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EC9988 Vegetables and Vegetable Cookery

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VEGETABLES & VEGETABLE COOKERY

Good health with a reserve of vigor should be the goal of every one--and a goal which may be attained by observing a few simple rules. One of these rules is protective eating, which means choosing and eating those foods which supply the substances to insure good health. Vegetables are among these foods and have an important part in making and keeping us strong, vigorous, and ready to meet any situation that may face us. Vegetables are rich in the food values needed to keep us healthy. They are important to that balance of diet which promotes balance of muscles, nerves, mind, and emotions. In addition they add interest, color, and variety in texture and flavor to our meals.

For these reasons it is essential that each day's meals include these vegetables:

- 1 or 2 servings of potatoes
- 1 serving leafy, green, or yellow vegetable
- 1 serving of other vegetables

And in addition, weekly:

- Tomatoes 3 to 5 times (5 times if oranges are not available)
- Dried peas, dried beans or lentils 3 times a week.

A family's like or dislike for vegetables may be greatly influenced by the way in which they are prepared and cooked. A good cook prepares vegetables for the table so they keep that fresh garden look and taste, and also retain their vitamins and minerals.

CLASSIFICATION OF NEBRASKA-GROWN VEGETABLES

Leafy, green and yellow vegetables, are rich in minerals and vitamins and contribute bulk or roughage to the diet. The thinner and greener the leaf, the richer the mineral and vitamin A content. Green vegetables are excellent sources of vitamin G, contain some B₁, and if eaten raw considerable amounts of vitamin C. The iron of green vegetables is readily absorbed and used by the body in building red blood. A rich deep yellow indicates a higher vitamin A content in the yellow vegetables.

Leafy vegetables are beet tops, chard, tender greens, mustard, kale, parsley, spinach, turnip tops, young green cabbage, and green leaf lettuce.

Green vegetables are snap beans, peas, green onions, broccoli, okra, asparagus.

Yellow vegetables are carrots, rutabagas, yellow corn, squash, sweet potatoes.

Other Vegetables. All vegetables except potatoes and the green and yellow vegetables may be classified as "other vegetables." In this group the most common varieties are the root vegetables, beets, turnips, parsnips, onions, and the above ground vegetables, egg plant, cauliflower, cucumber, and fresh shelled beans. Vitamins B₁, C, and G, and minerals are contained in the vegetables of this group.

Tomatoes. These are widely recognized as the most popular vegetable source of vitamin C. Tomatoes also contain considerable amounts of vitamin A, B₁, and iron.

Dried Legumes. This group includes dried beans and dried peas. They are concentrated sources of both energy and protein and so fill two important needs in the diet. In the dry state their protein content compares with that of lean meat, fish, and cheese but the quality of the protein is not so good as that in milk, meat, and fish. In cooking the food values are diluted because of the absorption of a large amount of water. Legumes also furnish liberal amounts of minerals and vitamin B₁.

CARE AND CHOICE OF VEGETABLES

It is best to harvest all vegetables early in the morning, and to use green vegetables as soon as possible after they come from the garden or market. If they must be kept for a day or two, store them in a cool, moist place in order to prevent wilting and a consequent loss of food value. Most root vegetables wilt less quickly if the tops are removed before storage. Some vegetables, especially peas and corn, lose sweetness and become tough if allowed to stand. Just before using, wash the vegetables quickly and thoroughly; but do not let them soak in water because food value is lost in that way also. Salad greens may be kept crisp and crunchy if they are washed, drained, and wrapped in a clean cloth or paper bag and kept covered in a cool place.

When gathering and buying vegetables select those of medium size, or smaller and those with few leaf scars. Younger leaves and vegetables are richer in vitamin C than older, more mature ones. The larger ones may be fibrous and have a lower vitamin content. Head vegetables should be solid and with few waste leaves. Leafy vegetables should not be wilted, and peas and beans should have crisp pods. Vegetables which are bruised or those which are underripe or overripe do not have their fullest food value. Greens should be fresh, young and tender in order that there may be no waste in straggly leaves and woody stems.

FOOD VALUES

Fresh vegetables just out of the garden are best in flavor and highest in food values. It is important that they be handled so as to conserve those values. Standing in a warm room, they rapidly lose their vitamin C content and gradually some of their other vitamin values.

If peeled and cut into pieces and left standing in water for several hours, large amounts of their mineral and water soluble vitamin content are lost. Thin-skinned vegetables such as carrots may be scraped or scrubbed with a stiff bristle brush to conserve minerals.

Cabbage, carrots, and other vegetables for salads should be shredded just before using, and lemon juice, vinegar, or dressing added at once to close the exposed surfaces to air.

Green peas, lima beans, and string beans are best prepared just before cooking. Do not allow cooked or reheated canned vegetables to stand a long time before serving. Left-overs should be stored in a cool place in covered containers.

Frozen vegetables properly handled before freezing and stored at very low temperatures rank next to fresh ones in food value. With the exception of corn-on-

the-cob, they should not be thawed before cooking. Exposure to air, careless handling, and improper cooking results in loss of food value.

Canned vegetables are cooked vegetables with all the preliminary preparation for serving already done so that with little time and labor they can be made into appetizing dishes. When being prepared for serving, canned food should not be cooked for a long time nor vigorously stirred while heating because vitamins are destroyed in the presence of air and heat. Of course, a safe-guard against botulinus poisoning from home canned vegetables is boiling at least five minutes in an uncovered pan before serving. The liquid from canned vegetables may be used as directed for vegetable stock or it may be concentrated for serving with the vegetable by pouring it off and cooking it down one-half before adding the vegetable.

Stored Vegetables. Retention of food value in stored vegetables varies with length of storage, temperatures, and the handling of the vegetable before and after storing. Generally the vitamin C content of stored vegetables decreases and vitamin A and B are gradually lost.

Dried and brined vegetables are lower in nutritive value than those preserved by other methods. Vitamin C is lost during the drying process, and in brining both vitamins and minerals are lost.

Ripened beans and peas are rich in other food values and make important contributions to a nutritious diet.

COOKING

Vegetables are affected in food value, flavor, appearance, texture and digestibility by the manner in which they are cooked. The new ways of cooking vegetables are simpler, easier, and quicker than those formerly employed and result in vegetables that look more attractive, taste better, and are more nutritious than those cooked by older methods.

There are two simple points to be kept in mind about cooking vegetables in order to conserve the minerals and vitamins. The first is that vitamin C is rapidly destroyed by heating in the presence of air. The second is that a large proportion of vitamin C, the B vitamins and the minerals dissolve out into the cooking water. Ordinary cooking processes cause little loss or destruction of vitamin A. Long cooking in water containing fat may cause destruction of vitamin A and its loss in the cooking water. Therefore cook vegetables as short a time as possible in a small amount of water and if it is palatable, use the cooking water. It is well to remember to serve raw vegetables often. Cooking vegetables by different methods add variety to the menu.

REMEMBER!

Regardless of time suggested, cook your vegetables until just tender.

TIME TABLE FOR COOKING VEGETABLES

Vegetable	Preparation	Boiled		Steamed	Baked
		Amount of Water	Minutes	Minutes	Minutes
Asparagus	Cut in one inch lengths	Barely cover	5-10 (if very tender) 20-25 (otherwise)		
Beans (Fresh Lima)		Barely cover	20-40	60	
Beans (Green)	Sliced lengthwise	Barely cover	10-15		
	Whole or broken in 1 inch lengths	Barely cover	30-60	40-60	
Beets, young	Whole	To cover well	40-60	60	70-90
Beet greens		Small amount	10-20		
Broccoli	Coarse stalks and leaves removed	Barely cover	15-30		
Cabbage	Quartered or Shredded	Barely cover	10-20 Barely cover (milk) 5-10		
Carrots	Whole or cut lengthwise or diced	Barely cover	10-20 (young) 20-30 (older) 30-40		30-45
Cauliflower	Separated in flowerets or whole	Barely cover	8-10	30	
Corn on cob		Large amount	6-15	10	
Corn, cut		Small amount (milk)	5		
Onions	Whole	Large amount	30	30	60
Parsnips	Cut lengthwise	Barely cover	20-30	30-40	30-45
Peas	Shell	Small amount	10-20	30	
Potatoes, Irish	Medium whole	Barely cover	25-45	30-35	45-60
Potatoes, Sweet	Whole or halves	Barely cover	15-25	25-35	35-45
Rutabagas	Cut lengthwise and sliced	Large amount	20-45		
Spinach	Coarse stems removed	What clings to leaves after washing	5-8	5-6	
Swiss Chard	Coarse stems removed	Enough to keep from burning	10-30	20-30	
Squash, Summer	Pare and cut	Small amount	10-20		
Squash, Winter	Pare and cut or Bake in shell	Small amount	20	20-25	45-60
Turnips	Cut in cubes or slice	Large amount	15-20	20-25	
Turnip greens	Coarse stems removed	Large amount	15-30		
Tomatoes	Whole	Very little if any	5-15		30

Baking vegetables with a skin like the potato, sweet potato, tomato, squash, and onion preserves practically all of the food value.

Baking in a covered dish. A vegetable that cannot be baked in the skin is prepared as for boiling, placed in a baking dish, seasoned, and a small amount of liquid added. The dish is tightly covered and baked in a moderate oven. If desired, the cover may be removed toward the end of the baking period in order to brown the vegetable. Most of the food value is saved by this method.

Panning is a quick and easy top-of-the-stove way to cook many vegetables. It conserves food value, too, for the vegetable is cooked and served in its own juice with just enough fat for seasoning. Almost any vegetable, as cabbage, carrots, tender beans, beets, turnips, spinach, kale, and summer squash, may be cooked in this way. They cook in so short a time that even the stronger flavored vegetables do not develop unpleasant flavors. Directions for panning are: About 15 or 20 minutes before serving time, shred or chop the vegetable medium fine. Measure the shredded vegetable and for each quart melt two tablespoons of fat in a heavy flat pan. Add the vegetable, sprinkle with salt and pepper, cover tightly and cook over moderate heat about 8 or 10 minutes or until barely tender.

Steaming is desirable for such vegetables as potatoes, carrots, beets, and squash. There are two kinds of steamers, those with pressure and those without pressure. Legumes cook in a short time in a pressure cooker. It is not desirable to use a pressure cooker for green vegetables because of loss of color, but they may be cooked in an ordinary steamer.

Boiling is a method commonly used, but unless the liquid is used, it is the method most wasteful of food value. Boiling whole and unpeeled saves food value. However, in some cases cutting and shredding the vegetable lessens the loss of food value because the cooking period can be shortened. Vegetables should be dropped into small amounts of boiling, lightly salted water and cooked only until tender. Bring the water to the boiling point quickly after the vegetable is put in, then lower the heat until it just boils. Prolonged rapid boiling causes too much loss of liquid and cooks vegetables to pieces. The cover should be placed slightly ajar to permit the first steam that rises to push the air out of the pan; then put the cover on tight to keep the air out, and finish cooking. If desired the juices may be partly boiled back into the vegetable by partially removing the lid during the last few minutes of the cooking period. This procedure insures real flavor in both the vegetables and its stock or juices.

It is most desirable to keep the amount of cooking water as small as possible on mild flavored vegetables and to serve it with the vegetable itself. Vegetable stock or the water in which vegetables have been boiled is at its best when freshly cooked. Moreover, if stored away for future use, it may be forgotten.

Frying is the least desirable method of cooking vegetables because cooked fat coats the food and retards digestion. Furthermore, the high temperature used in frying is destructive of vitamins.

Pressure Saucepan -

When using the pressure saucepan it is best to follow the manufacturer's directions. One suggestion is to start with hot water when cooking vegetables to shorten the time it takes to reach the required pressure.

Research tells us that to date no significant differences in food value have been found between foods cooked in the pressure saucepan and food cooked by other methods.

REMEMBER THESE POINTS ABOUT VEGETABLES

Learn to like and use a variety of vegetables. Eat raw vegetables often. Try raw carrot and turnip strips, cauliflower broken into flowerlets, raw spinach shredded with cabbage or cottage cheese.

Choose those of good quality. Younger leaves and vegetables are richer in vitamin C than older, more mature ones. Vitamin C content increases in tomatoes as they ripen.

Care for and prepare vegetables to retain vitamin and minerals. Keep them fresh and cold. Use all edible parts. Outer leaves of cabbage and lettuce have more iron and vitamin A than inner, bleached leaves. Beet, turnip, and carrot tops are good food and good sources of iron and vitamin A.

Prepare vegetables in their jackets often. Avoid peeling when possible or peel after cooking. Cook vegetables soon after preparing them. Do not use soda. It destroys vitamins. For the same reason avoid excess straining or sieving of hot foods. Prepare chopped or shredded vegetables for salads at the last possible moment.

Cook to conserve food value, flavor and appetite appeal. Cook in a small amount of water. Have the water boiling when the vegetables are put in, or pour boiling water over the vegetables. The air present in cold water destroys vitamin C. Covering the pan prevents loss of vitamin C and makes it possible to use less water. Stir only when necessary. Stirring admits air, which is destructive to vitamin value, breaks up vegetables, and delays the cooking. Cook vegetables until just tender--thus preserving natural flavor, form and color plus the nutrients. Use the liquid in which vegetables were cooked or canned. Always add salt when cooking green vegetables for it helps to retain the bright green color.

Serve attractively and vary the seasoning. Serve vegetables as soon as possible after cooking. If they must wait, let them cool and reheat. Each time a vegetable is warmed over some nutrients are lost.

Use choice seasonings and vary the seasoning from time to time.

RECIPES

Scalloped Asparagus and Eggs

4 hard-cooked eggs	4 tablespoons butter
30-36 stalks of asparagus	4 tablespoons flour
1 cup milk	3/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup vegetable stock	1 cup buttered crumbs

Cook asparagus in boiling salted water until nearly tender. Drain. Make a sauce of butter, flour, milk, vegetable stock, and salt. Arrange a layer of asparagus in a buttered baking dish, and cover with sliced hard-cooked eggs. Add the remaining asparagus; pour sauce over it and cover with buttered crumbs. Bake in a hot oven (425° F.) until the crumbs are brown. Carrots or some other vegetable may be used instead of asparagus.

Snappy Cream Beans

1½ quarts fresh green beans	1 cup sweet or sour cream
2 onions, sliced	2 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon vinegar	Salt and pepper

Cook beans and sliced onions in boiling, salted water until tender; drain. Cook down water in which they are cooked to half cup or less. Add vinegar and cream (the thicker the better). Thicken with flour. Season with salt and pepper. Cook until smooth, stirring. Pour sauce over beans and onions and serve immediately. Serves 8.

Spanish-Cheese Limas

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped onion	Dash of cayenne
1 cup chopped celery	2 teaspoons Worcestershire
2 tablespoons fat	sauce
2 cups drained, canned tomatoes	2 cups or 1 box frozen
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt	baby limas, cooked
$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon pepper	$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups grated American cheese

Lightly brown onion and celery in fat; add tomatoes, seasonings, Worcestershire sauce, and limas. Cook slowly 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Alternate the layers of lima-bean mixture and cheese in greased casserole. Bake in moderate oven 350° F. for 30 minutes. Serves 6.

Beets and Onions in Casserole

3 cups diced raw beets	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup water
1 cup chopped onion	1 tablespoon salt

Combine the beets and the onion. Boil the water and salt and pour it over the vegetables in a casserole. Cover and bake in a moderate oven (375° F.) for $1\frac{1}{4}$ hours. Serves 6.

Cabbage with Mustard Butter Sauce

$1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. head of cabbage	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon prepared mustard	3 tablespoons butter
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon granulated sugar, honey or syrup	1 teaspoon lemon juice

Shred the cabbage and cook in boiling salted water until tender, or about ten minutes. Drain. Meanwhile mix the mustard, sugar and salt with butter in a sauce; when smooth, stir in the lemon juice. Pour over the cabbage and mix with a fork. Serves 6-8.

Cheddar Carrots

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped onion	Few grains pepper
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter or other fat	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup grated Cheddar cheese
2 cups soft bread crumbs	2 tablespoons water
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt	$2\frac{1}{2}$ cups cooked sliced carrots

Brown onion in butter or other fat; mix with crumbs, salt, pepper, cheese and water. Place 1 cup carrots in bottom of greased casserole; cover with crumb mixture. Arrange remaining carrots in overlapping circle on crumb mixture around edge of casserole. Cover; bake in moderate oven (350° F.) 20 minutes. Uncover; brown under broiler unit or burner. Serves 6.

Carrot Sticks and Beans

2 cups canned green beans	1 teaspoon celery seed
2 cups cooked carrot sticks (cut about $\frac{1}{4}$ " by $1\frac{1}{2}$ ")	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
$3\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons butter	$\frac{1}{16}$ teaspoon black pepper
	1 tablespoon lemon juice

Drain beans. Combine and heat with remaining ingredients, tossing lightly together to flavor vegetables well. When thoroughly heated, serve immediately. Serves 6-8.

Corn, Bacon and Tomatoes

12 slices bacon	1 teaspoon salt
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped onion	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper
1 quart canned corn, drained	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon chili powder
1 quart canned tomatoes, drained	

Fry bacon until crisp. Remove from drippings and fry the onion. When brown, add corn and tomatoes. Simmer 20 minutes; add bacon and seasonings and remove from heat. Serve hot. Serves 8.

Baked Potatoes with Sauce of Peas and Dried Beef

3 tablespoons butter	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup rich milk or thin cream
3 tablespoons flour	1 cup shredded dried beef
$\frac{2}{3}$ cup liquid drained from canned peas	$2\frac{1}{2}$ cups peas, drained
	6 baked potatoes

Melt butter; add flour and blend. Add pea liquid and milk; cook until thick, stirring constantly. Add dried beef and peas. Insert tines of a fork to form a deep cross in hot baked potatoes; press firmly at ends. Pour beef mixture over potatoes. Serves 6.

Spinach with Horseradish Cream

$2\frac{1}{2}$ cups cooked spinach	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup prepared horseradish
1 teaspoon vinegar	1 cup whipped cream

Heat and drain spinach. While spinach is heating, blend vinegar and horseradish with whipped cream till smooth and fluffy. Place hot spinach on serving platter and decorate with dressing. Serve immediately. Serves 6. Spinach prepared in this fashion makes a delicious accompaniment for baked or broiled ham when you want your menu to be somewhat out of the ordinary.

Stuffed Turnips

Pare and boil medium-sized turnips, one for each serving. When tender scoop out the center, leaving the wall about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Stuff with one of the following mixtures:

Sliced onions that have been boiled and buttered, and seasoned with salt, pepper or paprika.

Tomato juice, bread crumbs and rice.

Creamed or buttered peas.

Reheat in slow oven and brown under the broiler if desired. In serving, a sprig of parsley adds much to the attractiveness.