Welcome to the fifth edition of a North Dakota specialty crops calendar featuring fruits and vegetables that can be grown in North Dakota. This educational calendar provides information and health tips about various specialty fruits and vegetables, along with recipes tested in the food laboratory at North Dakota State University. As conversation starters, we have listed many national food days. These annual calendars have been made possible with funding from the North Dakota Department of Agriculture through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Specialty Crop Block Grant program.

Visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/food for more information about growing, preparing and preserving fruits and vegetables, and for educational opportunities including webinars and monthly e-newsletters. See www.ag.ndsu.edu/fieldtofork for a wide range of nutrition, food safety and health information.
Nutrition: Lentils are a type of legume. They are low in sodium and saturated fat, and high in potassium, fiber, folate and polyphenols. They have blood sugar-lowering effects because they are a slow-digesting starch. They are a source of prebiotics, which feed good bacteria in our gut to help prevent digestive diseases.

Stretch Your Dollar: Lentils keep for one year in a tightly sealed container in a dark, dry and cool place. Cooked lentils will keep for up to four days in the refrigerator or up to three months in the freezer. Freeze soup in an airtight container or freezer bag for up to six months.

Hearty Lentil Soup

2 Tbsp. canola oil, vegetable oil or your favorite cooking oil
1 large carrot, grated
½ medium onion, diced
2 medium potatoes, cubed
1 c. green lentils, rinsed (can use other colors)
4 c. kale, chopped (or substitute spinach)
5 c. vegetable broth, low-sodium* 
3 Tbsp. lemon juice
½ tsp. turmeric
½ tsp. cumin powder
½ tsp. pepper
⅓ c. chopped dill
Salt, to taste

In a large pot, sauté the grated carrots and chopped onions in the oil over medium heat for about four minutes. Add the turmeric and cumin, stir and cook for one minute. Add the potatoes, lentils and broth. Reduce the heat to low and cook for about twenty-five minutes. Add salt, pepper and kale and cook for five more minutes. Turn off the heat and add the lemon juice and dill. Stir and serve.

*If desired, substitute chicken broth.

Makes six (½-c.) servings. Without added salt, each serving has 230 calories, 6 g fat, 9 g protein, 37 g carbohydrate, 7 g fiber and 140 mg sodium.
Potato Nachos

3 large russet potatoes
1 Tbsp. canola oil
½ tsp. paprika
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
½ tsp. garlic powder
½ tsp. onion powder
1 c. black beans, drained and rinsed
1 c. cheddar cheese
1 jalapeno pepper (or to taste)
⅛ c. diced red onion
5 green onions
½ c. finely chopped tomato
Optional toppings: salsa, guacamole or sour cream

Preheat the oven to 400 F. Spray a large baking pan with non-stick cooking spray or line with parchment paper. Wash and pat dry potatoes using a paper towel. Slice into ¼-inch thick rounds. Add potatoes to a large mixing bowl and add oil, paprika, salt, pepper, garlic powder and onion powder. Bake for 20 minutes then turn over potato rounds and bake for another 20 minutes. Add beans and cheese and cook for an additional 5 minutes or until the cheese is melted. Add the rest of the toppings. If desired, serve with salsa, guacamole and/or sour cream.

Makes five servings. Each serving has 276 calories, 11 g fat, 11 g protein, 35 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber and 270 mg sodium.

Food Safety Tip: Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables before preparing. Use cool running water and a vegetable brush if needed. Use cool running water and a vegetable brush if needed.

Health Tip: Eat the skins on a baked potato or cook with the skins. These contain fiber and antioxidants which are great for gut health. Diets with adequate fiber reduce your risk of developing colon cancer.

Stretch Your Dollar: If you have extra potatoes they can be frozen raw (blanched first), or frozen in boiled, baked or mashed forms. See the NDSU Extension publication “Freezing Vegetables” for more information about preserving a wide variety of vegetables and fruits.
Veggie-Loaded Sloppy Joes

Vegetable oil cooking spray
1 lb. extra-lean ground beef
1 small green bell pepper, diced
1 small red bell pepper, diced
1 small onion, diced
1 Tbsp. white vinegar
¾ c. ketchup
2 Tbsp. mustard
6 whole-grain or mixed-grain sandwich buns
1 small white or red onion, sliced (optional)

Spray a medium-sized skillet with cooking spray. Combine ground beef, diced peppers and onion in the skillet. Cook on medium heat until the beef is thoroughly cooked, about 10 minutes. Mix the vinegar, ketchup and mustard together and add to the beef mixture. Simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. Scoop one portion (¾ c.) onto each sandwich bun. If desired, top with a slice of sweet onion, lettuce leaf and/or tomato slice.

Makes six (¾ c.) servings. With one bun, each serving has 270 calories, 6 g fat, 21 g protein, 33 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 650 mg sodium.

Health Tip: As bell peppers ripen, they change in color from green to yellow to orange to red. Each color has its own set of beneficial nutrients.

Nutrition: Peppers are loaded with vitamins A and C. Vitamin A promotes eye and skin health while vitamin C boosts immunity through anti-inflammatory effects. Peppers are also good sources of potassium, folic acid and fiber.

Stretch Your Dollar: “Tray freeze” any leftover bell peppers by slicing, dicing or cutting peppers into strips. Freeze them in a single layer on a sheet pan for an hour or longer. Once frozen, transfer them to a freezer bag, excluding as much air as possible to save freezer space.
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- **February 2023**
  - 1 - 28

- **March 2023**
  - 1 - 31
  - National Nutrition Month
  - National Cereal Day
  - Daylight Saving Time Begins
  - World Water Day
  - National Spinach Day

- **April 2023**
  - 1 - 30

- **National Ag Day**
- **Ramadan Begins**
- **St. Patrick’s Day**

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**Roasted Asparagus with Balsamic Glaze**

1 lb. asparagus, fresh  
1 Tbsp. canola or vegetable oil  
½ tsp. salt  
½ tsp. pepper  
1 c. balsamic vinegar  
½ c. pine nuts, toasted (or other nut such as almonds, optional)  
½ c. parmesan cheese (optional)  
½ c. balsamic vinegar

Preheat oven to 425 F. Break off the woody ends of the asparagus and place in a large bowl. Toss asparagus with oil to coat. Spread the asparagus on a baking sheet in a single layer and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast asparagus in the oven for 10 minutes or until tender. While the asparagus is roasting, pour the balsamic vinegar in a small saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Stirring constantly, cook the vinegar until reduced by half. Turn off the heat and set aside. Transfer the asparagus to a serving dish. Sprinkle with pine nuts and parmesan cheese. Drizzle balsamic vinegar over the asparagus and serve.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 84 calories, 4 g fat, 4 g protein, 7 g carbohydrates, 3 g fiber and 162 mg sodium.

**Health Tip:** Adding pine nuts, almonds or other kinds of nuts to your asparagus can help you consume all nine essential amino acids. Asparagus has seven of the nine essential amino acids, and many nuts have the other two that are missing.

**Nutrition:** Asparagus provides vitamins, especially B vitamins and vitamins A, C, E and K. These vitamins play essential roles in energy production, brain function and maintenance of good overall health. Asparagus is rich in minerals, such as iron, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, zinc, potassium and dietary fiber.

**Stretch Your Dollar:** You can use the provided balsamic glaze recipe with any kind of vegetable. Purchase what is on sale or compare price per ounce at your favorite store.
**Fun Fact:** Strawberries are one of the first fruits to ripen in the spring. They are in season in May.

**Strawberry Oat Muffins**

1 c. quick cooking oats  
½ c. packed brown sugar  
1 c. Greek yogurt  
½ c. oil  
1 egg, beaten  
1 c. all-purpose flour (plus some extra for strawberries)  
½ tsp. salt  
1 tsp. baking powder  
½ tsp. baking soda  
1 c. chopped strawberries

Preheat the oven to 400 F. Line a 12-cup muffin pan with paper liners. Add oats, brown sugar, Greek yogurt, oil and egg to a medium bowl and mix very well. Set aside for 5 minutes. In the meantime, mix flour, salt, baking powder and baking soda in a large bowl until evenly combined. Mix the strawberries with 1 to 2 Tbsp. of flour in a small bowl. Add the wet ingredients to the bowl with the dry ingredients and stir just until combined. Batter will be lumpy. Do not use a whisk. Fold in the strawberries with two to three stirs. Evenly divide the muffin batter between the prepared muffin cups. Bake on the middle rack for 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out mostly clean. Cool the muffins in the pan for 5-10 minutes, then remove and cool completely on a cooling rack.

Makes 12 muffins. Each muffin has 190 calories, 8 g fat, 6 g protein, 23 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 210 mg sodium.

**Nutrition:** One cup of strawberries provides about 50 calories. Strawberries are a good source of soluble fiber and vitamin C. Eating more soluble fiber can help manage cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Vitamin C is an antioxidant, which protects cells from damage.

**Stretch Your Dollar:** Try buying frozen fruits and vegetables to save some money. Fruits and vegetables are frozen at peak ripeness and have the best nutrition.
National Teacher’s Day
National Shrimp Day
International Hummus Day
Mother’s Day
Memorial Day

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Cucumber Salsa

3 c. diced cucumbers
½ c. to 1 c. diced red onion (as desired)
½ c. diced tomatoes
½ c. feta cheese, reduced fat

Dressing:
2 lemons
¼ c. salad oil, such as canola or sunflower oil
½ tsp. salt

Chop cucumbers, onions, tomatoes and olives, then add to a large bowl. Mix in feta cheese. Make dressing with the juice of lemons, olive oil and salt. Toss together mixture with dressing. Serve with pita chips.

Makes six (¾ c.) servings. Each serving of salsa has 125 calories, 10 g fat, 3 g protein, 8 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 290 mg sodium.

Food Safety Tip: Cut vegetables are perishable. They should be refrigerated and consumed within two to three days.

Health Tip: Cucumbers are low in calories because they contain mainly water. Cucumbers provide vitamin K, which is needed for blood clotting and maintaining good bone health.

Stretch Your Dollar: Buy fruits and vegetables during their growing season to save money at the grocery store. Add sliced cucumbers to sandwiches, wraps or salads. Pair them with a dip or eat them plain for a refreshing snack.
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Fun fact: Many people consider tomatoes a vegetable. However, they actually are a fruit because they grow from a flower and contain seeds.

Nutrition: Tomatoes are an excellent source of vitamin C. Vitamin C is an antioxidant that helps fight against disease and inflammation. Meeting the vitamin C recommendation can build your immune system.

Stretch Your Dollar: If you need to let your tomatoes ripen, store them in room temperature (65 to 75 F). Place them stem down until they get plump and fully ripe. Use within a couple of days. If you will not use ripe tomatoes for a few days, refrigerate them to prevent spoilage.
Greek Zucchini Boats

3 zucchini, sliced and seeds removed
1 Tbsp. olive or canola oil
¼ c. quinoa
½ c. water
½ tsp. garlic powder
½ tsp. dried basil

Dressing for quinoa mix:
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
2 Tbsp. olive or canola oil

Preheat the oven to 375 F. Line a baking pan with parchment paper or use non-stick cooking spray. Wash, dry and cut zucchini into halves. Scoop out the flesh of the zucchini with a spoon. Drizzle zucchini with 1 Tbsp. of olive or canola oil. Bake 25 to 30 minutes until tender.

While zucchini is cooking, combine the quinoa and water and cook by following the directions on the package. Drain any excess water from quinoa, then add garlic powder, dried basil, oregano, grape tomatoes, red onion, chickpeas and feta to the mixture and combine all ingredients. Mix oil and lemon juice in a separate container, then add to the quinoa mixture. Fill zucchini with mixture. Top with green onions.

Makes six servings. Each serving has 134 calories, 8 g fat, 5 g protein, 13 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber and 130 mg of sodium.

Fun Fact: Did you know the flower of a zucchini plant is edible? Many zucchini blossom recipes are available online.

Health Tip: Zucchini is rich in antioxidant nutrients that protect our cells. Consuming antioxidant-rich foods can reduce our risk of chronic diseases.

Stretch Your Dollar: Shredded, sliced or diced zucchini can be added to many recipes. Add shredded zucchini to your smoothies or burgers. Add zucchini to baked goods such as brownies, bread and muffins.
Fun Fact: Apples have high levels of boron, which may help maintain memory and brain function. Raisins, avocado and prune juice are other good sources of boron.

Nutrition: One medium-sized apple is about 100 calories. Apples are rich in vitamin C, fiber and potassium. They may lower cholesterol and blood pressure while aiding in digestion as well.

Stretch Your Dollar: Prevent cut apples from browning by submerging them in water, sprinkling lemon juice over them, or using a commercial ascorbic acid mixture made according to package directions.

### Oatmeal Pancakes with Cinnamon Apples

**Pancakes:**
- ¾ c. unsweetened applesauce
- 2 eggs
- ¾ c. milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 Tbsp. pure maple syrup
- 1½ c. old fashioned rolled oats
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. allspice
- ¼ tsp. nutmeg
- ¼ tsp. salt

Cooking spray or oil, for cooking

Add all of the ingredients to a blender (or use a mixer) and blend on high until completely smooth, about 30 seconds to one minute. Make topping. Heat griddle to 300 F. Let the batter sit in your blender while your griddle heats up. If batter is too thick, you may need to add a few extra tablespoons of milk to the blender. Lightly coat a nonstick griddle with cooking spray or oil. Once the griddle is at 300 F, add about 1/3 c. of the batter to the griddle for each pancake and cook for two to four minutes until pancakes slightly puff up and you see a few bubbles along the edges. Flip cakes and cook until golden brown on underside. Wipe griddle clean and repeat with more oil and remaining batter.

### Topping:
- ¾ c. diced apple
- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1 tsp. pure maple syrup
- Sprinkle of cinnamon

Topping directions:
Add diced apple, butter, maple syrup and cinnamon to a saucepan, and sauté over medium heat until apples begin to cook down. Serve over pancakes if desired.

Makes six servings. Each serving has 150 calories, 5 g fat, 5 g protein, 23 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber and 290 mg sodium.
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**September 2023**

- **National Coffee Day**
- **World Alzheimer's Day**
- **Rosh Hashanah Begins**
- **Rosh Hashanah Ends**
- **Yom Kippur Begins**
- **Yom Kippur Ends**

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Butternut Squash Bake

4 c. cooked butternut squash (about 2.5 lb. in grocery store)
2 large eggs
6 oz. canned evaporated non-fat milk
2 tsp. vanilla extract
¼ c. granulated sugar

Prepare squash by rinsing with cool water and scrubbing skin if needed. Next, cut squash in half and lay flesh side down on greased baking sheet. Poke holes in skin and allow to cook for 45 minutes to one hour at 350 F. Mix eggs, milk, vanilla and sugar together by hand, or use a hand mixer. After squash is cooked, scoop out four cups using a spoon and measuring cup. Add squash to milk and eggs mixture. Mix until combined. Pour mixture into a greased 9x13 baking dish. Make topping: Melt butter in microwave and combine cereal, brown sugar and butter in a bowl. Sprinkle brown sugar topping over squash mixture. Top with nuts if desired. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes.

Makes 10 (½ c.) servings. Each serving has 180 calories, 7 g fat, 4 g protein, 26 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber and 50 mg sodium.

Fun Fact: When spaghetti squash is cooked, its flesh will separate. This separated flesh looks like tiny little spaghetti noodles, which is where "spaghetti" squash gets its name.

Nutrition: Winter squash comes in many different shapes and sizes. Squash is a good source of magnesium, vitamin B6 and fiber. Squash with orange flesh is high in beta-carotene, which our bodies convert to vitamin A. Vitamin A helps maintain skin and eye health.

Stretch your Dollar: To preserve quality, store winter squash in a cool and dry place out of the light.
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www.ag.ndsu.edu/food
Fun Fact: The potato was the first plant to be grown in outer space.

Nutrition: Potatoes are a staple food in most households. They are starchy vegetables, meaning they are higher in carbohydrates compared to other vegetables. Potatoes are a good source of potassium and vitamin C. Potassium helps us maintain a healthy blood pressure.

Stretch Your Dollar: To keep your potatoes fresh, keep them out of the light and store them in a cool, dry place. Potatoes stored from 40 to 45°F will last longer compared to potatoes stored above and below those temperatures.

Buffalo Potato Salad

1.5 lb. small red potatoes
¼ c. diced red bell pepper
¼ c. light mayonnaise
2 Tbsp. Greek yogurt
2-3 Tbsp. hot sauce
1 tsp. apple cider vinegar
½ tsp. garlic powder
½ tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. ground black pepper
4 green onions, chopped

Wash potatoes and add them to a large pot with water. Boil for about 20 minutes until the potatoes are fork tender. Remove the potatoes from the water and cut potatoes into small pieces. Wash red pepper, cutting in half and dicing. Add red pepper and potatoes to large bowl. Next mix mayonnaise, yogurt, hot sauce, apple cider vinegar and spices together. Add this mixture to bowl containing potatoes and red peppers. Stir and add chopped green onions.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 180 calories, 5 g fat, 30 g carbohydrate, 4 g protein, 3 g fiber and 610 mg sodium.
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**November 2023**

- November 1: Veterans Day
- November 10: Veterans Day Observed
- November 12: National Pickle Day
- November 14: Daylight Savings Time Ends
- November 18: Thanksgiving Day
- November 23: National Sandwich Day
- November 24: Veterans Day

Additional notes:

- American Diabetes Month
- Field to Fork

Website: [www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food)
North Dakota is the top producer of dry beans in the U.S. Pinto, navy and Great Northern are the most popular beans by per capita use in the U.S.

Beans are classified as a vegetable but also are considered a protein source. Beans are an inexpensive source of protein and provide a variety of vitamins and minerals, including folate, fiber, potassium, iron and magnesium.

Stretch Your Dollar: You can swap one type of bean for another in recipes. Beans can be purchased in dry or canned form. Rinse and drain canned beans to remove about 40% of the sodium, or choose low-sodium canned beans.

Black Bean Brownies

1 (15-oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed
3 eggs
3 Tbsp. canola oil
½ c. cocoa powder (unsweetened)
1 pinch salt
1 tsp. vanilla extract
¾ c. white sugar
½ c. semi-sweet chocolate chips (can substitute mini chocolate chips)
1 tsp. instant coffee (optional)
Chocolate syrup for drizzle (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease an 8x8 inch baking dish. Blend together all ingredients except chocolate chips. Spread the mixture in a baking dish. Sprinkle chocolate chips over the top. Bake 25 to 30 minutes until top is dry and sides start to pull away from dish, or until toothpick comes out clean. Drizzle with chocolate syrup if desired.

Makes 16 servings. Each serving has 130 calories, 6 g fat, 3 g protein, 19 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 105 mg sodium.
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- **December 2023**
- **New Year's Eve**
- **Christmas Eve**
- **Christmas Day**
- **Kwanzaa**
- **Hanukkah Begins**
- **Hanukkah Ends**
- **National Maple Syrup Day**
- **National Hot Cocoa Day**

[www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food)
Featured Recipes

See more information at www.ag.ndsu.edu/food

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