

BUY FRESH - BUY LOCAL

Food of the Week: Green Beans

Green beans belong to the plant species known as *Phaseolus vulgaris* along with kidney, navy, and black beans. The green bean was introduced to other parts of South, Central, and North America by migrating Indian tribes from Peru. The green bean was first introduced to Europeans in the 16th century by Spanish explorers returning from the New World.

Availability - Green beans can be found all year long at the grocery store, but the best season for fresh green beans is during the summer months through the early part of fall.

Selection - If you can find fresh green beans at the store or your local farmers market that sells them loose, this ensures that you will get the best quality because you can sort through the beans yourself. Green beans should have smooth, deep green skin without any bruises or brown spots. They should also be very crisp and make a snapping noise when you break them.

Storage - Green beans can be kept in refrigeration for up to three days if they are kept in a perforated bag, unwashed.

Nutrition

Fresh green beans are a very nutrient dense food, meaning they are low in calories but packed full of nutrients. Green beans are considered an excellent source of vitamin K, with one cup providing approximately 155% of the daily value. Vitamin K plays an important role in bone mineralization by activating a bone protein called osteocalcin, which helps keep calcium in the bone.

Green beans are also an excellent source of vitamin A because they contain high amounts of carotenoids. One cup of green beans provides 20.8% of your daily value for vitamin A. Carotenoids are important antioxidants, protecting against cardiovascular disease, some types of cancer, and inflammation, while vitamin A plays a role in keeping the immune system healthy.

One cup of green beans also provides 20% of your daily value for dietary fiber and contains vitamin C, riboflavin, potassium, iron, manganese, folate, magnesium, and thiamin.

Adapted from: The World's Healthiest Foods,

<http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=134>

Nutrient analysis of 1 cup of green beans: calories: 44, fat: <1g, cholesterol: 0mg, protein: 2g, carbohydrate: 8g, sodium: 7mg, potassium: 374mg, vitamin K: 98 mcg, vitamin A: 833 IU, vitamin C: 12mg, fiber: 4g, folate: 42 mcg

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Recipe of the Week: Summer Vegetable Spaghetti

Ingredients:

- 2 c Small yellow onion, cut in eighths
- 2 c Tomatoes (chopped, peeled, fresh, and ripe) - approx. 1 lb.
- 2 c Yellow and green squash (about 1 lb)
- 1-1/2 c Fresh green beans (about 1/2 pounds)
- 2/3 c Water
- 2 T Fresh parsley, minced
- 1 clove Garlic, minced
- 1/2 t Chili powder
- 1/4 t Salt
- 1/8 t Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 can (6 oz) Tomato paste
- 1 lb. Uncooked spaghetti
- 1/2 c Grated parmesan cheese

Preparation:

Combine first 10 ingredients in large saucepan; cook for 10 minutes, then stir in tomato paste. Cover and cook gently, 15 minutes, stirring occasionally until vegetables are tender. Cook spaghetti in unsalted water according to package directions. Spoon sauce over drained hot spaghetti and sprinkle parmesan cheese over top. Makes 9 serving (1 cup spaghetti and 3/4 cup sauce with vegetables).

Nutrient Analysis Per Serving: calories: 264, fat: 3g, cholesterol: 3mg, protein: 11g, carbohydrate: 51g, sodium: 310mg, potassium: 579mg, vitamin K: 8mcg, vitamin A: 1155 IU, vitamin C: 25mg, fiber: 4g, folate: 152mcg

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