

On average, children and adults should aim to consume 4½ to 5 cups of fruits and vegetables daily, but most people fall short of that goal. All forms of fruits and vegetables, including canned, fresh, frozen and dried, count toward the recommendation. From fresh to grilled to roasted, try some different ways to enjoy fruits and vegetables.

This pocket guide provides creative ideas for using fruits and vegetables as part of nutritious meals and snacks. Be sure to wash your hands with warm, soapy water before and after preparing food. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables, even those you peel, under cool running tap water.

- See [www.ag.ndsu.edu/fieldtofork](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/fieldtofork) for webinars, fact sheets and much more.
- See [www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food) for more information about food preservation (canning, freezing, drying), food safety and nutrition.

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## Broccoli

**FRESH**—Enjoy broccoli fresh.  
**STEAM**—Add a few inches of water to a pot and let simmer on medium heat. Add broccoli, then cover. Steam for four to five minutes until tender.  
**SAUTÉ**—Add oil to a skillet over medium heat. Add cut-up broccoli and stir frequently. Cook until broccoli is bright green and tender.

**ROAST**—Heat oven to 425 F. Toss broccoli florets on baking sheet with oil and desired seasonings. Roast for 20 to 25 minutes.

## Brussels Sprouts

**ROAST**—Heat oven to 400 F. Toss Brussels sprouts on a baking sheet in olive oil and desired seasoning (usually salt and pepper or garlic powder), roast for 35 to 40 minutes until crisp on the outside and tender on the inside. Shake the pan from time to time to brown the sprouts evenly.  
**STEAM**—Add about 1 inch of water in a sauté pot. Place a steamer basket on top of the pan, add Brussels sprouts to the steamer basket and cover. Toss occasionally until soft/tender (5 to 8 minutes).  
**SAUTÉ**—Prepare them whole or cut lengthwise; drizzle with oil in pan. Toss until all are lightly coated with oil. Cook undisturbed on medium heat until sides become caramelized (5 to 7 minutes). Cook for another 6 to 8 minutes or until tender. Add garlic and a squeeze of lemon for added flavor. Salt and pepper to taste.



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# A Pocket Guide to Preparing Fruits and Vegetables

NDSU EXTENSION



## Cabbage

**FRESH**—Enjoy cabbage fresh. Create your own coleslaw recipe.  
**SOUPS**—Experiment with different variations of cabbage soup.  
**BOIL**—Cut cabbage into slices and bring a pot of water to a boil. Add cabbage to the pot and boil 5 to 10 minutes, then drain.  
**ROAST**—Heat oven to 425 F. Cut cabbage into wedges. On a baking sheet, toss with oil, salt and pepper. Bake until the cabbage is golden and tender, about 25 to 30 minutes.



## Cauliflower

**FRESH**—Enjoy cauliflower fresh.  
**ROAST**—Heat oven to 425 F. Cut cauliflower into slices. Place cauliflower on a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Add salt and pepper. Bake until deeply golden on the edges, tossing halfway, about 25 to 30 minutes.  
**SAUTÉ**—Cut cauliflower into bite-sized pieces. Heat olive oil in a skillet on medium heat. Once oil is hot, toss in cauliflower and season with salt and pepper. Cook cauliflower until tender and it starts to brown, about 10 to 12 minutes.  
**STEAM**—Bring ¼ inch of water to a boil in a pan. Add cauliflower florets to the pan, season, cover and steam for 3 to 8 minutes (depending upon desired tenderness).  
**BOIL**—Boil cauliflower with potatoes, then mash to make cauliflower mashed potatoes.



## Apples

**FRESH**—Enjoy apples fresh.  
**BOIL**—Chop apples and cook in water for 10 minutes. Drain water, then make applesauce or mix with honey, cinnamon and butter for a sweet side dish or dessert.  
**GRILL**—Slice apples into ¼-inch slices and brush with butter. Place on a grill and cook until grill marks appear. Remove and top with cinnamon or honey.  
**DRIED**—Rinse, core and slice apples horizontally into ⅛-inch-thick rounds. Soak apples in lemon water for 30 minutes, then pat dry. Arrange apples in a single layer on baking sheets. Add a sprinkle of cinnamon if desired. Bake for 2 hours at 200 F. Turn off the oven and let apples sit in the oven for 1 to 2 hours as they cool further, until desired crispiness.



## Asparagus

**STEAM**—Bring an inch of water to boil in a pan with a steamer insert in the bottom. Cover the pan. Steam just until the thickest stalks can be pierced with a sharp knife. This takes about 3 to 8 minutes, depending on thickness of the stalks. Season and serve immediately.  
**ROAST**—Preheat oven to 425 F. Cover a cookie sheet with foil (optional) for easy cleanup. Place asparagus on a cookie sheet in a single layer. Coat the asparagus with olive oil. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt and pepper. Roast for 12 to 15 minutes until asparagus is tender.  
• Squeeze lemon juice or sprinkle Parmesan cheese over the top for flavor.  
**GRILL**—Mix oil and garlic and drizzle the mixture over the asparagus. Grill on a grill pan for about 5 minutes and turn regularly with tongs. Grill until tender but not mushy.

## Carrots

**FRESH**—Rinse and peel carrots.  
**ROAST**—Rinse, peel and chop fresh carrots into coin-shaped pieces. Toss with seasoning of choice, such as a mixture of olive oil (or desired oil), cinnamon or chili powder, salt and pepper. Try drizzling them in a glaze of honey and butter. Roast in the oven at 400 F for 25 to 40 minutes, depending on thickness of carrots and desired tenderness.  
**BOIL**—Rinse, peel and chop fresh carrots into desired size. Place in a pot of water, bring to a boil and cook for 7 to 9 minutes, depending on the size of the carrots.



## Chickpeas

**CANNED**—Canned chickpeas are ready to consume after being drained and rinsed. Chickpeas are the key ingredient for making hummus. In a blender, blend 1 can of chickpeas, 1 Tbsp. lemon juice, 1 Tbsp. olive oil, 1 clove of crushed garlic or 1 tsp. of minced garlic, ½ tsp. ground cumin, and salt and pepper to taste. Blend until smooth and let chill for at least 2 hours before serving. Drizzle with olive oil and extra cumin or cayenne pepper before serving. Serve with vegetable sticks, crackers or pita bread.  
**DRY**—Soak dry chickpeas in a large pot of water overnight to allow them to expand before being cooked. To cook the chickpeas, place them in a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and let cook for 60 to 90 minutes to desired tenderness.  
• Mix chickpeas into soups or salads.  
**ROAST**—Toss chickpeas with olive oil, salt, pepper and cayenne pepper. Spread on a baking sheet and roast at 450 F for 30 to 40 minutes or until crunchy.



## Beets

**BOIL**—Boil beets with the skin on for approximately 30 to 45 minutes or until tender. Eat by themselves or in a salad, or add to smoothies for a beautiful color.  
**ROAST**—Peel and cut the beets into ½- to ¾-inch wedges. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast in the oven for 25 to 30 minutes at 400 F.



## Bell Peppers



**FRESH**—Rinse and chop or julienne and enjoy. Great for topping a fresh salad or dipping in vegetable dip or hummus.  
**SAUTÉ**—Cut peppers lengthwise into strips. Heat olive oil in a pan, then add peppers. Cook, stirring occasionally, until peppers are just tender, about 10 minutes.  
**GRILL**—Cut peppers lengthwise, brush with oil and place on a grill until grill marks appear (usually 10 to 14 minutes, depending upon desired tenderness).

## Cucumbers

**FRESH**—Rinse and chop cucumbers and enjoy fresh as a snack or mixed into a salad.  
**SMOOTHIE**—Rinse and chop cucumbers and add them to your favorite smoothie, then blend.  
**SPREAD**—Rinse and finely chop cucumbers. Mix with cream cheese and seasonings to make a simple spread or add them to your favorite sandwich spread such as egg or chicken salad.



## Dry Beans

**CANNED**—Canned beans are ready to consume after being drained and rinsed.  
**DRY**—Soak dry beans, allowing room to expand. See directions at [www.ag.ndsu.edu/fieldtofork](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/fieldtofork). To cook, place in a pan with water and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook for about 1 hour or until tender. Enjoy beans in soups, salads, tacos or salsas.





## Herbs

**BASIL**—Rinse and dry with paper towels. Remove leaves, then stack and roll. Use a knife to cut thin strips from the rolled leaves. Enjoy fresh basil on pizza, or in salads, soups or pesto.

**CILANTRO**—Rinse and pat dry with paper towels. Keep in longer strips or chop finely. Enjoy fresh cilantro in your pasta salad, rice or salsa.

**DILL**—Rinse and pat dry with paper towels. Remove the large stems and chop the leaves into smaller chunks for garnish, or mince to be used in dishes. Enjoy in potato salads, seafood or salad dressings.

**MINT**—Rinse and pat dry with paper towels. Remove the leaves, make a stack and roll, then chop into thin strips. Mix in tabbouleh salad, add to lemonade or make your own mint tea by steeping the leaves with hot water for five to 10 minutes.

**ROSEMARY**—Rinse and pat dry with paper towels. Cut individual sprigs to use as garnish, or strip off the needles and dice to use in recipes. Use rosemary to season meat dishes such as chicken, turkey, pork and beef. Add to cheesy dishes such as macaroni and cheese or pizza or use it to season roasted vegetables.

## Grapes

**FRESH**—Enjoy fresh grapes mixed in a fruit salad or chicken salad, or on fruit kabobs. Place in the freezer for a refreshing snack.

**ROAST**—Toss grapes with oil, salt and pepper, and roast for 30 minutes at 425 F. Eat as a side dish, tossed in a salad or as a topping on ice cream.

## Leafy Greens

**FRESH**—Enjoy a variety of leafy greens as the base of a salad or blended into a smoothie.

**SOUPS**—Depending on the type of soup, try adding some spinach, Swiss chard, kale or collard greens.

**SAUTÉ**—Rinse leafy greens such as kale, Swiss chard or spinach, then sauté in a pan with oil and seasonings of your choice.

**CHIPS**—Try turning kale into delicious kale chips. Rinse kale and mix with olive oil, salt and pepper. Spread on a baking sheet and bake in the oven at 325 F for 10 to 15 minutes, until they are crunchy.

## Leeks

**FRESH**—After rinsing and trimming, enjoy leeks fresh as a garnish or as additional flavoring in soups, sauces or vegetable dishes. Leeks can be used as a replacement for onions for a milder taste.

**SAUTÉ**—Drizzle olive oil in a sauté pan. Cook trimmed and cut leeks for about seven minutes or until tender. Add herbs (such as thyme) for extra flavoring. Add sautéed leeks to any desired dish for additional flavoring.

**STEAM**—Clean and trim into 1- to 2-inch pieces. Place in a steamer basket above 1 inch of boiling water. Cook for 10 minutes or until tender, then remove from heat (time will vary according to thickness). Drizzle with olive oil and lemon juice and season with salt and pepper, then serve.

## Onions

**FRESH**—Enjoy onions raw on top of a burger or added to a salad.

**CARAMELIZE**—Spread olive oil over a large pan, about 1 tsp. per onion. Slice onions into long strips and heat in a pan until they condense, stirring occasionally. This will take about 45 minutes. Add a little water as they condense to bring out some additional caramel color from the bottom of the pan. For increased flavor, add some balsamic vinegar with the water during the last step.

**GRILL**—Slice an onion into rings, brush with olive oil and place on grill until grill marks appear.

**SAUTÉ**—Spread olive oil over a pan and cook sliced onions for five to seven minutes until tender. Add bell peppers for some additional color and flavor.

## Potatoes

**ROAST**—Cut red potatoes in half or quarters and mix with olive oil, salt, pepper and any additional seasoning. Roast in the oven at 400 F for 45 to 60 minutes or until crispy.

**BOIL**—Rinse and peel potatoes if desired and boil for about 15 minutes or until soft. Chop the potatoes to mix into potato salad or you can make mashed potatoes by mashing them together, adding milk, sour cream, salt and pepper.

**BAKE**—Rinse potatoes and wrap them in aluminum foil. Bake in the oven for about 50 to 60 minutes, depending on their size.

**GRILL**—Rinse and cut potatoes horizontally into about ¼- to ½-inch-thick pieces. Place on large sheet of aluminum foil, drizzle with olive oil, add desired seasonings to taste and wrap securely. Place on a grill for about 30 minutes or until tender.

**FRY**—Chop the potatoes and place in a skillet with oil or butter and add seasoning to taste. Fry the potatoes until they are soft. Or use precooked potatoes from baking or boiling.

**AIR FRY**—Dice potatoes. Toss diced potatoes in a bowl with olive oil and seasonings. Toss until all potatoes are evenly coated. Place them in the air fryer at 400 F for 25 minutes, or until potatoes are crispy and fully cooked.

## Pumpkins

**PUREE**—Cut a whole pumpkin in half and discard the stem, seeds and pulp. Place halves on a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil and bake at 375 F for 1½ hours or until soft. After cooking, scoop out the flesh and mash or puree. Use in pasta sauces, smoothies, pancakes and pumpkin bread.

**ROAST**—Chop a whole pumpkin into 1-inch-thick chunks, scooping out the seeds and pulp. The skin on some pumpkins is thin and edible. Peel larger pumpkins with thicker skin. Place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. In a bowl, mix together olive oil, salt, pepper and nutmeg, and brush onto pumpkin slices. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes at 425 F or until soft. Add pumpkin to salads or eat it as a side dish.

\* Note that not all pumpkins are meant for eating. Sugar pumpkins are a smaller variety that are ideal for roasting.

## Raspberries

**FRESH**—Enjoy raspberries fresh, or add them to smoothies, fruit salads or a garden salad.

**SAUCE**—Boil together raspberries, sugar and water in a medium saucepan. After they begin to boil, thicken with a cornstarch-water mixture. For each cup of liquid, use 1 tablespoon of cornstarch, then add cold water and stir well to make a slurry. Add gradually to boiling berry mixture. Remove from heat and add vanilla and salt. Enjoy this sauce over ice cream, cheesecake or pancakes.

### RASPBERRY VINAIGRETTE

**(salad dressing)**—In a blender or food processor, mix 1½ c. raspberries, ½ c. olive oil, ¼ c. red wine vinegar, 1 Tbsp. diced shallots or mild onion, 1 tsp. Dijon mustard, ¼ tsp. salt and white pepper to taste.

## Rutabagas

**MASHED**—Peel rutabaga, then cut into chunks. Boil, then let simmer for 25 to 30 minutes, until tender. Drain rutabaga, then mash. Add salt, pepper and butter as desired.

**ROAST**—Peel rutabaga and dice into 1-inch pieces. In a large bowl, toss diced rutabaga in olive oil, salt and pepper. Spread rutabaga on a baking sheet and bake for 40 to 50 minutes at 425 F until tender and lightly browned.

## Snap Peas

**FRESH**—Enjoy snap peas fresh.

**SAUTÉ**—Remove stem and string end from each pod. Heat oil in a pan and add snap peas, salt and pepper. Sauté for three to five minutes until pods are tender.

**BOIL**—Boil the snap peas for about three minutes or until tender. Remove from water and toss in oil or butter, salt and pepper.

**ROAST**—Toss snap peas with olive oil, salt, pepper and any other seasoning such as parsley, garlic or Parmesan cheeses. Spread pods on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and bake at 400 F for 15 to 20 minutes or until crispy.

## Summer Squash

**FRESH**—Enjoy summer squash fresh.

**SAUTÉ**—Cut squash into chunks and place in an oiled pan with salt, pepper and any other desired seasoning. Sauté for two to three minutes or until tender.

**ROAST**—Cut squash into chunks and toss with olive oil, salt, pepper and any other seasonings. Bake at 400 F for about 10 minutes or until brown and tender.

**STEAM**—Cut up squash and steam in a microwave for about five minutes or until tender. Add any desired seasoning.

**CHIPS**—Slice squash into ½-inch rounds. Coat squash in olive oil, salt, pepper and preferred seasonings. Place squash on baking sheet and bake at 450 F for 10 minutes. Flip squash to other side, and bake an additional eight minutes, or until golden brown.

## Winter Squash

**ROAST**—Cut squash in half and scoop out the seeds. Brush with olive oil, salt, pepper and any additional ingredients such as maple syrup or brown sugar. Place the flesh side down and roast for about 40 to 45 minutes at 400 F.

## Strawberries

**FRESH**—Enjoy strawberries fresh.

**SAUCE**—Combine sliced strawberries, sugar and lemon juice in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and let simmer for 20 to 25 minutes until the sauce thickens. Enjoy as a topping for ice cream, pancakes or cheesecake.

## Sweet Corn

**BOIL**—Shuck the corn and place in a pot of salted, boiling water. Bring water back to a boil and let cook for five to seven minutes.

**GRILL**—Lightly oil the corn and season as desired. Place corn on the grill and cook for about 10 minutes, rotating often until evenly charred.

## Tomatoes

**FRESH**—Enjoy tomatoes fresh on hamburgers, on a salad or in fresh salsa.

**ROAST**—Halve or quarter the tomatoes and toss with olive oil and any desired seasoning such as basil, rosemary or thyme. Roast on a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil at 400 F for 30 minutes or until soft.

**STEW**—Place whole tomatoes in boiling water for one minute; immediately transfer to cold water so you can peel the skin easily. Cut the tomatoes into quarters and place in a large saucepan with salt. Simmer for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

## Turnips

**FRESH**—Enjoy turnips fresh.

**ROAST**—Heat oven to 400 F. Trim and peel turnips. Cut into desired sized pieces or leave whole. Place on a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil or other oil. Add salt and pepper. Roast turnips until tender and browned, about 45 minutes.

**SAUTÉ**—Peel and chop turnips. Toss in a pan with oil, salt and pepper. Cook on medium heat until tender, about 10 to 12 minutes.