugar; 1g Sugar


Choose cantaloupes that have a sweet smell. Look for a smooth, rounded stem scar and a blossom end (opposite stem scar) that yields slightly to pressure. The outer rind or skin should have raised well-developed netting with a yellow background. Some new varieties retain green-colored backgrounds when ripe. Melons should be free of cuts, bruises, or other defects.

If the melon is not ripe when purchased, store at room temperature for one to two days. When purchased from a grocery store, melons will keep in the refrigerator for about 5 days. It is best not to rinse cantaloupes before storage; this helps ensure a longer shelf life for the uncut fruit. Cantaloupes should be rinsed just before preparing and eating. Before cutting the cantaloupe, scrub the whole melon with a clean vegetable brush under clean running water.

Like It!

Try It!
Carrot

The carrot originated about 5,000 years ago in Middle Asia around Afghanistan.

Carrot is a vegetable that grows in the ground as a taproot (main root of a plant).

The carrot originated about 5,000 years ago in Middle Asia around Afghanistan. In Roman times, carrots were purple or white. In the 16th century, Dutch growers bred the vegetable to grow in the colors of the House of Orange.

Pick carrots which are a dark orange in color. More beta-carotene is present in carrots which have a dark orange color.

Over half of the carrots grown in the United States are grown in California. Carrots are available all year long.

Over half of the carrots grown in the United States are grown in California. Carrots are available all year long.

VARIETIES

The variety of carrots usually found in supermarkets is 7 to 9 inches long and ¾ to 1½ inches in diameter. Baby carrots are longer carrots that have been peeled, trimmed and packaged. There are many other varieties of carrots with colors including white, yellow, red and purple.

Many carrots are grown in South Dakota.

NUTRITION FACTS

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Good source of fiber
- High in beta-carotene
- Very high in vitamin A

USES

Raw carrots make a perfect snack. They can also be cooked (steamed or microwaved). Add carrots to salads, soups and stews, or shred and bake them into cakes or breads.

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The flavor of cooked carrots is enhanced by herbs such as spearmint, marjoram, a small bay leaf, thyme, grated ginger root, chopped chives, dill or parsley. To sweeten carrots, use honey, maple syrup or a sprinkle of artificial sweetener. Marinate carrots as a garnish or snack!

Braised Carrots with Fresh Herbs

Ingredients:
- 1 pound baby carrots or carrot sticks
- 1 cup canned or fresh beef broth
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped (or use one tablespoon dried)

Directions:
1. Rinse, scrub and peel carrots. Leave baby whole or cut larger carrots into sticks that are 2-3 inches long and then cut into halves or quarters so that all pieces are about the same size.
2. In a medium saucepan, bring beef broth to a boil, add carrots, honey, butter and parsley. Cover and simmer for 4 to 5 minutes.
3. Remove carrots from the liquid to a warm plate. Continue simmering the broth for 15 to 20 minutes longer until it becomes a thickened liquid glaze.
4. Return carrots to pan and cover them with the glaze.
Serves 4.

Nutrition Facts per Serving:
90 Calories; 3.5g Fat; 0mg Cholesterol; 125mg Sodium; 13g Carbohydrates; 3g Fiber; 7g Sugar; 2g Protein

Sources: http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/carrot.cfm
Cauliflower

The cauliflower originated over 2,000 years ago in the Mediterranean and Asia Minor region. Almost all cauliflower grown in the United States comes from California.

Cauliflower, or “cabbage flower,” is a member of the cabbage family, which may help prevent certain types of cancer. Cauliflower is available year round but is more plentiful in the fall.

Nutrition Facts
• Fat free
• Cholesterol free
• High in vitamin C
• High in folate
• High in fiber
• Good source of folate

In its early stages, cauliflower looks like broccoli, which is a close relative. While broccoli opens outward to sprout bunches of green florets, cauliflower forms a compact head of undeveloped white flower buds.

Cauliflower is a vegetable which grows as a flower on a plant.

Varieties
- creamy white — more popular in the United States
- “broccoflower” hybrid — as it has green heads, this type of cauliflower looks like broccoli
- purple cauliflower
- orange cauliflower

Some cauliflower are grown in South Dakota.

Uses: Cauliflower can be eaten raw or cooked. Steam or microwave, instead of boiling, to reduce vitamin loss.

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Herbs that complement cauliflower are caraway seed, celery salt, dill, mace, tarragon, rosemary, parsley flakes, basil, curry powder, nutmeg, or poppy seed.

Savory Cauliflower

Ingredients:
- 1 head cauliflower
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 large tomatoes
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 Tablespoon dried parsley
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Directions:
1. Chop the cauliflower into 2 inch pieces.
2. Peel and chop the onion. Chop the tomatoes.
3. Put the cauliflower in a pan. Add 1 inch of water.
4. Cook, covered, over medium heat, and let it boil for 3 minutes. Remove cover and cook for 15 seconds.
5. In a large pan, heat oil. Add onion.
6. Cook onion over medium heat for 3-5 minutes.
7. Test the cauliflower for doneness. If tender, drain the cauliflower.
8. Add garlic and cauliflower to the pan with the onion.
9. Cook while stirring for 3 minutes, until lightly browned.
10. Add the tomatoes and pepper.
11. Cook for 5 more minutes. Serve with a sprinkle of parsley and cheese.

Nutrition Facts per Serving:
80 Calories; 3.5g Fat; 5mg Cholesterol; 85mg Sodium; 9g Carbohydrates; 3g Fiber; 4g Sugar; 4g Protein

Greens date back to ancient times. Many greens descended from wild cabbage which originated in the Mediterranean region and Asia Minor.

Greens should have fresh, green leaves. Before cleaning, remove any wilted or yellow leaves. Wash under clean, running water.

Greens are vegetables which grow as plant leaves.

Greens are members of the cabbage family, where the green leaves do not form a compact head. In the United States, cooking greens are a southern tradition. Most greens are available all year long.

There are many varieties of greens. The ones most often found in the supermarkets are: collard, mustard, kale, Swiss chard, and broccoli rabe. Some greens come in bunches (such as collards and kale) and some have stems or stalks (such as mustard, Swiss chard, and broccoli rabe).

NUTRITION FACTS
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of vitamin C

USES
Greens can be served raw in salads. They are often cooked (boiled, steamed or microwaved). Add to stir-fries, soups or stews.

Some greens are grown in South Dakota.
Leaves should be free of wilt, rot and rust. Harvest crisp green leaves when they are young and tender (about 8-12 inches long). Store unrinsed greens in plastic bags in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. They will keep for about three days. Wrap in moist paper towels for longer storage, up to five days. Cooler temperature will keep greens fresh longer. The coolest part of most refrigerators is usually on the first shelf against the rear wall.

Rinse greens in cool water to remove all dirt and grit. Change to fresh water several times. Remove the tough stems and central vein as well. Chard, a variety of greens, can be used in place of spinach in any recipe, although chard will need to be cooked a bit longer. When cooking older chard, the stems require longer cooking time than the leaves.

During the cooking process, nutrients are leached out into the cooking liquid. This is full of valuable nutrients so save it to add to soups.

**Wilted Swiss Chard with Garlic**

- 2 pounds Swiss chard, cleaned and coarsely chopped
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt and ground black pepper to taste
- Fresh lemon juice, optional

**Directions:**
1. Rinse the greens in several changes of cold water.
2. Remove the stems and chop them into one-inch pieces. Set aside.
3. Stack the leaves and roll them into a tube shape.
4. Using a sharp knife cut across each tube until all the greens are prepared.
5. Mince the garlic and set aside.
6. Heat a skillet or deep Dutch oven saucepan over medium-high heat.
7. Add olive oil and chopped stems. Cook 5 minutes.
8. Add garlic and cook an additional 15 seconds.
9. Add the wet chard one hand full at a time. Stir after each addition.
10. Cover with tight fitting lid. Cook the greens about 5 minutes, keeping the bright color.
11. Remove the lid and cook over high heat until all the liquid has evaporated, about 2 to 3 minutes.
12. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve with a squeeze of lemon juice, if desired. Serves 4.

**Nutrition Facts per Serving:**
140 Calories; 11g Fat; 0mg Cholesterol; 480 Sodium; 9g Carbohydrates; 4g Fiber; 3g Sugar; 4g Protein

Sources: [http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/chard.cfm](http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/chard.cfm), [http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/collards.cfm](http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/collards.cfm)
Lettuce

Lettuce actually started out as a weed around the Mediterranean Sea. This vegetable has been eaten for over 4,500 years, and was known to the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. Christopher Columbus introduced lettuce to North America and it has been grown here since.

California raises more lettuce than any other state; followed by Arizona, Florida and Texas.

Varieties

There are four main types of lettuce and each type has different varieties:

- **Butterhead** — forms a loose head and has a buttery texture.
- **Iceberg** — pale green with leaves packed in a tight head.
- **Looseleaf** — doesn’t form a head, but instead the leaves are joined at the stem.
- **Romaine** — has a loaf-like shape with darker green leaves.

NUTRITION FACTS

- Good source of vitamin A
- Good source of beta-carotene
- Good source of folate

USES

Lettuce is usually eaten raw. Lettuce is often used in salads — a mixture of lettuces can be used. Add lettuce to all types of sandwiches (including hamburgers) and tacos.

Some lettuce is grown in South Dakota.

Developed by University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County’s Nutrition Education Program. This materials was funded in part by USDA’s Food Stamp Program and EFNEP. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact: 1-800-430-3244.

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Growing lettuce in your garden will give you a first hand opportunity to taste fresh flavorful leaves. Leaf lettuce and romaine provide flavor and crunch and are excellent salad and sandwich selections. Lettuce leaves should be free of wilt, rot and rust. Harvest crisp green leaves. Wrap fresh, unrinised leaves in plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator for a few days if necessary. Cooler temperature will keep lettuce fresh longer.

Avoid storing lettuce with apples, pears or bananas. These fruits release ethylene gas which will cause the lettuce to develop brown spots and decay quickly. Toss lettuce that looks slimy or has black spots.

The mild flavor of fresh lettuce leaves pairs well with fresh or dry herbs. The base of most green salads is lettuce. The simplest way to appreciate a tossed green salad is with a vinaigrette dressing. Keep it simple. When the dressing becomes too flavorful the mild garden greens can be overpowered. Try this simple vinaigrette recipe with your favorite salad greens.

**Red and Yellow Pepper Vinaigrette**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 small yellow bell pepper, finely chopped (about 1/2 cup)
- 1 small red bell pepper, finely chopped (about 1/2 cup)
- 4 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil (or vegetable oil)
- 2 teaspoons warm water
- pinch of sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste

**Directions:**
1. In a medium bowl, mix together all ingredients until combined well.
2. The vinaigrette will keep, tightly covered, in the refrigerator for 3 days.
   Shake before serving.

Makes one cup.

**Nutrition Facts per Serving:**
40 Calories; 3.5g Fat; 0mg Cholesterol; 150mg Sodium; 1g Carbohydrates; 0g Fiber; 1g Sugar; 0g Protein

Sources: [http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/lettuce.cfm](http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/lettuce.cfm)
Potato

Potato is a vegetable that grows in the ground as a tuber (fleshy, underground stems).

Potatoes were first grown in the Andes Mountain of South America over 7,000 years ago. Spaniards brought potatoes to Spain in the 1500’s, which then gradually spread to the rest of Europe. Irish immigrants introduced potatoes to North America in the 18th century.

Most potatoes have a light brown or red skin with white flesh. Some of the new varieties have purple/blue skin or yellow flesh. The peel is good to eat and has many nutrients. Cut off any green spots or sprouts.

Potatoes are the second most popular vegetable in the world (after corn). They are inexpensive and available year round. Idaho grows 30% of the potatoes grown in the United States.

The potato is not related to the sweet potato, but because both vegetables grow in the ground, they have often been confused.

There are thousands of varieties of potatoes. Common North American potato varieties include:
- Russet Burbank
- Yellow Finn
- Red Gold
- German Butterball
- Yukon Gold

Some potatoes are grown in South Dakota.

VARIETIES

NUTRITION FACTS
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of fiber
- High in potassium
- High in vitamin C

USES
Potatoes can be eaten raw, but are usually cooked (boiled, baked, microwaved, mashed, fried or grilled). Potatoes can be added to soups, stews or casseroles. Other popular ways to eat potatoes are potato salad, hashbrowns, potato chips and French fries. Potatoes prepared with little or no added fat are more nutritious.
Potatoes can be boiled, fried, steamed, grilled or baked. All potatoes should be cooked or placed in water immediately after peeling to prevent browning. Depending on the preparation method or personal choice, you may peel or not peel. The exceptions are thin-skinned new potatoes, which should not be peeled.

Potatoes should be chosen based on their use in a recipe. New potatoes are moist and waxy and are best for steaming, boiling and in salads. Mature white potatoes are rather dry and starchy. They are the most popular french-fried potato and they are great for baking and mashing. Round red potatoes have a waxy texture making them ideal for boiling and mashing. Round white potatoes are thin-skinned and hold their shape in salads as well as boiling and roasting. Yellow-fleshed potatoes are good for steaming, roasting, and mashing.

Fresh garden herbs that enhance the flavor of potatoes include basil, chives, cilantro, dill, fennel, marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, tarragon and thyme.

New Potatoes with Garlic and Herbs

Ingredients:
- 8 to 10 small new potatoes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, dill or thyme leaves or 4 teaspoons dried
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt

Directions:
1. Using a vegetable brush, gently scrub potatoes under cold running water. Do not peel the thin skin.
2. Cut potatoes into cubes (about 2 cups). Place in a colander, and rinse well under cool running water.
3. Place in a saucepan with enough water to just cover the potatoes.
4. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cook for 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender.
5. Meanwhile, chop the parsley until finely minced.
6. Drain the potatoes and toss with olive oil.
7. Add parsley, garlic, salt and pepper and toss until combined.

Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition Facts per Serving:
310 Calories; 8g Fat; 0mg Cholesterol; 600mg Sodium; 55g Carbohydrates; 6g Fiber; 3g Sugar; 7g Protein

Sources: http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/potato.cfm
Spinach is believed to be of Persian origin and was introduced into Europe in the 15th century. Spinach was not commonly eaten in the United States until the early 19th century. Most spinach is grown in Texas and California. Fresh spinach is available year round.

There are three basic types of spinach:
- Flat or smooth leaf — has unwrinkled, spade-shaped leaves (usually used for canned and frozen spinach or in other processed foods)
- Savoy — has crinkly, dark green curly leaves (usually sold fresh)
- Semi-Savoy — has slightly curly leaves (usually sold fresh)

Some spinach is grown in South Dakota.

Spinach should have fresh, green leaves that are not limp, damaged or spotted. Leaves should be dull green on top and bright green on the underside. Wash under clean, running water.

Spinach is a vegetable which grows as plant leaves.

VARIETIES

NUTRITION FACTS
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Low sodium
- High in potassium
- High in vitamin C and vitamin A
- Good source of iron, fiber, and folate

USES
Spinach tastes good raw or cooked. Serve raw in salads or on sandwiches. It can be steamed, boiled, microwaved, sautéed or stir-fried. It can also be added to soups, lasagna or other vegetable dishes.
**Spinach**

For the best quality, select leaves that are green and crisp, with a nice fresh fragrance. Avoid leaves that are limp, damaged, or spotted. If you are in a rush, grab a bag of fresh, pre-rinsed spinach. The ready-to-eat packaging makes it easy to be on the go and still stay healthy.

Fresh spinach should be dried and packed loosely in a plastic bag and stored in the refrigerator crisper. If stored properly, it should last 3 or 4 days.

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**Chicken Florentine:**
- 4 cups firmly packed baby spinach leaves, rinsed with stems removed, or 1 (10 oz) package frozen, chopped spinach (thaw and drain well in a strainer)
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves, crushed
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- 1 Tablespoon white flour
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 3 cups of cooked, cubed chicken
- 2 lemons, to yield 2 Tablespoons grated lemon peel

**Directions:**
1. Place spinach in a large skillet over medium heat.
2. Cover and cook until fresh spinach is wilted or frozen spinach is heated through. Spinach should have a dark, rich green color. Do not overcook, or the spinach will change color.
3. Remove spinach, and drain well.
4. In the same skillet, heat thyme with oil, garlic, and onion. Sauté until onion is transparent.
5. Stir in flour until it disappears.
6. Add broth and stir constantly until a thickened sauce is formed.
7. Return chopped spinach to sauce and mix well. Heat and adjust seasonings, if desired.
8. Place the chicken into a baking dish.
9. Top with spinach sauce and grated lemon peel.
10. Place in preheated 300° F oven for 10 minutes. Serve immediately.

Serves 4. Each serving equals 3/4 cup of fruit or vegetables

**Nutritional Facts per serving:**
Calories 220, Fat 7g, Carbohydrates 8g, Cholesterol 75mg, Fiber 3g, Sodium 150mg.

**Sources:**
- [http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/spinach.cfm](http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/spinach.cfm)
Squash is a vegetable. Depending on the variety, it grows either on vines or bushes.

Squash originated in North America over 5,000 years ago. It was one of the “three sisters” planted by Native Americans, along with maize (corn) and beans. Squash was grown and eaten by early Europeans that settled in America.

Squash are in the same family as melons and cucumbers.

**VARIETIES**

Squash are commonly divided into two groups:
- **Summer squash** — the rinds are rich in beta-carotene and can be eaten. Zucchini is the most popular variety in the United States.
- **Winter squash** — usually have a hard rind which is not eaten. Some popular varieties are pumpkin, butternut, acorn and spaghetti squash.

NUTRITION FACTS
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- High in vitamin C and vitamin A

USES

Squash is often cooked, but some summer squash may be eaten raw (try with vegetable dip or add to salads). You may steam, sauté, grill or bake squash. Add to stir-fries, soups and casseroles. Bake in breads, cakes and pies. Sometimes the seeds are eaten separately.

Many squash are grown in South Dakota.
**Winter Squash:** Harvest sturdy, heavy squashes with fairly glossy skin that is free of soft spots, cuts, breaks or discoloration. Immature winter squash is not the most flavorful, so wait until the rind is hard. Curing is helpful by holding the squash at warm temperature (about 70-80 degrees) for 10 to 20 days. After curing, move to a cool (45 to 50 degrees), dry place such as the basement or garage for long term storage. Do not allow them to freeze. The large hard rind winter squash can be stored up to six months under these conditions. Warmer temperatures and soft rinds simply mean shorter storage time. Store only cut pieces of winter squash in the refrigerator.

**Summer Squash:** Summer squash is best when immature, young and tender. To store summer squash, harvest small squash and place, unrinsed in plastic bags in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Rinse the squash just before preparing. The storage life of summer squash is brief, so use within two to three days.

### Zucchini Carrot Bread

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 1 cup grated zucchini
- 1/2 cup grated carrots
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

**Directions:**
1. In a large mixing bowl stir together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt and ginger. Set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, beat the egg, add the oil, grated zucchini and grated carrots. Mix well.
3. Add the zucchini mixture and nuts to the flour mixture. Stir only until all the flour is blended. Do not over-mix or the bread will be dry and chewy.
4. Scrape the batter into a well greased 9-inch bread pan and bake in a preheated 375° oven for 50 minutes.
5. Remove from the oven and let the bread cool in the pan 5 minutes, then turn out onto a rack or plate.

**Nutrition Facts per Serving:**
- 270 Calories; 1g Fat; 10g Cholesterol; 20mg Sodium; 33g Carbohydrates; 1g Fiber; 19g Sugar; 3g Protein

**Sources:** [http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/ssquash.cfm](http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/ssquash.cfm)
Sweet potato is a vegetable which grows in the ground as a tuberous root (fleshy, side root).

Sweet potatoes originated in the tropical Americas at least 5,000 years ago. Christopher Columbus introduced sweet potatoes to Europe, and later explorers introduced them to Asia. China is now the world’s largest grower of sweet potatoes.

In the United States, sweet potatoes are commonly called yams. True yams are usually grown in Africa and Asia — they have a pinkish white center and can grow up to 6 feet long and 100 pounds!

The sweet potato is not related to the potato, but because both vegetables grow in the ground, they have been often confused.

**VARIETIES**

There are two varieties of sweet potatoes:

- Pale yellow — with a dry, yellow flesh
- Dark orange — with a moist flesh. The dark orange is plumper in shape and somewhat sweeter than the pale yellow variety.

Few sweet potatoes are grown in South Dakota.

Sweet potatoes are usually the size of regular white potatoes. They are long and tapered. Sweet potatoes have smooth, thin skins which can be eaten.

**NUTRITION FACTS**

- Fat free
- High in vitamin C
- High in vitamin A
- Good source of calcium and potassium
- Excellent source of fiber

**USES**

Sweet potatoes can be eaten raw, but are usually cooked (boiled, baked, microwaved, mashed or fried). Add to stir-fries, soups and casseroles. Sweet potatoes are popular at Thanksgiving and Christmas meals.

In the United States, sweet potatoes are commonly called yams. True yams are usually grown in Africa and Asia — they have a pinkish white center and can grow up to 6 feet long and 100 pounds! The sweet potato is not related to the potato, but because both vegetables grow in the ground, they have been often confused.

**VARIETIES**

There are two varieties of sweet potatoes:

- Pale yellow — with a dry, yellow flesh
- Dark orange — with a moist flesh. The dark orange is plumper in shape and somewhat sweeter than the pale yellow variety.

Few sweet potatoes are grown in South Dakota.
Typical seasonings include small amounts of butter or brown sugar, apple, orange or pineapple juice, orange peel, nutmeg, cinnamon or ginger.

**Sweet Potato Oven Fries**
- 4 medium sweet potatoes
- Nonstick vegetable oil spray
- 2 tablespoons canola or olive oil
- Optional Seasonings:
  - Mix equal parts ground nutmeg and cinnamon or
  - Mix 1/8 teaspoon each paprika, garlic flakes and salt with a pinch of cayenne pepper

**Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 475°F.
2. Lightly spray a baking sheet with the nonstick vegetable oil spray.
3. Rinse potatoes thoroughly and dry with a paper towel.
4. Cut the potatoes into long strips about ½ inch thick.
5. Put oil in a plastic bag. Add potatoes and toss to evenly coat with oil.
6. You may add seasoning to the bag.
7. Spread strips in a single layer on the baking sheet and place in preheated oven.
8. Bake at 475°F for 40 minutes, turning once.

**Nutrition Facts per Serving:**
Calories: 130; Sodium: 10 mg; Total Fat: 5 g; Dietary Fiber: 3 g; Carbohydrate: 21

**Sources:** http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/sweetpotato.cfm, http://www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/PDF/FCS727.pdf
Tomato

Tomato is a vegetable which grows on plants.

The tomato originated in the Andes Mountains in South America. Maya and Aztec people grew tomatoes. Its name is derived from the Aztec word “tomatl”. Spanish explorers introduced the tomato to Europe in the 1600’s where it was embraced by Spaniards and Italians.

Tomatoes are fruit formed from flowers, but they are served and prepared as a vegetable. They are one of the most popular vegetables eaten by Americans.

There are thousands of tomato varieties. The most widely available varieties are classified into four groups: grape, cherry, plum or roma, and slicing tomatoes.

Many tomatoes are grown in South Dakota.

NUTRITION FACTS
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Very low sodium
- Good source of potassium
- High in vitamin C and vitamin A

USES
Tomatoes can be eaten raw or cooked (baked, stewed, grilled or stir-fried). They are wonderful to eat alone. Add to salads and sandwiches. Other popular ways to enjoy tomatoes are in soups, salsas and sauces. Tomato sauce is used in many pasta dishes such as spaghetti and on pizza. Ketchup is made from tomatoes.
Tomato

Try it!

Tomatoes are great raw, sautéed, grilled, stewed, and added to many dishes. Use a serrated knife or very sharp knife to slice or chop tomatoes or prick the skin to get a slice going. Cut tomatoes lengthwise from stem to blossom end to keep more juice in each slice.

To peel tomatoes, drop them into boiling water for about 30 seconds, or longer for firm tomatoes. Then plunge into a bowl of ice water until cool enough to handle. Cut an X on the stem end and use a paring knife to pull skin away. Skin will pull away easily if the tomatoes have been blanched long enough.

To seed tomatoes, cut the tomato in half horizontally. Holding a half in the palm of your hand, squeeze out the jelly-like juice and seeds over a strainer and scoop out remaining seeds with your fingertip.

Like it!

Selection should be suited to how you will use the tomato. Slicing tomatoes are large round varieties and are perfect for eating raw in many ways. Plum tomatoes are meaty, eggplant-shaped, and may be red or yellow and are best for sauce making, canning, and pizzas. Small cherry-type tomatoes are generally served whole, but can be cut in half and sautéed in any dish. They contain a great deal of seeds and juice.

Fresh ripe tomatoes should not be stored in the refrigerator. Refrigerate only extra-ripe tomatoes you want to keep from ripening any further. Flavor and texture begin to worsen when the temperature drops below 54°F. Store tomatoes at room temperature for 2 to 3 days, away from direct sunlight until ready to use.

To ripen tomatoes, place them in a paper bag, stem end up. Punch several holes all around the bag and fold the top over. Depending on how under ripe they are, tomatoes may take one to five days to ripen. Check progress daily.

Fresh Garden Salsa

- 2 large ripe, red slicing tomatoes, cored and chopped
- 1 small white onion, chopped
- 1 green onion, top included, chopped
- 1 to 3 jalapeno peppers, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup cilantro leaves, minced
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 teaspoon salt

Directions:
1. Using a serrated knife, chop tomatoes. If using plum tomatoes, add 2 tablespoons water.
2. In a medium bowl, toss together the tomatoes, onions, peppers, and cilantro.
3. Squeeze lime juice over the mixture and sprinkle on the salt.
4. Allow to rest 30 minutes before serving to allow salt to draw juice from the tomatoes.
5. Stir again just before serving.

Makes about 2 cups.

Nutrition Facts per Serving:
30 Calories; 0g Fat; 0mg Cholesterol; 640mg Sodium; 7g Carbohydrates; 2g Fiber; 4g Sugar; 1g Protein

Sources: http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/tomato.cfm
Watermelon is a fruit that grows on vines.

Watermelon originated in Africa over 5,000 years ago. By the 10th century, watermelons were being grown in China, which is today the world’s largest watermelon producer.

Watermelons are usually round or oblong and weigh 5 to 30 pounds. They have a smooth, green rind (thick skin), which is not eaten. Most watermelons have red flesh, but there are orange and yellow-fleshed varieties. Some have seeds and some are seedless.

Most states grow watermelons commercially. The top producers are Georgia, Florida, Texas, California and Arizona.

Watermelons are a melon. Melons are in the same gourd family as squash and cucumbers.

There are more than 50 varieties of watermelons grown in the United States.

Nutrition Facts
- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of vitamin A
- High in vitamin C

Uses
- Watermelon is wonderful eaten alone.
- Add to fruit salads, salsa, cool drinks or desserts.

Many watermelons are grown in South Dakota.

Developed by University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County’s Nutrition Education Program. This materials was funded in part by USDA’s Food Stamp Program and EFNEP. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact: 1-800-430-3244.

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Watermelon Smoothie

- 1 - 8 ounce lemon, fat-free yogurt
- 3 cups cubed, seeded watermelon
- 1 pint fresh strawberries, cleaned and hulled
- 1 tablespoon honey or strawberry jam
- 3 ice cubes

Directions:
1. In a blender or food processor, combine yogurt, watermelon, strawberries, honey and ice cubes.
2. Process until smooth and frothy.
3. Serve in tall glasses with a straw.

Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition Facts per Serving:
140 Calories; 0g Fat; 0mg Cholesterol; 680mg Sodium; 34g Carbohydrates; 4g Fiber; 26g Sugar; 5g Protein

Sources: http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/watermelon.cfm