

## NOVEMBER: Using Harvests in Holiday Meals & Finding Produce during Winter!

Now that holidays are fast approaching, it's time to think about what harvests can be used in holiday meals! What do you have on hand from your summer and fall harvest? Where can you find some ideas for healthy harvest-filled holiday meals? Read below for some suggestions!

What garden harvests will you share during holiday meals? You worked hard all summer and fall and likely have a few special vegetables or fruits that can be served as sides or in desserts. Don't worry, if you did not preserve your own vegetables or fruits, you can find some at some indoor (or outdoor, depending on where you live) Farmers Markets!

### Serve, and showcase, your harvest!

What did you can or freeze from your summer and fall harvests? Green beans, peas, asparagus, potatoes, carrots, pumpkin, berries – what else? Go through your pantry and freezer to inventory what you have on hand. When you serve these nutritious foods during holiday meals, share with your family and friends how you planted, harvested and prepared the yummy foods they are enjoying! Maybe even showcase the food with a card that says when you planted, harvested, and preserved the vegetables or fruits so your guests can appreciate the time it took for the nutritious foods to get to the table! Consider including a few jars containing your harvest as table decorations.



### Search out foods harvested by others!

- The winter Farmers' Markets are a perfect place to stock up for holiday meals, parties, and gift giving during the holidays. Look for locally raised products including eggs, beef, pork, duck, turkeys, holiday hams, and a variety of late season and greenhouse produce, as well as canned items.
- The frozen section of your local grocery store has lots of nutritious fruits and vegetables without added sodium, sugar, and other additives – yummy real food!
- The canned section of your grocery store has lots of nutritious fruits and vegetables too. Watch out for high sodium vegetables, consider rinsing the vegetables to remove excess sodium before putting them in your recipes (green beans for example), or look for low sodium (or fruit in natural juices) as a healthier option.



# NOVEMBER: Finding Produce during Winter!

Winter is here! Where can you find nutritious fruits and vegetables reminiscent of your summer and fall harvests? Fresh items can be found indoors, depending on your community's resources, and preserved forms (that are very nutritious!) are available in your local grocer and, increasingly, in many corner stores! Read below for some suggestions for finding good produce during winter!

Finding nutritious fruits and vegetables in winter may seem like a daunting task, but there are options for enjoying nutritious produce during winter. Greenhouses, indoor Farmers Markets, and other places grow and sell fresh produce! Frozen fruits and vegetable, as well as canned, round out the nutritious options during this time of year.

### Indoor Farmers Markets and Greenhouses

It may be more challenging to find fresh vegetables and fruits during the winter, but due to sophisticated shipping, many of your local food stores do have some available, although likely not produced locally. If you want locally-produced items, seek indoor Farmers Markets and greenhouses that sell fresh produce. You may not know it but there likely are some in your neighborhood! Try searching the internet for "indoor farmers market," or "greenhouse vegetables," or some other key word search to see what is near you!



### Frozen Fruits and Vegetables

Contrary to what you may think, frozen food isn't necessarily less nutritious than fresh produce! In fact, sometimes it is more nutritious! Thus, you can get the same benefits in a convenient and oftentimes more affordable form when you select frozen vegetables and fruits. Your local grocery stores, as well as many corner stores, Walmart, Dollar Generals, and others sell frozen produce.



- Use as much as you need of the frozen item, then put it back in the freezer – less food waste!
- Choose frozen items *without* additives such as sugar, salt, fats, artificial colors and flavors, preservatives, etc. for a more nutritious choice. Check the nutritional facts labels for additives!
- Toss frozen vegetables into dishes like stews, casseroles, and soups to add more quick-and-easy nutrition!
- Frozen veggies are quick to cook – steam them then toss with your favorite herbs and spices, or sauté them in a healthy oil then season to taste!

### Canned Fruits and Vegetables

What can be more convenient than canned fruits and veggies? Fill your pantry with these for times you can't get to the store, or can't find your favorite vegetable or fruit when it is out of season. Canned items don't expire quickly, so you won't waste money when buying canned veggies. Your local grocery stores, as well as many corner stores, Walmart, Dollar Generals, and others sell canned produce.

- Many canned vegetables have lots of sodium as part of their preservation. So look for low-sodium, reduced-sodium or no-salt-added labeled foods, comparing the sodium content on the Nutrition Facts label and choose the product with the lowest amount. Also, drain and rinse your canned veggies to reduce sodium even more!
- Many canned fruits have added sugars or syrups. So look for fruit that is canned in water, its own juice, or light syrup (and then drain and rinse if choosing the latter). Again, read the nutrition facts and ingredients to find out what is in your can.

