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Willie D. Ford

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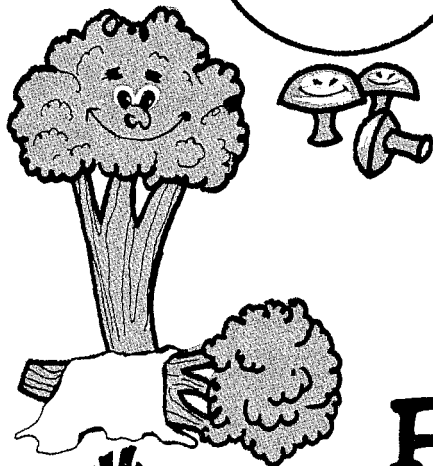
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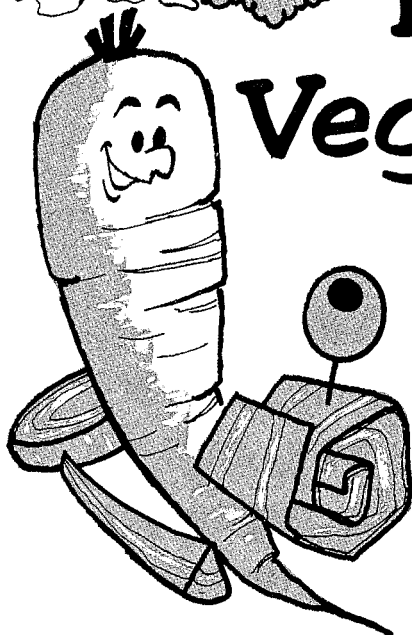
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The Many Faces of Vegetables



Extension Service
University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Agriculture Cooperating with the
U. S. Department of Agriculture and the College of Home Economics
E. F. Frolik, Dean J. L. Adams, Director

The Many Faces of Vegetables

Willie D. Ford
Ext. Specialist, Food and Nutrition

Vegetable fads and popularity have come and gone in history. Vegetables were appreciated by the Egyptians centuries ago. They ascribed special powers to anyone who ate garlic and onions. Later, the Greeks and Romans gave credit to vegetables for many of the characteristics of their people. At the beginning of the Dark Ages, cabbage was almost a cult. Radishes, celery, cucumbers, mushrooms and other vegetables have had their day as important dietary foods. The Daikon radish is highly extolled by many food faddists.

Some vegetables are native to America, but a number of vegetables have been brought in from other countries. Vegetables have been called international ambassadors because they represent borrowings and sharings from continent to continent. Vegetables have a wide variety of personality and character and have to be treated as such. Some are strong and powerful, some are delicate and mild, and some are tempting and tantalizing. Any vegetable can become a drag if handled carelessly and yet with just the right touch, any one of them can be exotic, refreshing or soothing.



WHY WE EAT VEGETABLES

Vegetables are important in the diet because they are sources of mineral elements and vitamins. Because of their texture, some vegetables have laxative properties.

The low caloric value of many vegetables makes them very important in the diets of those who are weight conscious. Many of the vegetables do not exceed 100 calories a serving. Vegetables highest in calories are peas, beans, potatoes, and corn. Vegetables low in calories include broccoli, asparagus, cauliflower, squash and greens.

Vegetables are good sources of iron. The green vegetables, especially leaves, are high in this mineral. Ten percent of the iron needs of a 10-year-old can be met with 1/2 cup of green leafy vegetable. Green leafy vegetables are not rich sources of calcium but because of the amount eaten they make a good contribution of calcium. They are also fair sources of magnesium.

The green and yellow vegetables are usually grouped together because they contain the yellow pigment which is converted to vitamin A. They are the main vegetable source of this vitamin. The leafy vegetables are also good sources of ascorbic acid or vitamin C and the B vitamins. Some raw vegetables or vegetables that are cooked for a short time in a small amount of water are important sources of vitamin C. These include brussels sprouts, collards, kale, mustard greens and turnip greens. The green stalks, stems and pod vegetables are good vegetable sources of vitamin A. Often the intensity of the color indicates the nutritive value of the green and yellow vegetables. Tomatoes are included in this group because of their contribution to the vitamins A and C value of the diet.

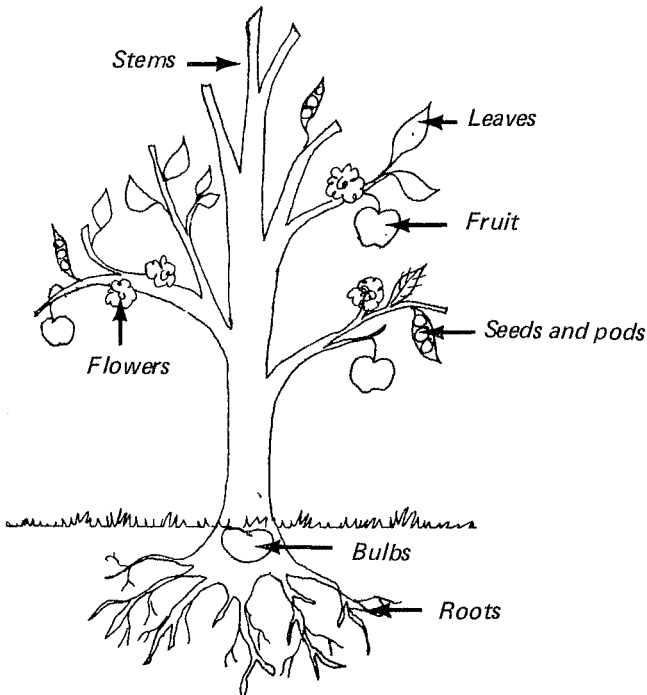
Eating a variety of vegetables daily will help improve the diet. Frequent eating of vegetables is another step toward better health. To meet the recommended daily needs, include several servings of different vegetables, especially those vegetables richest in minerals and vitamins.

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

Vegetables are edible forms of the different parts of plants. They vary in color and flavor according to the part of the plant that is eaten. Vegetables are classified by the part of the plant (Table 1).

Table 1. Classification of vegetables.

<i>Parts of plant</i>	<i>Examples</i>
1. Roots	beets, radishes, turnips rutabagas, turnips
2. Bulbs	garlic, onions, chives
3. Stems	asparagus, celery, rhubarb
4. Leaves	salad greens, brussels sprouts, cabbage, collards, kale, spinach
5. Flowers	broccoli, cauliflower, artichoke
6. Fruit	cucumber, okra, tomatoes, eggplant, squash
7. Seeds and pods	corn, beans, peas



HOW TO ADD COLOR AND ENHANCE FLAVOR

Vegetables add color to meals if they are cooked properly. Vegetables are grouped as green, yellow, red and white. To bring out the color of vegetables:

1. Cook for as short a time as possible.
2. Cook covered except for green and strong flavored vegetables.
3. Add a little acid such as vinegar, lemon juice or cream of tartar to make the white and red vegetables sparkle. Acid discolors green vegetables.

The flavor of vegetables is one factor that determines the way a vegetable is prepared. Strong flavored vegetables are best cooked uncovered in enough water to almost cover them. They should be cooked only until they are tender. Strong flavors develop with long cooking periods.

Vegetables taste best when they are treated with care during cooking. Over cooking with too much water or steam can ruin and change the "faces" of the most dazzling tomatoes or fresh string beans. Most vegetables can be cooked several different ways.

Boil in a small amount salted water; cover. Cook over high heat until steam appears, then lower heat and *simmer* gently until tender. Simmer green vegetables uncovered to retain their color. They are very good at the crisp, tender stage, slightly undercooked.

Steam vegetables by placing them in a steamer over rapidly boiling water. Cover and steam just until tender.

Oven-steam in a covered casserole with a small amount of water. This is particularly good when cooking oven meals. Cook the vegetables at a moderate temperature about three times longer than boiled vegetables.

Braise vegetables in a covered skillet with about 1-2 tablespoons fat and 1-2 tablespoons water. These are also known as panned vegetables.

Broil tender raw vegetables as tomatoes and mushrooms or use this method to reheat cooked vegetables. First brush with butter or margarine.

Shallow fry or saute a small amount of vegetables at a time. The wok, a popular utensil for Chinese cooking, is often used for sauteing thin sliced vegetables.

Cook frozen vegetables according to the directions on the package. Frozen vegetables can be baked in a covered casserole in a 350° oven from 40-60 minutes according to the vegetable.

Commercially canned vegetables don't need added cooking. Boil the liquid from the vegetable until it is reduced down to half. Add the vegetables and heat quickly. **Do not boil.** Season to taste.

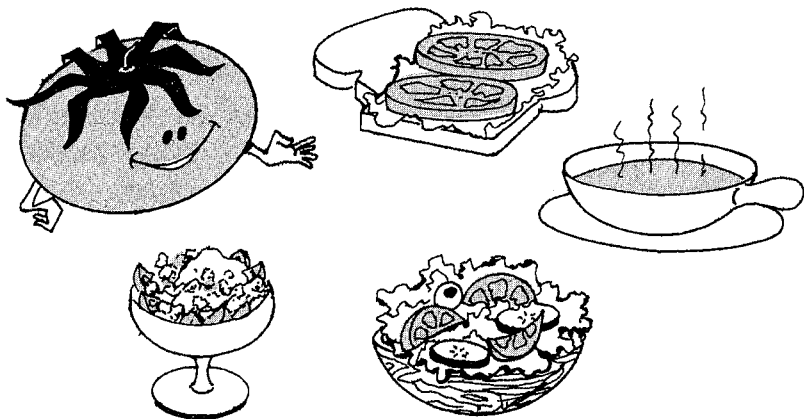
Home canned vegetables should be boiled 10 minutes before tasting.

CHANGING FACES

A vegetable's personality can be hidden in the way a vegetable is dressed up. Vegetables are made glamorous with imagination and creativity:

1. Sauces: the basic sauces are white, brown, hollandaise. Different seasonings furnish variations of these.
2. Butter or margarine - with herbs and spices, nuts, cheeses, and olives.
3. Scalloped or casseroles.
4. Au gratin.
5. Glazed.
6. Omelets or souffles.
7. Aspics.

The vegetable's place on the menu dictates the amount and kind of dressing. A vegetable may appear on the menu as a sandwich, soup, salad or dessert.



SANDWICHES

The sandwich represents the form of eating for many highly mobile people. Vegetables as fillings for the different breads are not limited to lettuce and tomatoes. Imaginative sandwich makers will vary the fillings by using raw and cooked vegetables. When raw, crisp vegetables such as cabbage and carrots are used, they may be grated, shredded or sliced and marinated in a dressing. Chill vegetables to preserve their appealing crispness. Some sandwich fillings are:

1. Carrots - grated and mixed with shredded cabbage or chopped raisins.
2. Celery - chopped and mixed with chopped nuts and mayonnaise.
3. Cucumbers, radishes or green peppers - sliced thin used alone or in combination, or mixed with minced onions.
4. Salad greens - whole or shredded.

HORS D'OEUVRES AND/OR GARNISHES

Vegetable hors d'oeuvres are welcomed by all. They are usually low in calories and fat, and have no cholesterol. They are tasty, colorful and can be prepared very easily. Assorted hors d'oeuvres can be arranged on a large platter or tray.

For an attractive serving, vegetables may be cut simply or in fancy shapes.

Some ideas for a tray: *carrots*—curls, slices, sticks, lattices, whole small ones; *cucumbers*—stuffed, slices, strips, twists; *green peppers*—dices, rings, strips; *radishes*—curls, roses, slices, scallions; *tomatoes*—whole, roses, slices, wedges; *cauliflowerets*; *celery* curls; *turnip* rings; *cabbage* and *lettuce* wedges.

For a dip - use cottage cheese flavored with fruit, chives, or onion.

VEGETABLE ENTREE

An entree must be chosen with great care and with special regard for flavor. An entree may be rich or light, usually served as a small portion and is always highly seasoned. Vegetables that are unusual in

kind or in method of preparation are most often used. Usually a sauce accompanies an entree. Asparagus, cauliflower and broccoli with sauce are very popular as vegetable entrees.

Mock Tartar Sauce

- 1 cup yogurt
- 1 large dill pickle or 1/2 cup pickle relish
- 1/2 teaspoon prepared horse-radish
- salt or pepper
- 2 tablespoons grated cheese

Blend all seasonings into yogurt and mix well. Spoon yogurt sauce over part of vegetable. Sprinkle each portion with 1 teaspoon of cheese. The rest of sauce is used in desired amounts. (One serving yields approximately 92 calories.) Makes 4 servings.

SALADS

As salads, vegetables are quite popular. They are sometimes the main course or an accompaniment. Salads are usually cold foods served with a dressing. The secret of a salad is thorough crisping and chilling. Raw salad greens should be thoroughly washed and dried. Cooked vegetables should be well drained. When using cooked vegetables, marinate them in a tart dressing separately and combine them just before serving.

For interest, variety and nutrients, toss and combine a variety of salad greens. Try spinach, escarole, watercress and chinese cabbage. Vary the greens and shred or tear into bite sizes. In addition to radishes, carrots, onions and cucumbers try thinly shredded cauliflower, raw beets and turnips, broccoli flowerets, tender peas. Some suggestions:

1. Slices of beets, cucumbers and raw onion.
2. Cooked asparagus tips added to salad greens and sliced hard cooked eggs.
3. Raw cauliflowerets with shredded red and green cabbage.

Marinated Vegetable Salad

1-8 ounce package each of frozen lima beans, green beans and green peas.

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 2 chopped pimentos (small jar)
- 1 teaspoon grated onion
- 3 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- salad greens
- tomato wedges

Cook beans and peas separately as directed on the packages. Drain. Combine vegetables and add salt and pepper. Cool. Add remaining ingredients except greens and tomatoes and toss lightly. Chill thoroughly (may let set overnight). Serve in bowl with a garnish of greens and tomato wedges.

VEGETABLE PLATES

Vegetable dinners are gaining popularity because of the variety of color and flavor which they have. They are economical and easy to prepare. Three or more vegetables may be combined to make attractive plates. Variety in size, shape, color, flavor, texture and methods of preparation should be included in planning a vegetable plate.

1. Broccoli spears
Broiled tomato halves
Buttered mushroom caps
2. Zucchini with parmesan cheese
Beets with orange sauce
Asparagus
3. Cauliflower surrounded by shredded beets in spinach cups and buttered onions.
4. Stuffed eggplant on a bed of romaine flanked by glazed carrots with parsley.

VEGETABLES AS VEGETABLES

Dinners and most luncheons are incomplete without a vegetable as a "side dish" or as an accompaniment. Often accompaniments are thought of as relishes and conserves, but vegetables are most frequently used as an important part of the menu. Vegetables such as peas, carrots, corn and beans are very popular.

Squash Duo

1 pound young zucchini
1 pound summer squash
2 medium thinly sliced onions
2 tablespoons fat
1 teaspoon sugar
salt to taste

Slice zucchini, squash and onions in 1/4 inch rounds. Add vegetables to hot melted fat, stir frequently and briskly to thoroughly coat the vegetables with fat. Add sugar and salt. Cover and cook 20 minutes or until tender. Continue frequent stirrings while cooking. Serve immediately.

VEGETABLE MAIN DISH

"Main dish" is used to describe the heavy portion of the informal meal. The vegetable main dish may be combined with meats, cereal or other vegetables. Baked and stuffed vegetables are popular as main dishes. A whole range of fresh vegetables--cucumbers, squashes, and peppers are great for stuffings. They can serve as the main course.

Stuffed Vegetables

Wash vegetables; cut large ones in half lengthwise; remove a slice from the smaller ones. Remove seeds and cut away seed parts, leaving a clean shell.

Place in boiling salted water and boil 5 minutes or until almost tender. Drain.

Stuff with vegetable stuffing. Place in a shallow baking dish

containing a small amount of water.

Bake in a moderate oven (350°F) 15-20 minutes or until vegetables are tender and stuffing is hot.

Vegetable Stuffing

1-10 ounce package frozen mixed veg.

1 clove garlic crushed

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon pepper

1 cup chopped tomato

2 cups herb seasoned dry

bread stuffing

1/2 cup grated cheese

Cook vegetables according to directions, add garlic, salt and pepper. Drain, add tomato and dry bread stuffing. Mix well. Spoon into vegetable. Sprinkle with 1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese. Makes 4 cups.

DESSERT

Vegetables as desserts are especially prepared for family members who offer the greatest resistance to vegetables. If the meal is one that is skimpy on minerals and vitamins then the dessert course can round out the meal. Some desserts are: Pumpkin custard; Sweet Potato Pie; and Tomato Cobbler.

Fruit Sauced Sweet Potatoes

1 can sweet potatoes

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 can (8 oz.) each of applesauce, crushed pineapple, orange slices

1/3 cup brown sugar, firmly packed

3 tablespoons chopped nuts

2 tablespoons butter or margarine

Put sweet potatoes in a shallow baking dish and sprinkle with salt. Spoon fruit over sweet potatoes. Sprinkle with brown sugar and nuts. Dot with margarine or butter. Bake 45 minutes at 375°F. Baste sauce over sweet potatoes several times.

SUMMARY

Vegetables come from different parts of plants. The part of the plant helps to give vegetables their characteristics.

Vegetables make significant contributions to health. They provide vitamins, minerals and fiber, and are generally low in calories. Vegetables are primary sources of vitamins A and C and to some degree, iron and calcium.

Vegetables can make simply prepared meals very elegant. They are available in all forms, colors and flavors. They can be cooked many different ways to add variety, even to the same food. Vegetables become different with sauces, butters, toppings, herbs, spices and combinations of vegetables.

The "faces" of vegetables are ever changing. They can be made to sparkle as Appetizers, Entrees, Salads, Themselves, or as Desserts.

Buy a variety of fresh, canned and frozen vegetables. Buy a few things to add glamor—ripe olives, water chestnuts and artichokes. Plan variety with vegetables. If the family likes peas or corn, think of all the ways to prepare them. Occasionally serve another vegetable such as cauliflower. If cauliflower is not a favorite, take advantage of the well liked peas and serve them together.

Vegetables are at their best cooked in a small amount of water just until tender and served with a favorite spread or condiment.

