We’ve all heard it. “Eat your vegetables”. Instead of thinking of it as having to eat vegetables because they’re good for us, think about all the delicious flavors, interesting textures and beautiful colors. We think of vegetables as a side dish or just an accompaniment to something else but vegetables are delicious dishes that can be the stars of the plate and provide a satisfying and pleasurable eating experience. We should want to eat our vegetables because they’re good, not just good for us.

Try incorporating vegetables into whatever you are making. Egg dishes like quiches and omelets, pastas, soups and sandwiches are all naturals for adding vegetables. Sautéed vegetables spooned over grilled or roasted meat make an interesting main dish. Kebabs are another good way to get a variety of vegetables with grilled meats.

Not only are vegetables good but they are a nutritional powerhouse, filled with vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals that may help protect against heart disease, high blood pressure and certain types of cancer. So veggie up this month and fill half your plate with vegetables.

To help us veggie up let’s consider the many possibilities. In the spring we can add asparagus, peas and spinach to pasta and eggs. All the fresh lettuces make great salads and lettuce wraps filled with chicken and vegetables. In the summer we enjoy corn on the cob, yellow squash sautéed with cherry tomatoes, peppers and onions on sausages, juicy tomato sandwiches or marinated cucumber and tomato salad. In the fall we have the fabulous greens like kale and collards for soups along with roasted winter squashes like butternut and acorn. Sweet potatoes can be baked or mashed.

Eat Your Peas, Please!

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Eat Your Peas, Please!
Half a Dozen Ways to Eat More Veggies

1. Boost Your Breakfast
   Add peppers, tomatoes, mushrooms and/or onions to your eggs for a delicious omelet or scramble.

2. Double the Veggies
   In soups, salads, pastas and casseroles, double the amount of vegetables called for in the recipe.

3. Be a Sneaky Chef
   Add pureed or grated vegetables to mixtures like meatloaf, quick breads, mac and cheese, sauces or mashed potatoes.

4. Feature a Fresh New Vegetable Each Week
   Try to experiment with a new seasonal vegetable each week, especially in the summer when the farmers markets are running.

5. Salute the Snack
   Keep cut up veggies in the fridge so you can grab and go. Fill celery with peanut butter or pimento cheese.

6. Say Yes to Salads
   Have a salad with your meal or make a salad your whole meal and load it with colorful veggies.

Dress Up Your Meats with Vegetable Sautéés

Both of these recipes are excellent spooned over a slice of roasted pork or a grilled chicken breast and they add some color and nutrition to your main dish.

Sweet Carrot Chutney
2 tablespoons butter
4 carrots, cut into 1/4” dice
1/2 onion, diced
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 (8 ounce) can pineapple tidbits
1/2 teaspoon chicken base (or bouillon granules)
1/4 cup orange marmalade

In a medium skillet, melt the butter and sauté the carrot, onion, thyme and salt until onion is translucent and carrots are starting to get tender, about 15-20 minutes. Add the pineapple with juice, chicken base and orange marmalade. Cover and simmer until carrots are tender. Uncover and reduce until there is just a little juice left. Spoon over meat.

Corn Sauté with Chile and Lime
2 tablespoons butter, divided
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 1/2 cups diced onion
1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
2 heaping cups corn kernels, fresh from the cob
1/2 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon lime zest
Black pepper
1/4 lime
3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter with the olive oil in a medium sauté pan. Add the onion and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt, cover and cook, stirring occasionally until translucent, about 5 minutes. Uncover, turn up the heat to medium and sauté, stirring frequently until lightly browned, 4-5 minutes more.

Add the remaining tablespoon of butter, corn and remaining 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Cook, stirring frequently and scraping the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon, until the corn is tender but still slightly toothy to the bite, 4-5 minutes. Add the chili powder and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Stir in the lime zest and remove the pan from the heat. Let it rest for a couple of minutes and then season with salt, pepper and lime juice. Stir in the cilantro just before serving.