
Hues You Can Use

Different-colored vegetables keep dinnertime interesting

By Elizabeth Wimer

Eating your veggies may not be the easiest dish to swallow, but with the help of a crop of colorful vegetables, getting your necessary nine servings a day can be a little more appealing. Vibrant colors make good food a little more fun to eat, and some colored counterparts offer a different range of vitamins than the traditional source.

You may have seen white eggplant or purple potatoes, but have you seen the technicolor twists of red corn and rainbow carrots? Vegetable color creations are popping up in produce aisles mostly as a result of two modification techniques: mixed breeding of different plants in a farmer's field or genetic alteration that takes place in laboratories. Both growing strategies produce fruits and veggies that are fun to look at and safe to eat.

This time of year supermarkets, such as the DeWitt Wegmans, 6789 E. Genesee St., Fayetteville (446-1180), have a colorful harvest on hand for the fruit and vegetable eater in search of a new shade or flavor. Red bananas (currently at 79 cents a pound) occupy the same rack as their yellow counterparts and promise a slight raspberry flavor that's especially good for baking. Available year-round, choose the reddest you can find; the darker the color means the more carotene you'll gobble up. Red bananas also have more vitamin C than the yellow variety, and are a good source of fiber, potassium and vitamin C.

But it isn't just fruit having all the fun. Eggplant is shedding its purple skin for a tie-dyed peel that's called a graffiti eggplant (\$2.99 per pound) and even shakes it off all together in a white eggplant (\$1.99 per pound). Both varieties are available any time of the year and are similar in nutritional content and flavor to the classic purple variety.

Scarlet red sweet corn (\$2.99 for a package of four) also promises to liven up the season's early cookouts. The corn is grown and distributed by Colorful Harvest of Monterey, Calif. Doug Ranno, managing partner and chief operating officer of the company, explains the benefits of reaching for red corn.

"The red color is a natural occurring antioxidant called anthocyanin," says Ranno. "The red corn is available grown in Florida from October into June and in California from July into September." The same company also distributes carrots colored a combined red, orange and yellow. This rainbow variety boasts the antioxidant lycopene, also found in tomatoes.

If you're interested in even more vibrant veggies, check the shelves year-round as new shades of old favorites come into season. Orange and purple cauliflower, purple potatoes and blood-red oranges are just part of the colorful cast coming to the produce aisle. Crops and harvests

vary depending on the locations from which the fruits and veggies are imported.

Red Corn Salsa

From the Colorful Harvest Web site (www.colorfulharvest.com).

1 can (approximately 20 ounces) of black beans rinsed and drained
2 cups of scarlet red corn cut fresh off the ear
1 cup chopped golden or red tomatoes
1/2 cup chopped red or white onion
1/8 bunch of chopped cilantro
1 to 2 chopped peppers
(use serrano peppers if hotter flavor is desired)
Optional: top with grilled shrimp as a healthy main-course meal
Combine all ingredients, mix and chill prior to serving.

Red Banana Bake

This recipe is from Melissa's World Variety Produce www.melissas.com.

1 bunch red bananas
1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon lime juice, freshly squeezed
1 tablespoon butter
Rum to taste
Peel the red bananas and slice in half. Place in an oven dish and sprinkle with brown sugar, cinnamon and lime juice. Pat with butter and top with rum if desired. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes or until fork tender. Serves 4.



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