

Apple

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Growing apples requires planting more than one variety for pollination. Purchase one-year-old trees with multiple branches and certified to be disease resistant, especially to Fire Blight. Plant in early spring, allowing 35-45 feet of growth space for standard-size apple trees, less for dwarf varieties. Plant trees in soil at the same depth as the containers they were grown in, and replace soil firmly against the roots. In a two foot diameter around the trunk, water and apply fertilizer as recommended. Visit www.msueextension.org for more information or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Apple harvest occurs in fall. Start picking apples from lower branches and move to the upper branches. To avoid damaging fruit buds for the next year's crop, carefully twist or cut fruit from the stem, do not pull them off.



Selection

Choose firm, shiny, smooth-skinned apples with intact stems. Apples should smell fresh, not musty.

Storage

Refrigerate apples in a plastic bag, away from strong-smelling food. Store away from other fruits, as apples produce ethylene, which may cause other fruits to prematurely ripen. Use within three weeks.

Nutrition Information

Most fruits are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium, and are gluten-free. Apples are high in Vitamin C and Potassium and have 32 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Applesauce. Place peeled, cored, and sliced apples in one-quarter inch water. Steam apples in a microwave or pan until soft and add water if needed. Remove from heat, mash apples to desired consistency and add seasonings. Eat warm or allow to cool.

Bake. Select larger apples and remove core with knife, leaving half-inch of the apple core intact at the bottom. Put a small amount of seasoning in the hole. Place apples in a baking pan and add 3/4 cup water to the pan. Bake at 375°F for 30-40 minutes or until desired tenderness.

Grill. Combine 1/2 cup water and 1/4 cup lemon juice in a large bowl and put sliced apples in mixture for 30-60 minutes. Place soaked apple slices on skewers and grill about seven minutes on each side. Once grilled, remove from heat and add seasonings. For added variety and texture, add apples to a grilled meat or vegetable kabob.

Raw. Rinse and dry an apple to enjoy as is, or slice and dip in peanut butter, yogurt, or hummus. Dip apple slices in lemon juice to prevent browning.

Season. Enhance the flavor of apples with cinnamon, clove, ginger or nutmeg.

Preserve. For information on preserving apples, look for Extension MontGuides on: *Drying Fruit*; *Freezing Fruit*; *Home Canning Pressures and Processing Time*; *Making Jams, Jellies and Syrups*. Visit www.msueextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

Food Safety Tips

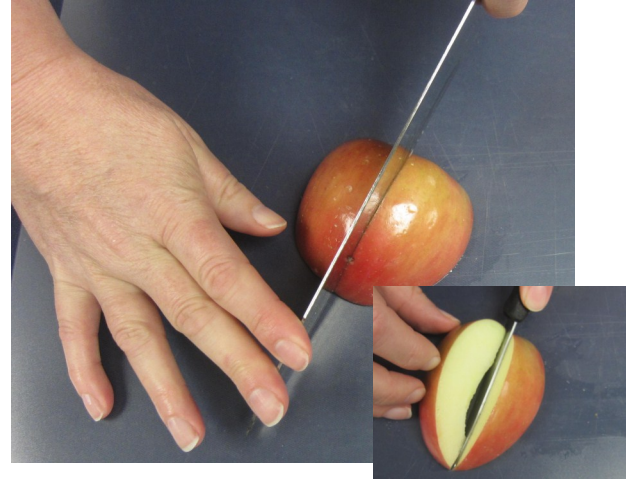
1. **Clean.** Wash hands and food contact surfaces before and after preparation.
2. **Chill.** Keep produce and food cool and chill promptly.
3. **Separate.** Keep produce and food separate from raw meats and eggs.
4. **Cook.** Cook food to a safe temperature.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Preparation: Step-by-Step



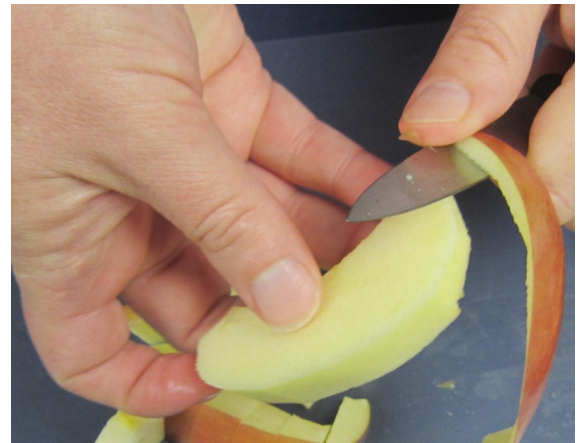
Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse apples to remove any dirt.
Cut whole apple in half with sharp knife.
Be sure to hold apple firmly on cutting board.



Place flat side of halved apple on cutting board and cut again to quarter. Remove the seeds and core.



Cut into smaller slices if desired,
such as for making applesauce or eating raw.



The peel is an edible source of fiber and nutrients,
but can be removed if desired.

For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msuxextension.org
MSU Extension Master Gardener: www.mtmastergardener.org
MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msuxextension.org/nutrition
MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buyeatlivebetter.org

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Childers, N.F. (1983). Modern fruit science. Horticulture Publications.
Fruits & Veggies More Matters. (2012). Apple: Nutrition. selection. storage. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/apple-nutrition-selection-storage>
Riggs, K. (2011). Apples: Food \$ense Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN_Food\\$ense_2011-07pr.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN_Food$ense_2011-07pr.pdf)

Apricot

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Growing apricots requires planting more than one variety for pollination. Purchase one-year-old trees, plant in early spring and soak roots for 2-4 hours before planting. In a full sun location, dig a hole large enough to accommodate the root system. Set plant in soil at the same depth as it was in the container and replace soil firmly against the roots. Water immediately and mulch to a depth of four inches. For more growing information look for the Extension MontGuide, *Growing Minor Stone Fruit in Montana*, at www.msueextension.org or call your Extension office.

Harvest. The best way to determine ripeness is to taste the fruit. The flesh should yield to gentle pressure, and ripening skin will change from green to yellow, red, orange or a combination thereof. To avoid damaging the fruit buds for the next year's crop, twist the fruit slightly while pulling.

Selection

Select firm, ripe fruit with a bright yellow or orange color.

Storage

Store apricots at room temperature until ripe, then in the refrigerator in a plastic bag for 3-5 days.

Nutrition Information

Most fruits are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium, and are gluten-free. Apricots are high in Vitamin A and C with 40 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Broil. Set broiler to high, with rack about four inches from heat. Cut apricots in half and remove pit. Place on a baking sheet with the skin side down and cut side up. Cook 2-5 minutes, or until tender.

Grill. Pierce the apricots (whole or halved) on skewers. Brush with honey and grill until desired tenderness, about 2-3 minutes.

Poach. Place apricots into simmering water or fruit juice. Remove from liquid when tender, about 6-8 minutes. Add spices such as cinnamon or cloves to enhance flavor.

Raw. Rinse and dry apricots to enjoy as is, or with blue cheese for added flavor. Add fresh, chopped apricots to oatmeal or cold cereal. Use apricots to create a breakfast parfait or smoothie with yogurt and granola.

Season. To enhance the flavor, season with cinnamon, clove and/or honey. Add apricots to cooked vegetables for a natural sweetener.

Preserve. For more information on preserving apricots, look for Extension MontGuides on: *Freezing Fruit*; *Drying Fruit*; *Home Canning Pressures and Processing Times*; *Processing Fruit, Tomatoes and Mixtures in a Pressure Canner*; and *Making Jams, Jellies and Syrups*. Visit www.msueextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.



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Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse apricots to remove any dirt.



Cut fruit following the natural line around the apricot. When ripe, fruit will easily release from the pit when opened.



Due to their small size, apricots need little further preparation. They are ready to grill, preserve, eat, or slice for salads, cereals or smoothies.



To remove skins, drop apricots in boiling water for 30-60 seconds, then immerse in cold water. The skins should slip off easily.

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Foulk, D., Hoover, E. (2011). Stone fruits for Minnesota gardens. University of Minnesota Extension. <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG1125.html>
Fruits & Veggies More Matters. (2012). Apricot: Nutrition, selection., storage. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/apricots-nutrition-selection-storage>
Serfustini, E. (2011). Apricots: Food \$ense Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN_Food\\$ense_2011-01pr.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN_Food$ense_2011-01pr.pdf)

Asparagus

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Plant one- or two-year-old crowns (stem and roots) in full sun six weeks before the last spring frost. Plant crowns 18-24 inches apart in trenches eight inches deep. Spread roots in bottom of trench and cover with 1-2 inches of soil. Gradually cover with more soil as growth progresses. Provide 1-2 inches of water every week, especially during first year, but do not overwater. Consider mulching in mid-summer to help control weeds. For more growing information look for the Extension MontGuide *Asparagus in the Home Garden* at www.msueextension.org or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Harvest in summer, only after the third year. Snap 6- to 10-inch long, pencil-thin spears close to the ground. Do not over harvest.

Selection

Choose odorless, pencil-thin to 1/2-inch thick asparagus spears with dry, tight tips. Avoid limp, wilted, or extra-large, woody spears.

Storage

Refrigerate asparagus up to four days by wrapping bottom ends of stalks in wet paper towel and placing in a plastic bag.

Nutrition Information

Most vegetables are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Asparagus is high in folate and potassium and is a good source of Vitamins K and A, with only 20 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Grill/Broil. Place asparagus in a plastic bag, drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasoning. Shake until asparagus is coated, then put spears on a preheated (medium-high heat) grill or under a hot broiler. Cook about 5-8 minutes until tender, turning occasionally.

Microwave. Place asparagus in a microwave-safe container with a small amount of water, low-sodium seasoning, and garlic. Cook for 3-4 minutes or until desired tenderness is reached.

Raw. Rinse and dry asparagus and enjoy as is, or in your favorite dip or salad.

Sauté or Stir-fry. Drizzle cooking oil in a heated pan. Add low-sodium seasoning with bite-size or one-inch pieces. Cook asparagus by stirring over high heat until desired tenderness, about 5-8 minutes.

Roast. Place asparagus in a plastic bag, drizzle with olive oil and seasoning. Shake until asparagus is coated, transfer spears onto a baking sheet or pan, then roast in oven at 400° F, about 5-8 minutes.

Season. To enhance flavor, season with allspice, basil, dill weed, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, thyme or lemon juice.

Steam. Place asparagus in a pan with a small amount of water, low-sodium seasoning, and garlic. Cook on medium heat for 8-10 minutes or until desired tenderness.

Preserve. For more information on preserving asparagus, look for Extension MontGuides on: *Freezing Vegetables*; *Home Canning Pressures and Processing Times*. Visit www.msueextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.



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Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse asparagus to remove any dirt or sand.



Chop off white, woody ends. These ends have a tough texture.



If roasting or grilling, leave spears whole.



If sautéing or using in stir-fry, chop asparagus into bite-size pieces of about one inch.

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Information Courtesy of:

Fruits & Veggies More Matters. (2012). Asparagus: Nutrition. selection. storage. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/asparagus>

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Beet

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Plant from seed in full sun as soon as soil can be worked. Plant seeds $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch deep and one inch apart in rows 18 inches apart. Thin to 3-4 inch spacing. Consider using a floating row cover for insect control early in the season. Water consistently with 1-2 inches of water per week. For more growing information look for the MontGuide, *Planting a Successful Home Vegetable Garden* at www.msuextension.org or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Begin harvest when beets are one inch in diameter. Harvest before beets exceed 2-3 inches in diameter.

Selection

Select beets with firm skins. Beets should be round with a slender tap root. Smaller beets are more tender. If greens are still attached, select beets with fresh looking leaves.

Storage

Beets can be stored in a plastic bag for up to two weeks. Beets can also be stored in a cold, humid cellar.

Nutrition Information

Most vegetables are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Beets are high in folate and magnesium with only 25 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Bake. Pierce and wrap washed beets in foil and bake at 350 °F for 45 to 90 minutes or until tender.

Grill. Place 1/2-inch thick slices in a plastic bag; drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasonings. Shake until beets are coated. Then put slices on skewers over a preheated (medium-high heat) grill. Cook 15-20 minutes or until tender, turning the skewer occasionally.

Juice. Combine one cup 100% orange juice or apple juice and the juice of one small beet in a juicer. Add to a smoothie for added flavor and nutrition.

Microwave. Place two to three small beets in a small amount of water and microwave for 8-15 minutes or until soft.

Roast. Slice 1/2-inch thick. Place in a plastic bag and drizzle with olive oil and seasonings. Shake until beets are coated. Spread on baking sheet and roast at 400°F for 30-40 minutes or until tender.

Salad greens. Rinse leaves thoroughly before adding to a salad. Tender greens are excellent for seasonal salads.

Stir-fry or soup. Sliced beets and their leaves are a colorful addition to stir-fry and homemade soup.

Season. To enhance the flavor, use allspice, basil, cinnamon, cloves, dill weed, ginger or nutmeg.

Preserve. For more information on preserving beets, look for MontGuides: *Freezing Vegetables*; and *Home Canning Pressures and Processing Times*. Visit www.msuextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.



Food Safety Tips

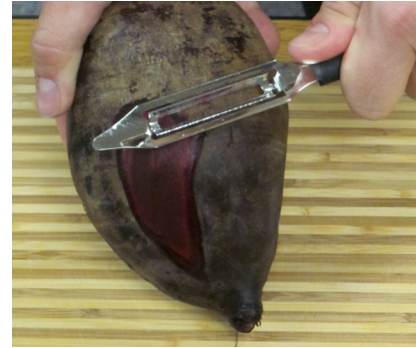
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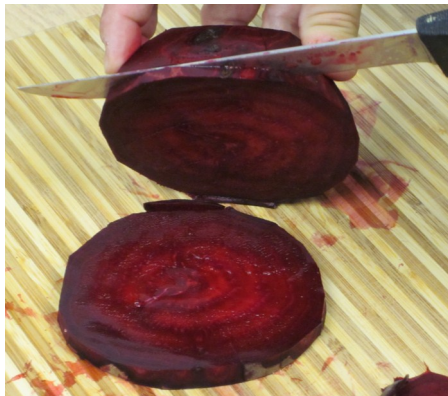
Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Remove leaves and cut stem down, leaving approximately one inch to prevent bleeding and flavor loss. Thoroughly scrub beets to remove dirt or sand.



When cooked whole, leave root end attached to prevent bleeding. Trim and peel with a vegetable peeler. It is not necessary to peel small, young beets with tender skins, but larger beets should be peeled before use.



Sliced beets can add flavor and color to any dish. Take care when handling beets. They can leave red stains on fabric, cutting boards, and hands. Use salt to clean stained fingers.



To serve: slice, dice or quarter large beets. Small beets may be left whole. If mixing with other ingredients, add just prior to serving to prevent color bleeding onto other foods.

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Spice Advice. (2013). Spice usage tips. <http://www.spiceadvice.com/news/usage/chart.html>
University of Illinois Extension. (2013). Beet. *Watch Your Garden Grow*. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/beet.cfm>

Broccoli

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Broccoli is a cool-season vegetable which grows at 65-75°F. It can be grown by direct seeding or transplanting. Broccoli should be planted in rows that are three feet apart. Space the plants 1½ to 2 feet apart in the row. Well-drained soils are needed for growing broccoli. For more growing information, look for the MontGuide, *Planting a Successful Home Vegetable Garden*, at www.msuxextension.org or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Broccoli heads, or compact clusters of unopened flower buds, and the attached stem, are the edible parts of the plant. Select compact and fully-developed heads. Harvest before it begins to loosen, separate, or turn yellow. Once the central head has fully developed, cut from the plant, keeping 5-6 inches of the stem intact. Removing the central head stimulates the side shoots to develop for later cuttings.



Selection

Look for large, firm, and bright green or dark-green heads.

Storage

Store the broccoli, unwashed, in loose or perforated plastic bags in the vegetable crisper of the refrigerator. It can be refrigerated for 3-5 days.

Nutrition Information

Most vegetables are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Broccoli is high in folate and Vitamins C, A and K and also a good source of potassium and dietary fiber, with 15 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Boil or Steam. Place chopped broccoli florets and/or stems (evenly-sized pieces) into steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam or boil about 10-15 minutes until individual pieces are tender enough to easily pierce through with a fork, or until desired tenderness.

Microwave. Place broccoli florets or chopped broccoli in a microwave-safe dish with 2-3 tablespoons water. Microwave on high for 5-8 minutes or until tender.

Pasta, Salad or Stir-fry. Chop broccoli into 1/4- to 1/2-inch florets to any lasagna, pasta sauce, or pasta salad. Add to any green salad or stir-fry dish.

Raw. Rinse and trim broccoli to enjoy plain or with a low-fat dip such as yogurt.

Roast. Place broccoli spears in a plastic bag and drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasonings. Shake until broccoli is coated. Spread on a baking sheet and roast at 400°F for 15-20 minutes or until tender.

Season. To enhance flavor, season with allspice, basil, curry powder, dill weed, garlic, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, tarragon, thyme or lemon juice.

Preserve. For information on preserving broccoli, look for MontGuides: *Drying Vegetables*; *Freezing Vegetables*; *Home Canning Pressures and Processing Times*. Visit www.msuxextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

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Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Rinse broccoli to remove sand and dirt.



Cut florets from the stalk. Pull apart or chop florets.



Chop broccoli into 1/4- to 1/2-inch sections to add to salads and pastas or for eating raw.



Trim stalks and cut into 1/4- to 1/2-inch sticks. Stalk can be chopped or cubed to use in soups and stews.

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University of Illinois Extension. (2013). Broccoli. *Watch Your Garden Grow*. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/broccoli.cfm>

Carrot

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Plant seeds directly into soil in full sun 2-3 weeks before last frost. Plant ½-inch deep, ½-inch apart, and in rows 12-18 inches apart. Water lightly each day until seeds germinate. Then, water 1-2 inches of water per week. For more growing information, look for the MontGuide, *Planting a Successful Home Vegetable Garden*, at www.msuxextension.org or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Pick when roots are 1-2 inches thick. Carrots can be left in the ground until needed. Even mature carrots will retain their quality.

Selection

Look for firm, plump, carrots without cracks.

Storage

Carrots lose moisture through their leafy green tops, so remove the tops before storing. Clean, dry carrots will keep in the refrigerator in a loosely tied or knotted plastic bag for up to 2 weeks.

Nutrition Information

Most vegetables are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Carrots are high in Vitamin A and potassium, with 27 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Boil or Steam. Slice carrots into 1/4- to 1/2-inch coins and place into steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam or boil about 5-8 minutes or until tender.

Chop. Add chopped carrots to stews, soups, or pot roasts.

Grate. Add raw, grated carrots to green salads, muffins, cookies, meat loaf, meatballs, or spaghetti sauce for added nutrients.

Microwave. Slice carrots into 1/4- to 1/2-inch coins and place in a microwaveable dish with three tablespoons of water. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on high for 4-5 minutes or until tender.

Raw. Rinse, peel, and eat carrots whole or cut into carrot sticks to enjoy plain or with a low-fat dip.

Roast. Chop carrots into 1/4- to 1/2-inch sections, place in plastic bag and shake with olive oil and desired seasonings. Spread on baking sheet and roast at 400°F for 20-30 minutes or until crisp. Roast with other vegetables, such as potatoes, broccoli, asparagus or cauliflower.

Season. To enhance flavor, season with allspice, basil, caraway seed, cloves, cinnamon, curry powder, dill weed, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, tarragon, or thyme.

Preserve. For information on preserving carrots, look for MontGuides: *Drying Vegetables*; *Freezing Vegetables*; and *Home Canning Pressures and Processing Times*. Visit www.msuxextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.



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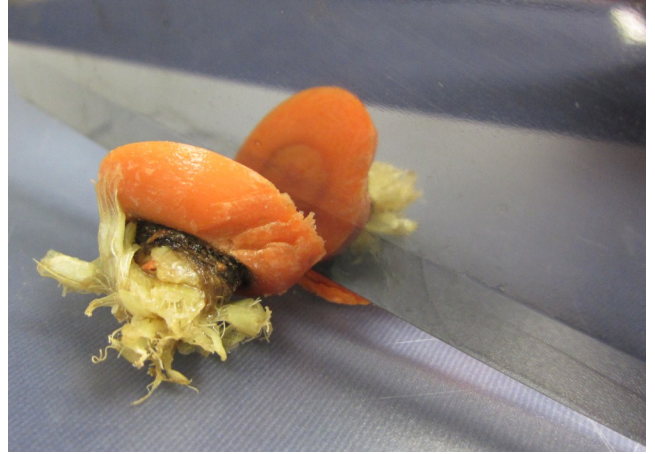
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Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly scrub carrots with a brush to remove dirt and sand.



Remove the ends of carrots prior to preparation.



If desired, peel carrots with a vegetable peeler or knife after washing. Shave the carrot lengthwise to create thin strips or ribbons.



Depending on the recipe, slice into 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick coins, dice into 1/8- to 1/4-inch uniform pieces, or grate.

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Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Purchase grapes adapted for your area. Plant in spring in full sun on a south facing slope. Immediately after planting, prune each cane back to 2-3 healthy, live buds. Shoots will grow from these buds, creating the trunk of the grapes. For cold climates, two or more trunks are recommended. Visit www.msueextension.org for more information or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Grape harvest in northern climates occurs in the fall. Allow fruit to ripen on the vine as it will not further ripen once picked. Harvest grapes when the seeds and cluster stems seem to turn brown and woody. The cluster should be cut from the vine with a small length of stem attached, taking care not to rub the “bloom” (gray or white powder) from the fruit. Bloom is a naturally-occurring substance which protects grapes from moisture loss and decay.



Selection

Grapes come in different varieties. Green grape varieties should have a slightly yellowish, translucent hue rather than a true, opaque green. Red grape varieties should be mostly red and have a rich, reddish-purple hue. Blue-black grape varieties should have a deep, rich, dark hue. Choose plump, firm grapes that are firmly attached to stem.

Storage

Store in the refrigerator, wrapped in a perforated plastic bag. Perforations in the bag allow excess moisture to escape. Avoid storing grapes next to strong-smelling food, such as green onions or leeks.

Nutrition Information

Most fruits are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Grapes are rich in potassium and have only 52 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Grill. Pierce the grape with a skewer to grill alone or with vegetables. Grapes are done when tender.

Frozen. Freeze a few grapes to use for snacks or add to drinks instead of ice cubes.

Raw. Rinse and eat off the stem. Slice grapes in half and add to green salads, or chicken salads for sandwiches.

Sauté. Heat pan to high, add butter or oil to coat bottom of pan, and add grapes. Sauté until lightly brown, about 3-5 minutes. Remove from heat and add to sauces or pour over fish or meat dishes.

Preserve. For information on preserving grapes, look for MontGuides: *Freezing Fruit*; *Drying Fruit*; *Processing Fruit, Tomatoes, and Mixtures in a Pressure Canner*; and *Making Jams, Jellies and Syrups*. Visit www.msueextension.org for more information or call your Extension office.

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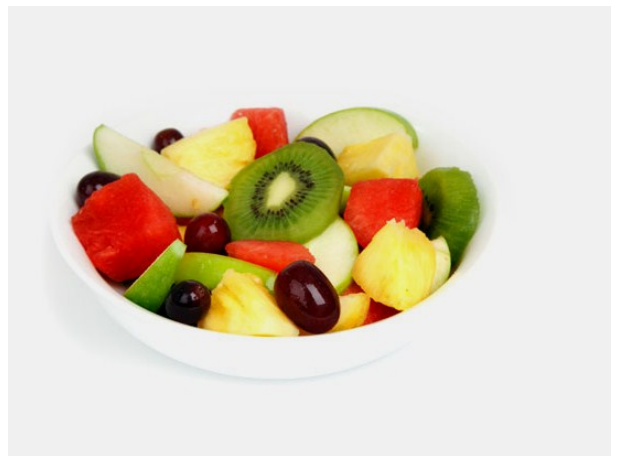
Wash hands. Rinse grapes thoroughly by placing under running water with hand or in colander.



Remove grapes from stem to eat or for in recipes.



Hold on both sides to secure a grape for slicing.
Slice in half or quarters for salads.



Enjoy in salads, yogurt, desserts, and preserves.

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Information provided by:

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Onion

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Start with small bulbs less than ¾-inch in diameter. Plant 2-4 weeks prior to last spring frost. Plant bulbs about one inch deep and 2-4 inches apart in full sun. Onions have a shallow root system that needs consistent moisture and weed control. Water with 1-2 inches of water per week. For more growing information, visit www.msueextension.org and look for our MontGuide, *Planting a Successful Home Vegetable Garden*, or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Harvest onions when the tops have fallen over naturally and papery skins have formed. Remove tops and place in mesh bag in a cool, dark space for 2-3 weeks to dry.



Selection

Onions should be firm and have little-to-no scent. Avoid bulbs with cuts, bruises, blemishes or mold. When purchasing whole, peeled onions, select ones with an outside layer that does not show signs of dehydration or mold.

Storage

Onions will keep longer if not washed until just prior to preparation. Whole, dry bulb onions should be kept in a cool, dry, dark place with plenty of air movement. Do not store onions in a plastic bag. Refrigeration is only necessary when trying to extend the shelf life of sweet or mild onion varieties with high water content. Whole peeled or cut onions should be refrigerated after purchasing.

Food Safety Tips

1. **Clean.** Wash hands and food contact surfaces before and after preparation.
2. **Chill.** Keep produce and food cool and chill promptly.
3. **Separate.** Keep produce and food separate from raw meats and eggs.
4. **Cook.** Cook food to a safe temperature.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Nutrition Information

Most vegetables are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Onions have only 32 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Caramelize. Heat pan on low, add oil to coat bottom of pan, add 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick slices of onion. Sweat onions in a covered pan until soft and translucent. Remove lid and increase heat to medium. Start stirring when onions begin to brown on bottom, then sauté until onions are soft and brown.

Grill. Peel and cut onions into slices or wedges. Cover grill with foil and poke small holes in foil. Pierce onions with a skewer, if desired and place over medium heat. Cover with a foil pan and grill for 15-20 minutes or until tender.

Raw. Add onions to salads, sandwiches, burgers, tacos, salsas and relishes.

Sauté. Heat pan to medium, add oil to coat bottom of pan, add 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick slices of onion. Cook onions about 8-10 minutes or until brown.

Steam. Add sliced, quartered or large diced onions into steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam until tender.

Roast. Place sliced, quartered or small onions in a roasting pan. Drizzle lightly with oil. Roast with other vegetables or herbs and spices, if desired, for 20-30 minutes at 400°F. Roasted onions can be added to other dishes for additional flavor.

Preserve. For more information on preserving onions, look for MontGuides: *Freezing Vegetables*; *Drying Vegetables*. Visit www.msueextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

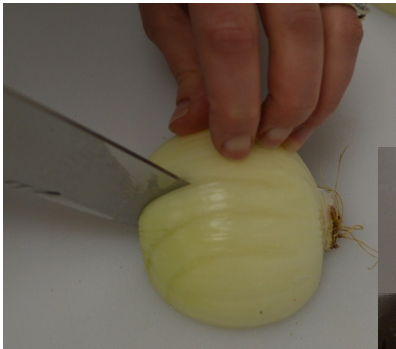
Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse onions to remove dirt or sand. To minimize irritation to skin and eyes, immerse a trimmed onion in cold water for a few minutes or chill onion for 30 minutes before chopping or slicing.



Cut off the stem end of the onion. Peel the outer layers of the onion skin. Cut the peeled onion in half from root end to stem end.



Lay each half cut-side down and make multiple, evenly-spaced cuts from root end to stem end. Do not cut through root end since it will hold the onion together. Then make horizontal cuts parallel to the cutting surface.



To dice, cut across the onion, adjusting the number of slices for desired dice size. Separate onion pieces.

For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msuextension.org
MSU Extension Master Gardener: www.mtmastergardener.org
MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msuextension.org/nutrition
MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buycatlivebetter.org

Information Courtesy of:

The National Onion Association. (2011). How to cut an onion. http://onions-usa.org/img/site_specific/uploads/How_to_cut_an_onion.pdf
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Date of Publication: January 2014

Parsnip

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Many parts of Montana may not have a long enough growing season between frosts to grow a decent parsnip. Plant seeds as soon as you can work the soil. Sow 1/2-inch deep, spaced 3-4 inches apart, and in rows 18 inches apart. Water 1-2 inches per week. Parsnips prefer cooler temperatures. For more growing information, visit www.msueextension.org and look for the MontGuide, *Planting a Successful Home Vegetable Garden*, or call your Extension office.

Harvest. Parsnip is considered a winter vegetable because its flavor is not fully developed until the roots have been exposed to near-freezing temperatures for 2-4 weeks in the fall and early winter. The root should be well-developed after being in the ground for around four months. Many gardeners leave parsnips in the ground over the winter and harvest in the spring.



Selection

Though parsnips look like white carrots, their flavor is slightly stronger, and they taste like turnips or rutabagas. The whiter the flesh, the sweeter the parsnip. Avoid parsnips which are yellowing or going brown around the core or are older and less sweet.

Storage

When storing parsnips, remove leaves and refrigerate parsnips unwashed in an unsealed bag for three weeks or more. Parsnips keep best in a perforated bag in the vegetable bin of the refrigerator.

Nutrition Information

Most vegetables are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Parsnips are rich in Vitamin C, folate, potassium and magnesium and they have 55 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Grate. Use grated parsnips in place of cabbage in a favorite coleslaw recipe.

Bake. Place whole or cut parsnips in a baking dish with a cover. Cook 20-30 minutes in 350°F degree oven.

Boil or Steam. Place trimmed, well-scrubbed parsnips in a steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam or boil about 12-15 minutes or until tender. Combine with mashed potatoes to enhance flavor and add fiber or eat mashed on their own.

Microwave. Cut parsnips into 1- to 1½-inch chunks and place them in a microwavable dish with two tablespoons of liquid. Cover with a lid or vented plastic wrap. Microwave on high for 4-6 minutes or until tender.

Roast. Chop parsnips into 1/4- to 1/2-inch sections, place in plastic bag and shake with olive oil and desired seasonings. Roast at 400°F for 20-30 minutes, or until crisp. Roast with other vegetables, such as potatoes, broccoli, asparagus or cauliflower.

Sauté. Heat pan to high, add butter or oil to coat bottom of pan, then add chopped 1/2- to 1-inch pieces of parsnips. Stir parsnips for even browning. Sauté about 12-15 minutes or until tender.

Season. To enhance the flavor of parsnips, use ginger, mace, nutmeg and/or cinnamon.

Preserve. For information on preserving parsnips, look for MontGuides: *Freezing Vegetables*; and *Drying Vegetables*. Visit www.msueextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

Food Safety Tips

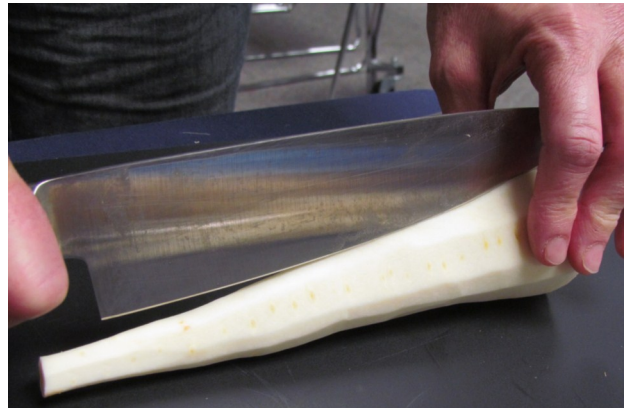
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Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly scrub parsnips with a brush to remove dirt and sand on the outer layer. If desired, peel with a vegetable peeler or knife.



Hold the parsnip to cut in half lengthwise. If roasting or boiling, cut into 1/4- to 1/2-inch chunks.



To slice for sautéing, set the flat side down on the cutting board and cut in half again. If the parsnip is large, remove the woody center.



If the parsnip is long, cut in half, then slice into 1/4-inch thick strips. Sauté in a pan with butter and seasonings. Cooking brings out the natural sweetness of parsnips.

For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msueextension.org
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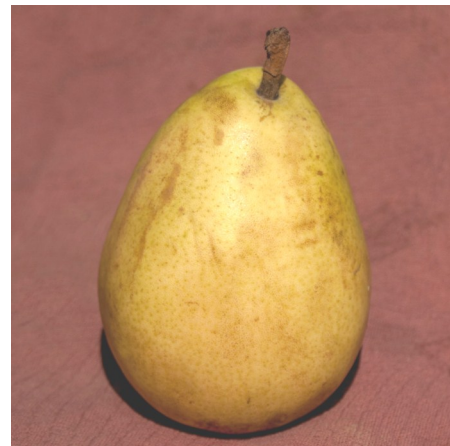
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University of Illinois Extension. (2013). Parsnip. *Watch Your Garden Grow*. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/parsnip.cfm>

Pear

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Select disease-resistant root stock; especially resistant to Fire Blight. Pears require cross-pollination from another variety to produce a large crop. For standard trees, allow 20-25 feet in all directions from buildings or other trees. Allow 12-15 feet for semi-dwarf trees and 8-10 feet for dwarf types. For best pollination, plant pear trees within 100 feet of each other. Plant in full sun in early spring. Set plant in soil at the same depth as it was in the container and replace soil firmly against roots. In a one-foot diameter around the trunk, water and apply fertilizer as recommended. Visit www.msueextension.org for more information or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Do not let pears ripen on the tree. The result will be gritty and non-palatable fruit. Harvest when the skin color turns from dark green to a lighter yellow-green color. The lenticels (dots) often will change from white to brown and the skin of the fruit will become smooth and waxy. To avoid damaging the fruit buds for the next year's crop, carefully twist or cut fruit from the stems; do not pull them off.



Selection

Choose firm pears. Check the neck for ripeness daily by applying gentle pressure to the stem end of the pear with your thumb. If it gives to gentle pressure, it is ripe.

Storage

Store fresh pears in the refrigerator for up to three weeks. Store unripe pears in a paper bag at room temperature.

Nutrition Information

Most fruits are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Pears have only 40 calories per half-cup serving and their skin is rich in Vitamin C.

Uses

Bake. Add diced pears to muffins, cakes, crisps, oatmeal, pies and breads for additional flavor and moisture.

Poach. Heat four cups water and 1 and 1/3 cups sugar until sugar is dissolved. Once sugar is dissolved, add peeled, quartered, and cored pears and desired seasonings. Allow pears to simmer for 15 to 20 minutes until tender.

Raw. Wash and eat whole or sliced. Enjoy with low-fat cottage cheese for added protein. Add dried pears to oatmeal or cold cereal.

Salsa or Salad. Peel and dice pears for a refreshing summer salsa or add to any green salad.

Season. To enhance the flavor of pears, use cloves, cinnamon, ginger or vanilla beans.

Preserve. For information on preserving pears, look for MontGuides: *Drying Fruit*; *Freezing Fruit*; *Home Canning Pressures and Processing Time*; *Freezing Fruit*; and *Making Jams, Jellies and Syrups*. Visit www.msueextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

Food Safety Tips

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Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse pears to remove dirt.
Peel if desired.



Cut pear lengthwise in half with a sharp, clean knife.
Remove core with a paring knife or melon baller.



Hold pear and cut into quarters. Place pear cut side down. Slice to desired thickness.



Stack slices and cut into strips. Make perpendicular cuts to dice. To prevent browning, brush or dip with solution of half lemon juice and half water.

For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msuxextension.org
MSU Extension Master Gardener: www.mtmastergardener.org
MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msuxextension.org/nutrition
MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buysatlivebetter.org

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Potato

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Plant only Montana Certified Seed Potatoes two weeks before last frost and when soil temperatures are above 40°F. Avoid areas where you have planted tomatoes, peppers, or eggplant in previous years. Cut seed potatoes into pieces about one inch across with each piece having at least two “eyes.” Dig a deep (up to 12 inches) trench four inches wide. Place seed with eyes up, 8-12 inches apart and cover with soil. Space trenches two feet apart. Use row covers to protect from early season insects such as flea beetles. Water heavily the first eight weeks with 1-2 inches of water per week or more. For more growing information look for the MontGuide, *Planting a Successful Home Vegetable Garden* at www.msuextension.org or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Potato harvest occurs when tops have died down and ground is dry. Be careful not to bruise when digging or storing.



Selection

Whatever the variety, look for potatoes which are firm, and fairly clean. Avoid those with wrinkled or wilted skins, soft dark areas, discoloration, cut or bruised surfaces, or greening. Choose the variety with the end use in mind, see chart on second page for ideas.

Storage

Best when stored in a dark, cool area, 42 to 48°F, with good ventilation. Do not refrigerate or freeze. Avoid placing potatoes in direct light. Temperatures warmer than 45°F encourage sprouting and shriveling; colder than 42°F encourages transformation of starch to sugar, which changes the taste and cooking properties.

Nutrition Information

Most vegetables are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Potatoes are a good source of potassium, Vitamin C, Vitamin B6 and magnesium with 54 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Bake. Rinse and scrub potatoes. Allow to dry slightly. To prevent a crispy skin, rub with olive oil or butter. Pierce potato with a fork prior to baking to allow steam to escape. Place in 400°F oven and bake 45 minutes or until tender.

Boil or Steam. Rinse, peel (if desired), and cut potatoes in 1- to 2-inch cubes into steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam or boil about 20-30 minutes for cubed potatoes and 30-40 minutes for whole potatoes. To mash, use a hand held mixer or masher until desired consistency. Add seasonings to enhance flavor.

Microwave. Pierce a medium-size potato with a fork before placing on a paper towel in the microwave. Cook on high for 4-6 minutes, until tender.

Roast. Chop potatoes into 1/2-inch sections or long strips, place in plastic bag and shake with olive oil to coat. Spread on baking sheet and roast at 450°F for 30-40 minutes, turning frequently.

Season. To enhance the flavor of potatoes, use basil, bay leaf, celery seed, chives, curry powder, dill weed, garlic, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, rosemary, tarragon and/or thyme.

Preserve. For more information on preserving potatoes, look for MontGuides: *Freezing Vegetables*; *Drying Vegetables*; and *Home-Canning Pressures and Processing Times*. Visit www.msuextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

Food Safety Tips

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Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse potatoes to remove dirt.
Re-rinse and scrub potato, if needed. Pat dry.



Peel skin off with knife or vegetable peeler, if desired.
Remove blemishes with a paring knife. Cut potato in half. Place cut side down and slice to desired thickness.



Cut slices again to dice to desired size or to recipe instructions.



Store peeled or cut potatoes in cold water.
Cover completely to prevent browning.

Uses for different potato varieties:

Russet	Red	White
Bake, mash, French fry, roast	Boil, steam, roast, sauté, scalloped/au gratin, soups, salads	Boil, steam, mash, French fry, roast, scalloped/au gratin, soups, salads
Yellow	Blue/Purple	Fingerling
Mash, steam, bake, boil, roast, French fry	Boil, steam, bake, microwave	Boil, bake, steam

For More Information:

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Date of Publication: January 2014

Information Courtesy of:

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Raspberry

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Plant disease-free raspberry plants in the early spring in rows six feet apart with plants spaced every 2-3 feet. Set bareroot plants in well-drained soil with a pH of between 5.5 and 6.5. In a shallow hole wide enough to accommodate the roots, spread the roots out so that the crown (where the roots meet the stem) is 1-2 inches below the ground. Cover with soil and firm in to remove air pockets. Water well and cut canes back to six inches above the ground. Newly planted canes will not produce fruit the first year, and possibly not the second, but will provide a mature crop in the third year. For more growing information look for the MontGuide, Growing Raspberries in Montana Gardens, at www.msuextension.org or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Raspberry harvest usually occurs in July and August. Look for full reddish-purple fruit. A good test for ripeness is how easy the berry pulls from the cane. A truly ripe berry will slip off the stem with a gentle pull.



Selection

Select raspberries which are bright-red (red raspberry) or fully-colored (black, purple, or yellow raspberry). Ripe raspberries should be bright, shiny, uniform in color and firm. Taste varies from tart to sweet depending on the variety and maturity. Avoid overly soft fruit with dark spots or if wet or moldy.

Storage

Place berries loosely in a shallow container to allow air circulation and to prevent the berries on top from crushing those underneath. Berries are highly perishable. Store immediately in the refrigerator. Do not wash berries before refrigerating. Store covered containers of berries in a cool, moist area of the refrigerator, such as in the hydrator (vegetable keeper), to help extend the usable life of the fruit. Raspberries can be stored one to two days in the refrigerator.

Food Safety Tips

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2. **Chill.** Keep produce and food cool and chill promptly.
3. **Separate.** Keep produce and food separate from raw meats and eggs.
4. **Cook.** Cook food to a safe temperature.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Nutrition Information

Most fruits are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Raspberries are rich in Vitamin K and C and have only 32 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Bake. Add berries to muffins, scones, cookies, cake, crisps, cobblers, pie, or to pancakes for added flavor and nutrients.

Puree. Puree raspberries, sieve or strain out seeds if desired, and use as a sauce over peaches, ice cream, or frozen yogurt.

Raw. Add fresh berries to hot or cold cereals or top fresh berries with plain nonfat yogurt and granola for a delicious breakfast, snack, or dessert. Also add fresh raspberries to smoothies, lemonade, iced tea, and water.

Preserve. For more information on preserving raspberries, look for MontGuides: Freezing Fruits; Drying Fruit; Processing Fruit, Tomatoes and Mixtures in a Pressure Canner; Making Jams, Jellies and Syrups Visit www.msuextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

Preparation: Step-by-Step



Harvest fruit early in the morning and cool immediately to protect quality. Keep store-purchased raspberries cool.



Store raspberries in half-pint containers. If a larger container is used, bottom fruit may be crushed.



Wash hands prior to rinsing raspberries. Do not rinse berries until ready to eat. Rinse raspberries thoroughly by placing under running water in hand or a colander.



Enjoy fresh, add to salads or drinks, bake, puree, or preserve.

For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msuxextension.org

MSU Extension Master Gardener: www.mtmastergardener.org

MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msuxextension.org/nutrition

MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buyeatlivebetter.org

Date of Publication: January 2014

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Rhubarb

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Technically a vegetable, rhubarb or “pie plant” can produce for 20 or more years and grows to a size of two feet high and six feet wide. To allow enough space for the mature plant, dig a hole two feet around and at least one foot deep. Add compost and plant crowns three feet apart at a depth of 2-3 inches below the soil surface. Water and cover with a layer of mulch. For more growing information, look for the MontGuide, *Growing Rhubarb in Montana* at www.msueextension.org or call your Extension office.

Harvest. A mature rhubarb plant can produce up to six pounds of stalks in a season. For the first two years after planting, harvest stalks sparingly, taking only a few at a time and only for a few weeks throughout the season. In the third growing season, harvest as much as you like from spring through the first part of July or until stalks begin to become smaller in diameter.

Selection

Rhubarb can be red, partially-red or green. The deeper the red, the more flavorful the stalks. Medium-size stalks are generally more tender than large ones, which may be stringy. Choose firm stalks which are not shriveled or limp. Only the stems are edible. Leaves should be discarded because they are poisonous. The stalks do not need to be completely blemish-free. Damaged spots can be trimmed away.

Storage

For storage, first trim and discard leaves. Freshly harvested stalks can be kept in the refrigerator, unwashed and wrapped tightly in plastic for up to three weeks. Refresh rhubarb stalks by standing them in a pitcher that has been filled partially with cold water. Allow them to stand for a minimum of one hour.

Nutrition Information

Most fruits are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Rhubarb has only 13 calories per half-cup serving and is rich in Vitamin C.

Uses

Bake. Use in recipes for jams, jellies, desserts, quick breads, juice and pies.

Sauce. Rinse and cut the stalks into 1-2 inch pieces and add 3/4-cup of water per four cups of rhubarb. Bring to a boil and simmer until tender. Since rhubarb is acidic, use a pan that will not cause color change or chemical leakage from cookware. These pans are called “non-reactive pans” and include aluminum, stainless steel, Teflon coated aluminum, or enamel-coated cast iron. Pans causing reactions to highly acidic foods such as rhubarb, are iron, steel, and aluminum. Rhubarb sauce is excellent as a topping for ice cream, pancakes, waffles, pound cake, a bowl of fresh fruit, gingerbread or yogurt. Add sugar if desired. Sauce will keep in the refrigerator up to four days.

Preserve. For more information on preserving rhubarb, look for MontGuides: *Freezing Fruits*; *Drying Fruit*; *Processing Fruit*, *Tomatoes and Mixtures in a Pressure Canner*; and *Making Jams, Jellies and Syrups*. Visit www.msueextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.



Food Safety Tips

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4. **Cook.** Cook food to a safe temperature.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse stalks to remove any dirt or sand.



Cut off leaves and end of stem using a knife. Remove blemishes with a paring knife.



For stalks wider than one inch, slice stem in half. For fibrous stalks, remove strings by cutting just under the skin and pulling the string down the stalk. Continue until all strings are removed.



Cut stalks into 3/4- to 1-inch pieces for use in stews or sauces. For use in pies, use 1/4- to 1/2-inch pieces.

For More Information:

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MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msuextension.org/nutrition
MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buycatlivebetter.org

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Tomato

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Tomatoes are usually started from transplants. When starting indoors, consider a grow light as they require a lot of direct sunlight and temperatures in the 75-90°F range to germinate. Plant transplants 24-30 inches apart. Tomatoes do best when planted deeply. Even moisture is important to prevent cracking of fruit or blossom end rot, a common problem with tomatoes. Stake early and avoid excessive nitrogen. Add high phosphorous (5-10-5) fertilizer when fruits are one inch in diameter. For more growing information, look for the MontGuide, Growing Tomatoes in Montana at www.msueextension.org or call your Extension office.

Harvest. For optimum flavor, tomatoes should be allowed to ripen fully on the vine. Tomatoes will change color when ripe.



Selection

Look for the reddest, ripest tomatoes, and watch for bruises and blemishes. Tomatoes should be soft, heavy, and firm. Smell is the best indicator of ripeness. Remember, size is not an indicator of quality.

Storage

Tomatoes should be stored in a cool, dry place. Do not store in a plastic bag. Store in a single layer, as stacking tomatoes may cause them to become mushy. If tomatoes need ripening, place them in a paper bag with a banana or an apple for a day or two—the gas from the fruit will help ripen them. Reminder: refrigerate and use within four days of slicing a tomato.

Nutrition Information

Most vegetables are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Tomatoes are high in Vitamin A and C and are a good source of potassium, with 16 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Grill. Rinse and cut tomatoes in half, brush with olive oil, and place directly on a preheated (medium-high heat) grill. Cook about 6-8 minutes until soft, turning once.

Raw. Rinse, dry and eat on top of salads or in sandwiches. For a quick and easy sandwich, top slices of whole grain bread with sliced tomatoes, sprinkle with reduced-fat cheese, and broil on high for 3-5 minutes, or until cheese melts.

Roast. Place small or grape variety, or diced tomatoes in a plastic bag, drizzle with olive oil and desired seasoning. Shake until tomatoes are coated, then bake in an oven at 425°F until soft, about 5-8 minutes.

Season. To enhance flavor, use basil, celery seed, chili powder, cumin, dill weed, garlic, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, tarragon or thyme.

Preserve. For more information on preserving tomatoes, look for MontGuides: Drying Vegetables; Processing Fruit, Homecanning Pressures and Processing Times; Tomatoes and Mixtures in a Pressure Canner; Freezing Vegetables. Visit www.msueextension.org/ nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

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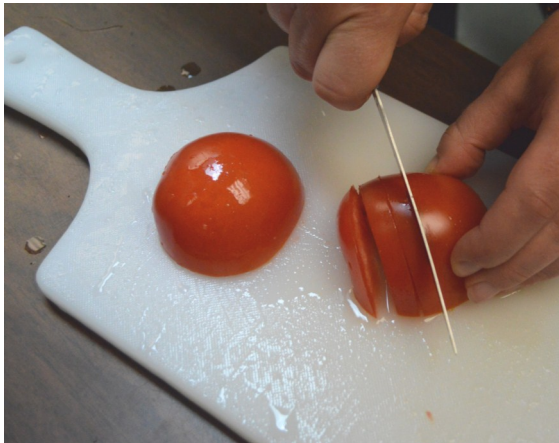
Preparation: Step-by-Step



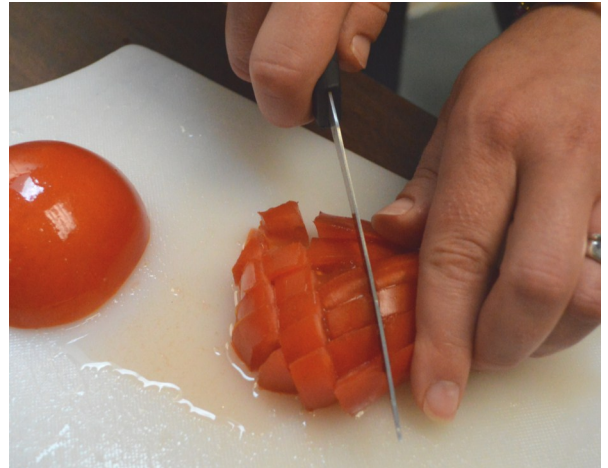
Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse tomato in cold water to remove any dirt.



Remove stem by slicing tomato in half with a sharp paring knife, then make a diagonal cut on both sides of the stem.



Hold one end of tomato and slice the other end with a sharp knife to desired thickness.



Cut slices again to dice to desired thickness.

For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msueextension.org
MSU Extension Master Gardener: www.mtmastergardener.org
MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msueextension.org/nutrition
MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buycatlivebetter.org

Date of Publication: January 2014

Information Courtesy of:

Fruits & Veggies More Matters. (2012). Tomato: Nutrition. selection. storage. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/tomato>
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Turnip

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Plant seeds in spring. Soil temperature can be as low as 40°F. Sow seeds ¼- to ½-inch deep, one inch apart, in rows 12-18 inches apart. Thin to 4-6 inch spacing. Plant in full sun and water 1-2 inches per week. For more growing information, visit www.msueextension.org and look for the MontGuide, *Planting a Successful Home Vegetable Garden*, or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Begin harvest when turnips are one inch in diameter or larger. Harvest can be late into the season as turnips can withstand several light freezes.

Selection

Choose young, small bulbs: they are the most tender. Overgrown turnips are sharp in flavor and tough and woody in texture. They should feel firm and heavy with crisp green tops. Check for a sweet aroma. Turnips are generally white at the bottom with a light purple blush on the top of the bulb.



Storage

Store turnips in a vegetable crisper where it is cool and moist for only a few days. Longer storage will make turnips bitter.

Nutrition Information

Most vegetables are rich in fiber but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Turnips have only 17 calories per half-cup serving and are rich in Vitamin C.

Uses

Bake. Place whole turnips, halves or slices in a baking dish and cover. Bake at 350°F for 45 minutes, or until tender.

Boil or Steam. Slice turnips into 1/2- to 1-inch pieces and place into steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam or boil about 15-20 minutes or until tender. Boil uncovered to allow the bitter gases to escape. After boiling or steaming, add turnips to casseroles or blend with potatoes.

Microwave. Cut turnips into quarters or one-inch pieces and place them in a microwaveable dish with two tablespoons of liquid. Cover with a lid or vented plastic wrap. Microwave on high for 4-6 minutes or until tender.

Raw. Cut smaller turnips into 1/4- to 1/2-inch slices and eat raw, or add to a salad, slaw or a vegetable tray.

Roast. Chop peeled turnips into quarters, place in plastic bag and shake with olive oil to coat. Spread coated turnips on a pan to roast at 425°F for 20-30 minutes, or until tender.

Sauté. Warm pan to medium to medium-high heat, add butter or oil to coat bottom of pan, then add diced 1/2- to 1-inch pieces of turnip. Stir turnips to produce even browning. Sauté about five minutes, or until tender.

Season. To enhance the flavor of turnips, use garlic, coriander, cumin, chili powder or cardamom.

Preserve. For more information on preserving turnips, look for MontGuides: *Freezing Vegetables*; *Drying Vegetables*. Visit www.msueextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

Food Safety Tips

1. **Clean.** Wash hands and food contact surfaces before and after preparation.
2. **Chill.** Keep produce and food cool and chill promptly.
3. **Separate.** Keep produce and food separate from raw meats and eggs.
4. **Cook.** Cook food to a safe temperature.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Rinse thoroughly in cold water to remove sand and dirt.



Cut off root and stem ends. Place turnip cut-side down and, if desired, slice off skin or use a vegetable peeler.



Firmly hold peeled turnip to slice to desired thickness.



Cut the slices into strips or dice to desired size.

For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msuxextension.org
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MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msuxextension.org/nutrition
MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buycatlivebetter.org

Date of Publication: January 2014

Information Courtesy of:

De Long, E. (2001). Guidelines for Harvesting Vegetables. Cornell Cooperative Extension. <http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/factsheets/vegetables/harvestguide.pdf>
Fruits & Veggies More Matters. (2012). Turnip: Nutrition. selection. storage. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/turnip>
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Beef

Selection

Flavor, tenderness, nutritional value and fat content of beef depends on many factors including the breed, age of the animal, feed, cut and cooking techniques. There are two types of cuts that vary in price and fat content. The first type are lean cuts with a lower fat content and more expensive. The second type of cuts are not as lean and less expensive. These cuts can be tender and delicious when cooked with techniques such as tenderizing, marinating and cooking slowly. To reduce fat content, select lean cuts.

Storage

Keep beef refrigerated below 40°F or frozen at or below 0°F. Ground beef can be refrigerated for one to two days or frozen for three to four months. Steaks and roasts can be refrigerated for three to five days or frozen for six to twelve months.

Nutrition Information

For incorporating beef into a healthy lifestyle, it is best to choose leaner cuts. However, considerations may dictate choosing cuts with a higher fat content. Top, bottom and eye round steaks and roasts and top sirloin steak are among the leanest cuts. The cooking method can affect fat content. Beef provides a variety of essential vitamins and minerals including iron, choline, selenium, zinc, phosphorus, niacin and riboflavin. It is also a high quality protein source; which means the body is able to absorb and use the protein readily.

Uses

For a complete guide to cooking beef, see *Confident Cooking with Beef* or visit www.BeeftIsWhatsForDinner.com.

Broil. Preheat oven for 10 minutes. Add seasonings, if desired. Place on rack of broiler pan and put in oven 2-4 inches below heat element. Turn once and cook 8-30 minutes. Ideal for kabobs, ground beef patties or steaks.

Chop. Add cooked steak slices or ground beef to salads for protein.

Grill. Add seasonings, if desired. Place on grill over medium heat. Cover and grill for desired tenderness, turning once. Ideal for kabobs, ground beef patties or steaks.

Pan-Broil. Add seasonings, if desired. Heat pan to medium heat, add beef. Do not add oil or water; or cover the meat. Turn beef occasionally and cook to desired doneness. Ideal for steaks or ground beef patties.

Pan-Fry/Sauté. Add seasonings, if desired. Use beef cuts ½ inch or thinner size. Heat pan to medium heat, add oil to coat bottom of pan, add beef. Turn beef occasionally and cook 3-4 minutes or to desired doneness. Ideal for steaks or ground beef patties.

Preserve. For information on preserving beef, read *MontGuide Home Canning Pressures and Processing Time*. Visit www.msuxextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

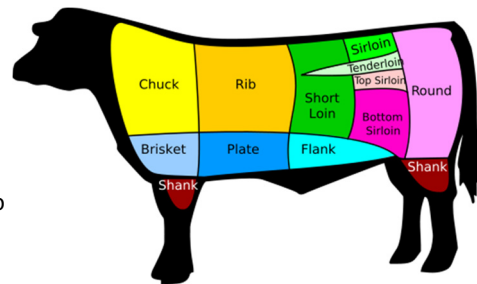
Pot Roast/Braise/Slow Cooker. Heat pan to medium heat, add oil to coat bottom of pan, add beef and brown sides. Add seasonings, if desired. Place beef in stock pot and add ½ to 2 cups of liquid, such as broth, water or an acidic fruit juice. Cover and simmer on low heat on the stovetop or in a 325°F oven. Cook for 1-3 hours. Ideal for large, less tender cuts of beef, such as short ribs, pot roasts and briskets.

Roast. Preheat oven to 325°F or 425°F. Place roast fat side up on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Do not allow the meat to rest in fat. Do not add water or cover the roast. Cook for up to 3 hours, depending on size. Let stand for 15-20 minutes. Ideal for roasts or meatloaf.

Season. To enhance flavor, use low-sodium seasonings in rubs, marinades and spices, such as allspice, basil, bay leaf, caraway seed, celery seed, chili powder, cloves, coffee powder, cumin, curry powder, garlic, ginger, marjoram, oregano or thyme.

Stir-Fry. Slice into thin strips. Heat pan to medium heat, add oil to coat bottom of pan, add beef. Cook in small batches to allow moisture to evaporate. Cook beef by continuously turning for even browning. Ideal for steaks and added to vegetable dishes.

Stew. Brown all sides of beef over medium heat in pan prior to covering beef with a liquid, such as broth, water or juice. Bring liquid to boil and reduce heat to low to cook for 2-3 hours. Ideal for shanks, briskets or stew meats.





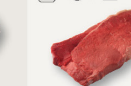
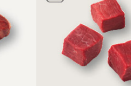










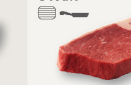





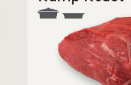
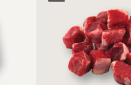





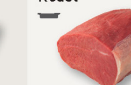
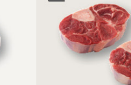




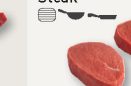
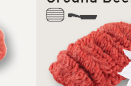




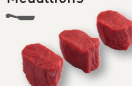


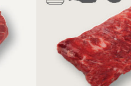



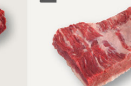
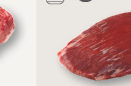








Food Safety Tips

1. **Clean.** Wash hands and food contact surfaces often.
2. **Chill.** Keep produce and food cool and chill promptly.
3. **Separate.** Keep produce and food separate from raw meats and eggs.
4. **Cook.** Cook food to the safe temperature.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Beef: Cuts & Cooking Methods

CHUCK		RIB	LOIN	SIRLOIN	ROUND	OTHER
Blade Chuck Roast 	Cross Rib Chuck Roast 	Ribeye Roast, Bone-In 	Porterhouse Steak 	Top Sirloin Steak <small>LEAN</small> 	Top Round Steak* <small>LEAN</small> 	Kabobs* 
Blade Chuck Steak* 	Shoulder Roast <small>LEAN</small> 	Ribeye Steak, Bone-In 	T-Bone Steak <small>LEAN</small> 	Sirloin Steak 	Bottom Round Roast <small>LEAN</small> 	Strips 
7-Bone Chuck Roast 	Shoulder Steak* <small>LEAN</small> 	Back Ribs 	Strip Steak, Bone-In <small>LEAN</small> 	Top Sirloin Petite Roast <small>LEAN</small> 	Bottom Round Steak* <small>LEAN</small> 	Cubed Steak 
Chuck Center Roast 	Ranch Steak <small>LEAN</small> 	Ribeye Roast, Boneless 	Strip Steak, Boneless <small>LEAN</small> 	Top Sirloin Filet <small>LEAN</small> 	Bottom Round Rump Roast <small>LEAN</small> 	Stew Meat 
Chuck Center Steak* 	Flat Iron Steak 	Ribeye Steak, Boneless 	Strip Petite Roast <small>LEAN</small> 	Coulotte Roast 	Eye of Round Roast <small>LEAN</small> 	Shank Cross Cut <small>LEAN</small> 
Denver Steak 	Top Blade Steak 	Ribeye Cap Steak 	Strip Filet <small>LEAN</small> 	Tri-Tip Roast <small>LEAN</small> 	Eye of Round Steak* <small>LEAN</small> 	Ground Beef and Ground Beef Patties 
Chuck Eye Roast <small>LEAN</small> 	Petite Tender Roast <small>LEAN</small> 	Ribeye Petite Roast <small>LEAN</small> 	Tenderloin Roast <small>LEAN</small> 	Tri-Tip Steak <small>LEAN</small> 		
Chuck Eye Steak 	Petite Tender Medallions <small>LEAN</small> 	Ribeye Filet <small>LEAN</small> 	Tenderloin Filet <small>LEAN</small> 	Petite Sirloin Steak 	Brisket Flat <small>LEAN</small> 	Skirt Steak* 
Country-Style Ribs 	Short Ribs, Bone-In 			Sirloin Bavette* 	Brisket Point 	Flank Steak* <small>LEAN</small> 
 IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER. Funded by the Beef Checkoff.		KEY TO RECOMMENDED COOKING METHODS  GRILL OR BROIL  SLOW COOKING  STIR-FRY  ROAST  SKILLET  SKILLET-TO-OVEN <small>*MARINATE BEFORE COOKING FOR BEST RESULTS</small>				
		<small>LEAN</small> These cuts meet the government guidelines for lean, based on cooked servings, visible fat trimmed.				
				BRISKET PLATE & FLANK  Short Ribs, Bone-In* <small>LEAN</small>		

All lean beef cuts have less than 10 grams of total fat, 4.5 grams or less of saturated fat and less than 95 milligrams of cholesterol per 3½-oz serving. Based on cooked servings, visible fat trimmed.

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For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msuxextension.org
MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msuxextension.org/nutrition
MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buysalivelivebetter.org
National Cattlemen's Beef Association: www.BeeffitsWhatsForDinner.com.

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Montana Beef Council. (2011). *Confident Cooking with Beef*.
Rombauer, Irma S., Rombauer, Marion R., Becker, Ethan. *Joy of Cooking*. Scribner, New York, 2006. Print.
Spice Advice. (2015) *Spice usage tips*. www.spiceadvice.com/newsa/usage/chart.html
US Department of Health and Human Services. *Food Safety*. www.foodsafety.gov

Kale

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Direct seed or transplant kale when soil temperatures have reached a minimum of 40°F. Plant seeds ¼ to ½ inch deep with approximately 8-inch spacing between plants and 18-30 inches between rows. Kale is a cool season plant and does not thrive in high summer heat. A late season crop can be achieved by planting 6 to 8 weeks prior to the first fall frost. Fertilize if plants exhibit stunted growth or yellow foliage. Plenty of water will promote tender leaves. Visit www.msueextension.org for more information or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Begin harvesting kale when several leaves have developed. Select older, larger leaves initially as plants will continue to grow through the season. As plants mature and temperatures warm, older leaves may become tough and bitter, requiring more frequent harvest or selection of younger leaves.

Selection

Choose small to medium leaves with a dark green appearance. Avoid brown, yellow, wilted or slimy leaves.

Storage

Store kale unwashed in a bag in the coolest part of the refrigerator for 3-5 days.

Nutrition Information

Kale is a nutrient packed vegetable, rich in Vitamins A, C, K and B6 and contains significant amounts of potassium, calcium, iron and manganese. It is also a good source of dietary fiber, contains no cholesterol and minimal amounts of calories and sodium. Like other leafy greens, it is rich in phytochemicals which may help prevent cancer and other diseases.

Uses

Wash greens thoroughly before using. Cooked kale reduces in size by 75% compared to fresh greens.

Blanch or Boil. Cover kale with water and bring to a boil. Remove dried or thick stems and place the kale into the boiling water to blanch 5-8 minutes or until desired tenderness.

Braise. Cut kale to desired size. Remove dried or thick stems. Drizzle cooking oil in a heated pan, add seasonings if desired. Cook over low heat for about 20 minutes, or until desired tenderness.

Preserve. For more information on preserving kale, read MontGuides *Drying Vegetables* and *Freezing Vegetables*. Visit www.msueextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

Roast. Cut kale to desired size. Place on foil-lined baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil and seasoning. Bake at 300°F for 12-15 minutes or until crispy.

Salad. Add raw to salads for added flavor, texture and visual appeal. Tenderness can be achieved by massaging finely cut greens with acidic dressing. Add in nuts, seeds or dried fruit for additional flavor and texture.

Sauté. Cut kale to desired size. Remove dried or thick stems. Drizzle cooking oil in a heated pan, add seasonings if desired. Cook by stirring over high heat until desired tenderness, about 5-8 minutes.

Season. To enhance flavor, experiment with low-sodium seasonings such as basil, bay leaf, celery seed, garlic, oregano, tarragon or thyme.

Soup or Entrée. Add kale to soups and entrees such as lasagna, quiche, or pizza.

Steam. Remove dried or thick stems. Place kale in a pan with a small amount of water and seasonings. Cook on medium heat for 2-4 minutes, depending on size and age of greens, until desired tenderness.



Food Safety Tips

1. **Clean.** Wash hands and food contact surfaces often.
2. **Chill.** Keep produce and food cool and chill promptly.
3. **Separate.** Keep produce and food separate from raw meats and eggs.
4. **Cook.** Cook food to the safe temperature.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse kale to remove any dirt. Dry with a towel or in a salad spinner. Rewash kale if needed.



Cut off end of stems using a knife. For large leafed kale, slice on both sides of the stem to remove. Remove the stem and discard.



Stack greens and slice into 1/4- to 1/2- inch sections. Tenderness can be achieved by massaging finely cut greens with acidic dressing.



Smaller-leafed kale can be hand torn or left whole.

For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msuextension.org

MSU Extension Master Gardener: www.mtmastergardener.org

MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msuextension.org/nutrition

MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buyeatlivebetter.org

Date of Publication: November 2015

Information Courtesy of:

Fruits & Veggies More Matters. (2015). Kale: Nutrition. selection. storage. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/kale>

Gough, Robert E. and Cheryl Moore-Gough. *Guide to Rocky Mountain Vegetable Gardening*. Brentwood, TN: Cool Springs, 2009. Print.

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Leafy Greens

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Several leafy greens are grown as spring and fall crops in Montana. Plant initial crop in spring when soil temperatures reach a minimum of 35°F (spinach, lettuce, arugula), 40°F (chard) or 50°F (mustard). Small seeded greens such as lettuce and arugula can be directly sown and do not require soil cover to germinate. Larger seeds such as spinach and chard can be covered with ¼-inch of soil. Plants should be thinned to approximately 2-6 inch spacing in rows 12-24 inches apart. Most leafy greens will create a seed stalk as summer temperatures increase. A late season crop can be achieved by planting 6 to 8 weeks prior to the first fall frost. Visit www.msueextension.org for more information or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Depending on species and variety, leafy greens can be harvested at 40-50 days maturity either by removing the whole plant at soil level or selecting older leaves, allowing the remaining leaves to mature for future harvests. Heading and semi-heading lettuce varieties take several more days to mature and are harvested as whole plants.

Selection

Choose brightly colored greens with firm, crispy leaves. Avoid dried-out, yellow, wilted, dull-looking or slimy leaves. Young tender leaves are preferred. Once plants have bolted, leaves tend to be tough and bitter. Early harvest ensures the best flavor.

Storage

Store unwashed greens in a bag in the coolest part of the refrigerator for up to one week.

Nutrition Information

Greens are cholesterol free and low in calories and sodium. Most of these plants are referred to as super foods because they contain phytochemicals, which promote long term health as part of a nutritious diet. They are also good sources of Vitamin A, C, K, protein and fiber. Greens are high in folate, a nutrient important for fetal development and calcium.

Uses

Prior to preparing, wash greens thoroughly in cool running water. Cooked greens reduce in size by 75% compared to fresh greens.

Blanch or Boil. Remove dried or thick stems. Cover the raw greens with water and bring to a boil. Add greens and blanch: collard, 8-15 minutes; beet, turnip, and mustard greens, 5-8 minutes; chard, 2-4 minutes; baby greens, less than a minute. Cook until desired tenderness.

Braise. Cut large greens and keep small greens whole. Remove dried or thick stems. Drizzle cooking oil in a heated pan, add seasonings if desired. Cook greens over low heat for about 20 minutes or until desired tenderness. This method is ideal for collards, chard, and kale.

Salad. Add a variety of raw greens to salads for added flavor, texture, and visual appeal. To serve tougher greens raw, massage the finely cut greens with acidic dressing. This will tenderize the greens and enhance the flavor.

Sauté. Cut large greens and keep small greens whole. Remove dried or thick stems. Drizzle cooking oil in a heated pan, add seasonings if desired. Cook greens by stirring over high heat until desired tenderness, about 5-8 minutes. This method is ideal for spinach, collards, chard, bok choy, and mustard greens.

Season. To enhance flavor, experiment with low-sodium seasonings such as basil, bay leaf, celery, seed, garlic, oregano, tarragon, or thyme.

Soup or Entrée. Add greens to soups and entrees such as lasagna, quiche, or pizza.

Steam. Remove dried or thick stems. Place greens in a pan in a steam rack with a small amount of water and seasonings if desired. Cook on medium heat for 2-4 minutes (depending on size and age of greens), or until desired tenderness.



Food Safety Tips

1. **Clean.** Wash hands and food contact surfaces often.
2. **Chill.** Keep produce and food cool and chill promptly.
3. **Separate.** Keep produce and food separate from raw meats and eggs.
4. **Cook.** Cook food to the safe temperature.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse greens to remove any dirt. Dry with a towel or in a salad spinner. Rewash greens if needed.



Cut off end of stems using a knife. For large greens, such as chard and collards, slice on both sides of the stem to remove. Remove the stem and discard.



Stack greens and slice into 1/4- to 1/2 inch sections.



For small or delicate greens, such as lettuce, spinach and mustard greens, can be hand torn or left whole.

For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msuxextension.org

MSU Extension Master Gardener: www.mtmastergardener.org

MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msuxextension.org/nutrition

MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buyeatlivebetter.org

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Morash, Marian. *The Victory Garden Cookbook*. Random House, Inc., New York, 1990. Print.

The Visual Food Encyclopedia. MacMillan, New York, 1996. Print.

Lentils

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Lentils are a cool season plant much like other legumes. Montana produces almost 40% of U.S. lentils. They are tolerant to frosts in the seedling stage, allowing for early planting a week or two before the last spring frost when soil temperatures are a minimum of 40°F. In the garden, seeds should be planted at approximately 1 inch deep about 2 inches apart. Plants can be thinned to 4-6 inches apart and trellised if desired. Excessive watering can kill plants which need approximately 10 inches of water throughout the growing season. Irrigation should be stopped when pods begin to dry.

Harvest. Pods can be harvested green and lentils eaten much like shell peas. Dried lentils for storage should be harvested at approximately 80-100 days maturity when pods have completely dried. Lentils should be removed from pods for long-term storage. Visit www.msueextension.org for more information or contact your Extension office.

Selection

French green, black, red, green, golden, and pardina (brown) are some of the many varieties of lentils. While every variety is versatile, each one has unique characteristics of texture, flavor, and color. Green lentils are larger and suitable for soups, salads, and in baked goods as a puree. Golden and red lentils cook quickly and lose their shape, making them great for adding to sauces, to thicken soups, mashed potatoes, or baked goods when pureed. Pardina, Black Beluga®, and French green lentils are smaller and round, hold their shape and are great sprouted and/or served in soups or salads.

Storage

Store lentils in airtight containers in a cool, dry place for up to a year. Cooked lentils may be refrigerated up to 5 days or frozen up to 3 months.

Nutrition Information

Like other plant-based foods, lentils contain no cholesterol, fat or sodium. Lentils provide protein, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, zinc and other minerals. These also contain phytochemicals which may help to reduce the risk of cancer and other diseases.

Uses

Blend. Add 1-2 tablespoons cooked lentils to smoothies.

Cook. Use 1 cup lentils to 1 1/2 cups water. Boil for 15-20 minutes for salads or longer for puree, depending on variety and desired texture.

Grind. Using a high-powered blender, food processor, coffee/spice grinder, or flour mill, grind washed and dried lentils until desired consistency. Use in baked goods as a gluten-free, high-protein and high-fiber flour.

Pan-fry. Cooked lentils can be used to make veggie burgers, falafel or croquettes.

Puree. Place cooked lentils in food processor and drizzle with olive oil, add seasonings if desired. Blend until smooth. Use puree as a dip for vegetables, spread on sandwiches, base for croquette, patty, or baked goods.

Risotto, Soups, Stews, or Stir-fry. Add cooked lentils to soups, stews or rice dishes for added nutrients and texture.

Salad. Chill lentils after cooking. Combine with chopped vegetables, such as tomatoes and broccoli, then toss with a balsamic or Italian dressing. Add to a pasta or green salad for fiber and protein.

Season. For added flavor, cook lentils in water, broth or tomatoes. To enhance flavor, experiment with low-sodium seasonings such as allspice, bay leaf, cardamom, chili powder, cloves, cumin, curry powder, garlic, ginger, nutmeg, oregano, rosemary, thyme or turmeric.

Soak. Cover lentils with 2 inches water, cover, and soak in refrigerator for 10-12 hours. Although lentils do not need to be soaked prior to cooking like other legumes, soaking and sprouting helps to increase nutrient availability.



Food Safety Tips

1. **Clean.** Wash hands and food contact surfaces often.
2. **Chill.** Keep produce and food cool and chill promptly.
3. **Separate.** Keep produce and food separate from raw meats and eggs.
4. **Cook.** Cook food to the safe temperature.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse lentils to remove any dirt.
Check for rocks and other debris.



Strain lentils.
To cook, use 1 cup lentils to 1 1/2 cups water.



Add lentils to water and bring to a boil. Simmer for 15-20 minutes for salads or longer for puree. Cooking time varies due to variety and desired texture.



Add desired seasonings. Serve alone or use in soups, stews or other dishes. Best chilled prior to use in salads or purees.

For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msuxextension.org
MSU Extension Master Gardener: www.mtmastergardener.org
MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msuxextension.org/nutrition
MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buyeatlivebetter.org

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Information Courtesy of:

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Garden-Robinson, Julie. (2012). *Pulses: The Perfect Food*. <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn1508.pdf>
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Summer Squash

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Summer squash can be planted from seed or transplants. Seed germination occurs when soil temperatures exceed 60°F with an ideal range of 65-75°F at planting. Varieties include chayote, patty pan, yellow crookneck, yellow straightneck and zucchini. Squash prefer well-drained soils with sufficient organic matter. Plant seeds ½-1 inch deep in mounds of soil approximately 48 inches apart or 12 inches apart in rows. If planting in mounds, thin to 2-3 plants per mound by pinching off plants at soil level when first true leaves have formed. Consistently water squash through the season. Visit www.msuxextension.org for more information or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Summer squash only require 40-60 days to mature, making them ideal for Montana's short growing season. Harvest fruit when they are immature with thin skins. Picking before maturity encourages continual flowering of plants and additional fruit production.

Selection

Select small to medium size squash with tender, firm and glossy skin. Avoid squash with signs of decay, such as cuts, moldy spots, sunken areas or punctures. Avoid large squash which will have harder seeds and dry texture. Large summer squash are often tough and bitter, but can be used in recipes using shredded squash, such as zucchini bread. Squash between 4-10 inches in size usually have good flavor and are not fibrous or woody.

Storage

Store in the crisper drawer in the refrigerator for up to one week. Do not store in a bag.

Nutrition Information

Summer squash has a low nutrient value because it is picked when it is immature. Since summer squash consists of 95% water, it has few calories (about 20 per medium squash). This makes it a great summer meal side dish. The vitamins and minerals is found in the skin, therefore, it is best to not peel the squash before cooking.

Uses

Broil. Set broiler to high, with rack about six inches from heat. Cut squash in slices and drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasoning before placing on a baking sheet. Cook 3-5 minutes or until tender.

Grate. Add raw, grated squash to green salads, muffins or cookies. Use a vegetable peeler to make ribbons in place of pasta noodles.

Grill. Pierce cubed squash with a skewer and place over a preheated (medium-high heat) grill. Cook 5-8 minutes or until tender. Pair squash with tomatoes, onions, mushrooms, peppers or fruit.

Microwave. Place sliced squash in a microwave-safe dish with 2-3 tablespoons water. Cover and microwave on high for 3-4 minutes or until tender.

Preserve. For more information on preserving summer squash, read the MontGuide *Freezing Vegetables*. Visit www.msuxextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

Raw. Rinse and dry squash to enjoy sliced in salads or dipped in hummus or yogurt. For raw salads, toss sliced or diced squash with vinaigrette, place in refrigerator, allow to sit for at least four hours and serve cold.

Sauté. Heat pan to high, add butter or oil to coat bottom of pan and add sliced squash. Sauté until lightly brown, about 3-5 minutes, or until tender. Remove from heat and use as side dish or add to vegetable dishes, lasagna, pasta and other dishes.

Season. To enhance flavor, experiment with low-sodium seasonings such as allspice, basil, cumin, curry powder, dill, oregano, rosemary, sage, tarragon or thyme.

Steam. Place sliced or whole squash into steam basket. Steam 6-10 minutes for sliced squash or 12-15 minutes for whole squash.



Food Safety Tips

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3. **Separate.** Keep produce and food separate from raw meats and eggs.
4. **Cook.** Cook food to the safe temperature.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse squash to remove dirt.
Cut squash in half lengthwise.
Firmly hold squash on cutting board.



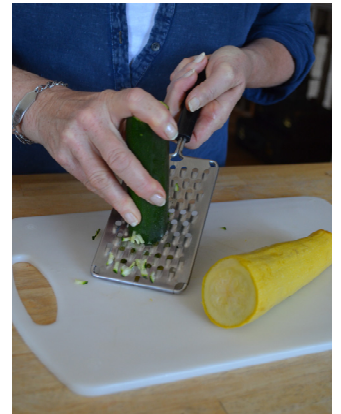
Place flat side of squash on cutting board to quarter.
Keep the length of the squash or cut in half to grill.



Slice into 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick coins.



Peel the squash lengthwise to create thin strips.
Add to salads or baked dishes.



Grate the squash and use in baked goods.

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Center for Nutrition, Diet and Health. (2015). Summer Squash. <http://www.udc.edu/docs/causes/online/SummerSquash%2015.pdf>

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The Visual Food Encyclopedia. MacMillan, New York, 1996. Print.

Whole Grain

Selection

Foods made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or other grains are considered a grain product. There are two subgroups: whole grains and refined grains. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel. The process of refining grains to make flour and other products removes the fiber and some of the nutrients from the grain. Therefore, select at least half of your grains from whole grain sources. Whole grain sources grown in Montana include whole wheat bread, oatmeal, whole corn and hulled barley. Although most refined grains are enriched—the nutrients are added back following processing—they are lacking in the fiber of the original whole grain.

Storage

Keep whole grains and flour stored in a cool, dry place in airtight containers. To extend shelf life, store in the refrigerator or freezer for up to six months.

Nutrition Information

Whole grains differ from refined and enriched grains because they consist of the entire grain, bran, endosperm and germ. All of these parts make a more nutrient dense grain product. The outer layer called the bran contains insoluble fiber, B vitamins, trace minerals and phytochemicals and protein. The center of the grain, called the endosperm, contains carbohydrates, protein and soluble fiber. The innermost center is oily and contains Vitamin E and B, healthy fats, protein and trace minerals. Including whole grains as part of a balanced diet is associated with lower body weight and a reduced risk of diabetes, cancer and other diseases.

Uses

Breakfast. Use in parfaits, prepare hot for cereal, or roast with dried fruit to make granola.

Ground. Grains can be ground using electric or hand mills. Depending on the types of grain, the flour can be used in products such as breads, muffins, cake, crepes, tortillas, or various desserts.

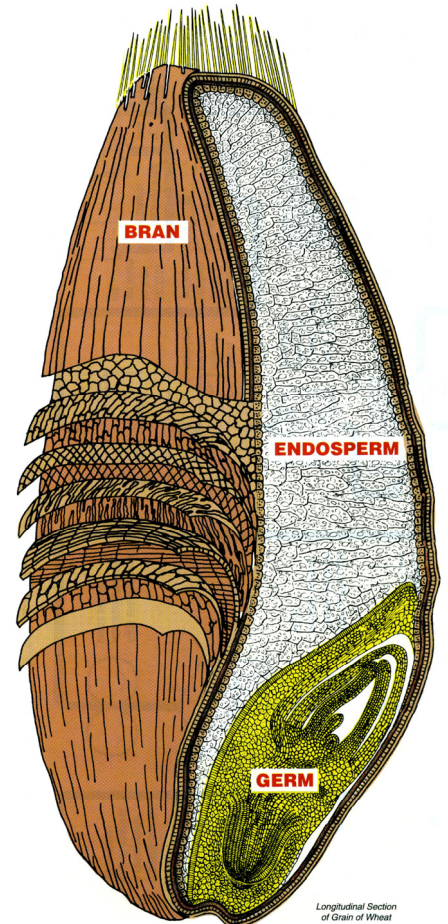
Pasta. Whole grain pasta tends to be tougher because it contains bran and germ, thus requiring a longer cooking time. To cook, use approximately 1 cup pasta to 6 cups water or broth, bring to a boil then simmer for 8-12 minutes or until tender. Add to cold salads with chopped vegetables or make a hearty entree with tomato sauce and chopped vegetables.

Pilaf, Risotto, Soups, Stews or Stir-fry. Add cooked grains for additional nutrients and texture.

Pop. Drizzle cooking oil in a heated pan and add seasonings. Put several corn kernels in the pan. When the kernels pop, add 1/3 cup corn kernels evenly in the pan, cover with lid and remove from heat for 30 seconds. Return to heat and gently shake the pan while kernels pop.

Salad. Chill grains after cooking. Combine with chopped vegetables, such as tomatoes and broccoli, then toss with a balsamic, Italian, or another vinaigrette dressing. Add to a pasta or green salad for fiber and texture. Ideal for wheat berries and hulled barley.

Season. For added flavor, cook grains in water with broth, or diced tomatoes. To enhance flavor, experiment with low-sodium seasonings such as experiment with allspice, basil, cinnamon, chili powder, celery seed, cloves, garlic, ginger, nutmeg, oregano, sage, and thyme.



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Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse grain to remove any dirt.
Check for rocks and other debris.



Barley. Prior to use, wash carefully. To cook, use 1 cup hulled barley to 3 cups water or broth, bring to a boil then simmer for 45-60 minutes. Yields approximately 3 1/2 cups.



Cornmeal and Oats. To cook, use 1 cup to 4 cups water or broth and bring to a boil. For cornmeal, simmer for 25-30 minutes. Yields approximately 2 1/2 cups. For oats, simmer for 20 minutes. Yields approximately 4 cups.

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Wheat. Prior to use, wash and soak wheat berries for 10-12 hours in water and drain. To cook, use 1 cup wheat berries to 4 cups water or broth, bring to a boil then simmer for 45-60 minutes. Yields approximately 3 cups.

Information Courtesy of:

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Winter Squash

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Plant winter squash from seeds or starts when soil temperatures have reached a minimum of 60°F (ideally 75-90°F). Varieties include acorn, butternut, carnival, delicata, hubbard, pumpkin, spaghetti and more. Soil should also be well-drained and contain sufficient organic matter to support the nutrient needs of the plant. Squash can be planted in hills or rows given they have room to trail. Plant seeds ½-1 inches deep, about 12 inches apart in rows or 48 inches in hills. Thin seedlings to approximately 24-36 inches apart in rows or a maximum of three plants per hill. Visit www.msueextension.org for more information or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Winter squash should be harvested at maturity (80-140 days depending on variety). Squash should be deep in color. Remove from the vine with a sharp knife or pruners, leaving the stem on the fruit.

Selection

Select heavy squash with a tough, shiny skin with attached stem. Avoid squash with signs of decay, such as cuts, moldy spots, sunken areas or punctures.

Storage

Store in a cool, dry space. The hard skin and attached stem helps retain moisture, which extend the storage period ranging between 30 to 180 days, depending on the variety.

Nutrition Information

The edible, dark orange winter squash flesh is high in beta carotene which is converted in the body to Vitamin A. Winter squash is also high in complex carbohydrates and fiber.

Uses

Bake/Roast. Peel and cube, or cut squash in half and scoop out seeds. On a foil-lined baking dish, place halved squash cut-side down or evenly arrange cubed squash. Cover and bake whole squash at 350°F for 45 minutes or until tender. Bake cubed squash at 350°F for 20-25 minutes.

Boil or Steam. Keep whole or cut squash into quarters or cubes and remove the skin and seeds. To boil squash whole, pierce skin with fork, cover, and boil for one hour. To steam or boil cubed squash, place pieces into pan of boiling water or steam basket for 10-15 minutes or until tender. To mash, use a hand held mixer or masher until desired consistency.

Dry. Cut in half and remove seeds and rinse thoroughly to remove strings. Drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasoning before placing evenly on a baking sheet. Cook at 300°F for 10-15 minutes. Stir periodically for even drying.

Microwave. Peel and cube squash, or slice squash in half and remove seeds. Place cubes or halves in a microwave-safe dish with 2-3 tablespoons water. Microwave cubes on high for 5-8 minutes or 8-12 minutes for halves. To soften thick or hard rinds before cutting or peeling, poke holes in rind with fork, and microwave for 2-5 minutes. Remove from microwave and allow to rest for 1-2 minutes until cool enough to handle.

Preserve. For more information on preserving winter squash, read MontGuides *Home-canning Pressures and Processing Times* and *Freezing Vegetables*. Visit www.msueextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

Puree. Roast or bake squash. Puree squash in a blender or food processor to a smooth consistency and add to soup, breads, muffins or custards.

Sauté. Grate or cube squash. Heat pan to high, add butter or oil to coat bottom of pan and add squash. Sauté 15-25 minutes, or until tender.

Season. To enhance flavor, experiment with low-sodium seasonings such as allspice, basil, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, marjoram, or nutmeg.



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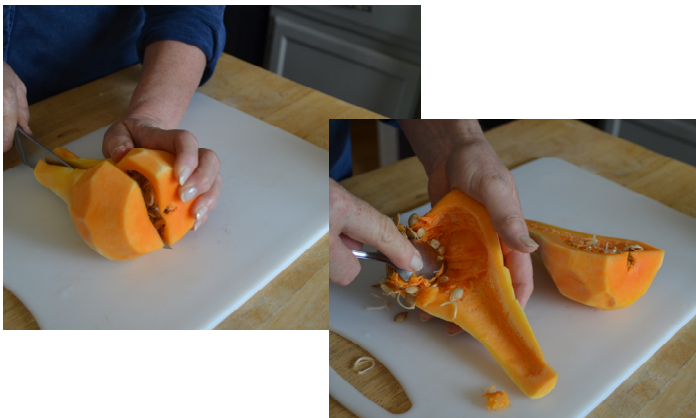
Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Thoroughly rinse squash to remove dirt.
Cut end of squash to create a flat edge.
Be sure to hold squash firmly on cutting board.



Place flat side of squash on cutting board and peel.
Use a paring knife or food peeler to remove outer rind.



Cut squash in half. Remove seeds with a spoon. Set seeds aside to rinse and dry for salads or as a snack. The halved squash can be roasted or baked. Spaghetti squash is typically halved and, when tender, spooned out.



Place flat side of halved squash on cutting board and quarter. To cube, cut evenly to desired size.

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