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EC58-920 Vegetables in your Meals

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Vegetables

in
your
meals



EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATING
W. V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR



VEGETABLES in your meals

ETHEL DIEDRICHSEN, Extension Nutritionist

Vegetables give your meals flavor, color and texture. They are important in your diet for vitamins and minerals as well as for bulk. You will find it easy to serve several vegetables every day because there are so many kinds from which to choose and so many ways to serve them.

Vegetables vary in food value according to the color and the part of the plant eaten. The dark green leaves and yellow vegetables are rich in vitamin A. Green leafy vegetables are also valuable sources of ascorbic acid. This vitamin is more easily lost during storing and cooking than other vitamins. Leafy vegetables contribute some calcium and iron.

Vegetables high in vitamin A include:

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| broccoli | carrots |
| greens | pumpkin |
| tomatoes | squash, winter |
| red peppers | sweet potatoes |

Important vegetable sources of ascorbic acid are:

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| greens | peppers |
| broccoli | tomatoes |
| green cabbage | potatoes |
| Brussel sprouts | sweet potatoes |

The two most commonly used flowering vegetables are broccoli and cauliflower. The onion is the most popular bulb. Seed vegetables include peas and beans which are valuable for phosphorus, iron and thiamine. Root vegetables are good sources of thiamine.

Other vegetables which contribute vitamins and minerals to the diet but are not outstanding in any particular one include:

| | | |
|-------------|-----------|----------------|
| beets | eggplant | radishes |
| cauliflower | lettuce | rutabagas |
| celery | mushrooms | squash, summer |
| corn | onions | turnips |
| cucumbers | parsnips | |

Fresh, frozen and canned vegetables are similar in food value. An exact comparison cannot be made because the food value depends on the variety of vegetable, growing conditions, storage, and the method of preparation.

BUYING

Vegetables are best when they are fresh from the garden. When buying, trade in a store where vegetables are kept under refrigeration or cooled by chipped ice. Select those that are firm or crisp in texture and bright in color. Avoid any that are over-ripe, decayed, blemished or bruised. Wilted vegetables have lost much of their vitamin content. Vegetables in season have better flavor and usually cost less than out-of-season ones.

STORING

Proper storage is important for the protection of both food value and flavor. Wash perishable vegetables carefully and store them in plastic bags or in the hydrator of your refrigerator. Do not peel or cut until just before using. Keep tomatoes at room temperature until fully ripe. Then put them in the refrigerator. Store long lasting vegetables such as onions, potatoes, turnips and winter squash in bins or ventilated boxes in a cool dry place. Do not wash before storing.

COOKING

You can add variety to your meals by cooking vegetables in different ways. They should be cooked so the color remains bright and strong flavors do not develop.

Cooking in Water.

A general rule for boiling vegetables is to cook in as short a time as possible in as little water as possible. One fourth to one inch of water in the pan is usually sufficient. Add vegetables to the boiling salted water and

cover pan tightly to keep in steam which does the cooking. Boil gently and cook only until tender when tested with a fork. Season and serve promptly.

Green vegetables become brownish and unappetizing when cooked covered for a long time. To keep the attractive green color, place the lid on the pan so there is an opening for steam to escape. The lid may be left off for the first 5 minutes to allow the volatile acids to escape. Vegetables such as spinach which cook very quickly may be cooked with the lid on.

Vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and turnips may develop a strong flavor if they are cooked covered for a long time. Use just enough water to cover and cook with the lid off. Cook until done but no longer. Cabbage, cauliflower and turnips may be cut into small pieces and cooked until just tender in a small amount of water in a covered pan. The vegetables cook so quickly this way that no objectionable flavor develops.

How to Bake.

Baking is a good way to cook potatoes, squash, onions and tomatoes. The skin holds the steam in so the vegetable stays moist while it cooks. More food value is retained because vitamins, minerals and flavor are not lost in the cooking water. Wash the vegetable, rub some fat on the skins of potatoes if you like, and bake until tender. Sliced potatoes, onions and squash may be baked in a casserole. Add seasonings and a small amount of liquid, cover tightly and bake in a moderate oven until tender.

How to Steam.

Place enough water in the steamer pan to form plenty of steam, but do not let the water touch the rack. Place the vegetables on the rack, cover the steamer, and let the water boil vigorously. Cook vegetables until just tender. The cooking time for steaming is a little longer than for boiling. This method is more satisfactory with white and yellow vegetables than with green vegetables which may turn brown.

How to Broil.

Broiling is a quick and easy method to use with cooked or leftover vegetables and a few raw vegetables such as onions, tomato halves and sliced eggplant. Preheat the broiler. Put the vegetables on a greased broiler rack. Brush with butter and broil 3 inches below the source of heat. When browned, turn and brush the other side with butter. Finish broiling, season and serve.

How to Pan.

Panning is an easy way to cook all kinds of greens, cabbage, carrots, beets, very young green beans and potatoes. Put sliced, diced or shredded vegetables in skillet with butter or bacon drippings, salt and 1 or 2 tablespoons of water. Cover tightly, reduce heat and cook until tender, stirring occasionally. The vegetable is best when it is somewhat crisp in texture. Serve at once.

How to Fry.

Potatoes, carrots, rutabagas, parsnips and leftover or canned vegetables may be fried in a small amount of fat. Eggplant and summer squash are best dipped in egg and bread crumbs before frying. Melt enough fat in a skillet to make a layer about 1/8 inch deep. Add the sliced vegetables and season lightly. Brown on both sides. Serve immediately. For variety, try frying potatoes, onions, eggplant and cauliflower in deep fat.

How to Cook Frozen Vegetables

Frozen vegetables cook in about half the time needed for fresh vegetables. They should be cooked in very little water without prethawing.

How to Cook Canned Vegetables

Drain the liquid from the canned vegetables into a sauce pan. Boil the liquid until only half of the original amount is left. Add the vegetable and heat it. Season and serve immediately. Home canned vegetables should be boiled for at least 10 minutes before tasting.

SERVING

Serve vegetables with a flair. To bring out the natural flavor season sparingly. Sometimes you may want to use a sauce on the vegetable. Here are some suggestions for serving.

Buttered -- Add 1 tablespoon of butter to each cup of drained vegetable. Mix lightly, season to taste and serve very hot.

Lemon Butter -- Blend together 1/4 cup butter, 3 tablespoons lemon juice and 1/2 teaspoon paprika.

Almond Butter - Melt 1/2 cup of butter in a heavy pan and heat carefully until golden brown. Add 1/2 cup toasted slivered almonds and 3 tablespoons lemon juice.

Buttered Crumbs -- Melt 2 tablespoons butter, add 1/2 cup bread crumbs and stir until well coated. The crumbs may be browned lightly and used to garnish asparagus, broccoli, green beans or cauliflower.

Medium White Sauce -- Melt 2 tablespoons butter; add 2 tablespoons flour and blend. Add 1 cup milk and cook over low heat until thick, stirring constantly. Add 1/4 teaspoon salt. Makes 1 cup.

Creamed -- Add 1 cup of medium white sauce to each 2 cups of drained vegetable. Mix carefully and serve hot..

Scalloped -- Put alternate layers of vegetable and medium white sauce in a greased casserole. The top may be covered with buttered crumbs. Bake in a moderate oven (350°).

Au Gratin -- Pour 3 cups of creamed vegetables into a greased casserole; sprinkle with a mixture of 1/2 cup of buttered crumbs and 1/4 to 1/2 cup of grated American cheese. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes, or until brown.

Cheese Sauce -- To 1 cup of medium white sauce, add 1 cup of grated American cheese. Stir over low heat until the cheese is melted.

Mock Hollandaise Sauce -- Stir part of 1 cup of hot medium white sauce into 2 slightly beaten egg yolks; add

this to remaining white sauce, blending thoroughly. Add 2 tablespoons butter and 2 tablespoons lemon juice. Stir well and season.

Candied or Glazed -- Make a sirup using 2 parts of brown sugar (or half brown and half white sugar) to 1 part of water. Place vegetable in a heavy pan or casserole and pour the sirup over it. Bake at 350° until tender. Baste and turn occasionally.

Harvard Sauce -- Melt 2 tablespoons butter. Add 1 tablespoon cornstarch and 2 tablespoons sugar. Gradually stir in 1/2 cup of mild vinegar. Stir until sauce boils. Add salt if necessary.

DIFFERENT COMBINATIONS

For a real treat in flavor or contrast in color combine two or more vegetables after cooking. Season carefully. The following list may suggest other combinations for you.

Creamed potatoes and peas with some chopped onion.

Green beans with small whole onions, green limas, peas, whole-kernel corn or sliced celery or carrots.

Carrots with sliced onions, peas, diced celery, lima beans, green beans, or cauliflower.

Green limas with cauliflower, peas, slivered carrots or sliced celery.

Corn with lima beans, tomatoes or green peppers.

Eggplant with tomatoes, green peppers or mushrooms.

Peas with carrots, cauliflower, onions, celery or mushrooms.

Small whole onions with green limas, peas, slivered carrots, summer squash, green beans, or mushrooms.

Stewed tomatoes with celery, onions, corn, okra, olives, zucchini or green peppers.

GUIDE FOR COOKING VEGETABLES

| Vegetable | How to Prepare | *Methods of Cooking | Ways to Serve |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|
| Asparagus | Trim off woody ends. Remove scales if sandy or tough. Leave whole or cut | Boil 5-12 min. Steam 7-18 min. | Buttered Creamed Mock Hollandaise Cheese sauce |
| Beans, green or wax | Remove ends. Leave whole, cut crosswise or lengthwise | Boil, whole 15- 30 min. cut 10-15 min. Pan 5-10 min. | Buttered Creamed Cheese sauce With almonds or mushrooms |
| Beans, green lima | Shell | Boil 20-30 min. | Buttered Creamed With minced onion or bits of bacon |
| Beets | Leave whole with skin and roots on and 1 inch of tops | Boil 20-35 min. | Buttered Harvard sauce Cold pickled |

GUIDE FOR COOKING VEGETABLES (continued)

| Vegetable | How to Prepare | *Methods of Cooking | Ways to Serve |
|-----------------|---|--|---|
| Broccoli | Whole stalks, cut off woody part, remove coarse leaves. Split large stalks | Boil 12-15 min. | Buttered Scalloped With buttered crumbs Cheese sauce |
| Brussel sprouts | Cut off wilted leaves, leave whole. Soak in salted water to remove dust and insects | Boil 10-20 min. | Buttered Creamed |
| Cabbage | Cut in wedges. Shredded | Wedges 10-15 min. Shredded 5-8 min. Pan 5-8 min. | Buttered Creamed Cheese sauce |
| Carrots | Scrub, pare or scrape. Leave whole or cut crosswise or in strips | Boil 15-20 min. Pan 5-8 min. Broil until brown | Buttered Baked With fresh mint Glazed |

GUIDE FOR COOKING VEGETABLES (continued)

| Vegetable | How to Prepare | *Methods of Cooking | Ways to Serve |
|---|---|--|--|
| Cauliflower | Leave whole or break into flowerets | Boil, whole 10-20 min. flowerets 8-10 min. Deep fry 375° | Buttered Creamed Cheese sauce Mock Hollandaise |
| Celery | Cut into serving size pieces | Boil 10-15 min. Pan 5-8 min. | Buttered Creamed |
| Corn | On cob. Kernels, cut from cob | Boil on cob 6-10 min. cut, 5-6 min. Bake in husk 20-30 min. | Buttered Scalloped In fritters |
| Eggplant | Cut in cubes or slices | Boil 10-15 min. Pan fry 10-15 min. Deep fry 375° Bake 20-30 min. Broil until brown | Buttered Scalloped Au gratin French fried Pan-fried |
| Greens Beets Spinach Swiss chard Kale | Cut off root ends and tough stems. Wash thoroughly several times to remove sand | Boil young leaves 5-10 min. | Buttered With lemon juice or vinegar With hard cooked eggs |

GUIDE FOR COOKING VEGETABLES (continued)

| Vegetable | How to Prepare | *Methods of Cooking | Ways to Serve |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Kohlrabi | Cut in slices or cubes | Boil 25-30 min. Pan-fry 10-15 min. | Buttered Creamed |
| Onions | Leave whole, quarter or slice | Boil 10-20 min. Parboil and bake Pan fry 10 min. Deep fry 375° | Buttered Creamed Scalloped Fried |
| Parsnips | Leave whole or slice | Boil 10-20 min. Pan fry (after boiling) Deep fry 375° | Buttered Glazed |
| Peas, green | Shell | Boil 10-20 min. | Buttered Creamed |
| Green peppers | Remove seeds, cut in halves or slices | Parboil and bake | Stuffed with rice and meat |
| Potatoes, white | Whole, with or without skins | Boil, whole or cut Bake 400° Deep fry 375° Pan fry 10 min. Broil until brown | Buttered Creamed Parslied Mashed Au gratin |

GUIDE FOR COOKING VEGETABLES (continued)

| Vegetable | How to Prepare | *Method of Cooking | Ways to Serve |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Potatoes, sweet | Leave skins on when- ever possible. Cut into pieces | Boil 30-35 min. Bake, whole 400° Deep fry 375° | Buttered Glazed Mashed with orange juice, apples or marsh- mallows |
| Squash, summer | Leave whole or cut into pieces | Boil 15-25 min. Pan fry 10-15 min. | Buttered with bits of bacon or tomato |
| Squash, winter | Cut in halves or ser- ving pieces. Remove seeds | Bake 40-60 min. Steam 50-70 min. Broil until brown | Buttered Mashed with bacon or brown sugar |
| Tomatoes | Remove skins, cut in quarters or slice | Broil until brown Bake 30 min. Pan fry 5-6 min. | Stuffed with crumbs, cheese or bacon. |
| Turnips or Rutabagas | Slice or cube | Boil 20-30 min. | Buttered Creamed Mashed |

*Cooking time will vary according to the altitude and the size, shape and maturity of the vegetable. The time given is intended to be used as a guide.