

PICK A BETTER SNACK – ON THE GO!

July

Week One -

On the Go – With Sweet Corn!



Hundreds of years ago, the Indians showed the Pilgrims the best ways to grow corn, and it quickly became a staple in American fare. Cornbread became a favorite food of travelers because it didn't spoil as quickly as other breads. Hominy, grits and succotash resulted from this fondness of corn and still remain part of today's contemporary diet. Following are tips to note when purchasing corn.

Harvested corn must be kept cool because warmth changes the sugar in the kernels to starch. This means that in a store, it should be in a refrigerated bin; when purchased at a roadside stand or farmer's market, it should be in the shade or on ice. Avoid corn that is piled high in an unshaded bin because it will generate its own heat and hasten spoilage.

When choosing sweet corn, fully ripe ears will have bright green, moist husks with stiff, dark and moist silks that are free of decay and worms. The rows should be uniform and well filled with plump kernels. When you pop a kernel with your fingernail, milky juice should spurt out. However, if the liquid is watery it means the corn is immature; if the kernel is tough and the contents are doughy, the corn is overripe. Refrigerate the corn immediately after taking it home to help the corn retain its natural sweetness.

Husk. Wash. Eat. (how easy is that?)

Take Sweet Corn With You!

- Sweet corn can be cooked quickly and easily in the microwave. Place in a microwave-safe dish with 2 tablespoons water, cover and cook for about two minutes per ear, or until just tender.
- Try grilling corn on the cob for your summer outings. Grill ears wrapped in the husks or foil for 20-30 minutes; unwrapped ears for about 12 minutes.

BLACK & GOLD SALSA *Easy, colorful, tasty (and good for you!)*

1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
2 cups yellow corn – fresh, canned or frozen
2 cups prepared salsa
Mix the three ingredients. Chill. Serve with baked corn chips.

Quick Nibble:

Did you know that a bushel of corn produces enough corn syrup to sweeten 324 cans of soda?

Week Two -

On the Go – With Blueberries!



July is peak season for the popular summer blueberry. During the past 10 years, blueberry consumption has increased by 50 percent – and it's no wonder! One cup of blueberries is packed with vitamin C and fiber, while being fat-free and low in calories!

The blueberry also is being recognized for its high antioxidant properties. According to current research by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the blueberry tops an extensive list of fruits, vegetables and juices high in antioxidants that may reduce the risk of cancer, heart disease and other ailments.

When choosing blueberries, look for plump, juicy berries with a deep purple color. Look for berries with skin highlighted by a silvery sheen called "bloom." Since blueberries do not ripen further after harvest, you can enjoy them immediately after purchase. Blueberries store longer than most other berries – up to five days fresh. They may also be frozen by spreading in a single layer on a cookie sheet. When frozen solid, transfer to a heavy plastic bag. Store in freezer for 10-12 months.

Wash. Eat. (how easy is that?)

Take Blueberries With You!

- Add blueberries to your favorite hot or cold cereal.
- For a yummy dessert, top a slice of angel food cake or frozen yogurt with fat-free whipped cream and fresh blueberries.

RED, WHITE AND BLUE PARFAIT

Show your colors by layering fat free vanilla yogurt, blueberries and sweet cherries or strawberries in a tall glass. Top with crunchy cereal such as Grape Nuts®.

Note: Endorsement not implied.

Quick Nibble:

Blueberries were once called "star-berries" because of the star-shaped blossom at the top of each berry. Certain tribes of American Indians were said to admire the blueberry because of this, and thought "star-berries" were a gift from the Great Spirit to hungry children.

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Week Three -

On the Go – With Cantaloupe!



Did you know that the color of a fruit or vegetable's flesh indicates how nutritious it is? Cut open a cantaloupe, and its bright orange color tells you the fruit is chock-full of essential vitamins and minerals.

Cantaloupe contains more Vitamin A than any other fruit. It's also high in vitamin C. In fact, one quarter of a medium cantaloupe contains 400 percent of your recommended daily dose of vitamin A and 100 percent of your daily vitamin C needs!

When choosing cantaloupe look for fruit that slightly yields to the touch and has a distinctive sweet smell. Avoid fruit that is shriveled, bruised or has punctured or cracked skin. Uncut cantaloupe should be stored on your countertop. After the fruit is cut, store it in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Wash. Cut. Eat. (how easy is that?)

Take Cantaloupe With You!

- Wrap slices of ham or turkey around cubes of cantaloupe, securing the meat with toothpicks. Store in an airtight container or plastic sandwich bag for a quick snack on the go!
- **CANTALOUPE POPSICLES** – Combine 4 cups cubed cantaloupe, ¼ cup sugar, 2 Tablespoons lemon juice and ½ teaspoon grated lemon peel in a blender until smooth. Pour into cups, freeze. When partially frozen, insert popsicle stick. Continue freezing until firm.

FIVE FRUIT SALAD

½ cup orange juice
1 cup cantaloupe – cubes or balls
1 cup blueberries
1 cup watermelon – cubes or balls
1 cup sweet cherries, pitted **OR** 1 banana peeled, sliced
Pour juice over fruits and chill.



Quick Nibble:

What Americans call 'cantaloupe' is actually a muskmelon. Real cantaloupes are grown in Europe and named after a castle in Italy.

Week Four -

On the Go – Watermelon!



One of the most popular summer fruits is the watermelon. The fruit is known for its sweet and refreshingly juicy taste. It's made up of about 90 percent water.

Watermelons have a long history.

Native to the Kalahari Desert in Africa, watermelons were first harvested in Egypt more than 5,000 years ago. Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics even depict watermelon harvests on tomb walls!

When choosing watermelons, look for fruit that's free of blemishes and heavy for its size. A ripe melon will have a dull rind, dried stem, and a yellowish underside where it touched the ground. One way to test for optimal ripeness is by thumping the melon gently with your hand. The sound should be high pitched, not flat or hollow. Before they are cut, watermelons should be stored in a cool, dry place in your kitchen. Before cutting, wash watermelon with cold running water. Wait to refrigerate watermelon until after it has been cut.

Wash. Cut. Eat. (how easy is that?)

Take Watermelon With You!

- July 18th is Cheese Lover's Day! Pair sliced watermelon with feta cheese. The sweet taste of watermelon paired with the saltiness of the feta is a special treat in Israel and Egypt.
- Make fruit kabobs! Skewer cubes of watermelon with other fruits such as grapes and cantaloupe. Drizzle the skewers with light yogurt for a healthy sweet snack!
- Insert freezer pop sticks into large chunks of watermelon and freeze for a cool treat on a hot day.

WATERMELON COOLER

2 cups peeled and seeded watermelon chunks, frozen
½ cup white grape juice
½ cup sugar-free lemon lime soda
Combine all ingredients in blender until smooth.

Quick Nibble:

Every part of the watermelon is edible, including the rind and seeds. In fact, in many parts of the world, it's popular to bake the seeds and eat them.

*For more information contact Jan Temple, CFCS, Nutrition Field Specialist, Iowa State University Extension, Housed in Johnson County
Ph. 319-337-2145; FAX 319-337-7864; Cell 319-330-6175; E-mail: mjtemple@iastate.edu;*

Web Site: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/food>

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