

50 Ways to Eat Your Fruit

The Centers for Disease Control State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2009 states that only 32.8% of adults consume at least 2 servings of fruit per day *and* only 14% of adults consume at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Five servings of fruit *and* vegetables per day are considered the minimum recommended intake by many health organizations and professionals. Visit CDC's Fruit & Vegetable Calculator which uses your age, gender and daily activity level to determine your optimal intake (<http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables/howmany.html>).

The Basics

Organic or conventional? Eating conventionally-grown fruit is far better than not eating fruit at all as the health benefits outweigh the risk of pesticide exposure. If you are interested in minimizing your exposure, use the Environmental Working Group Shopper's Guide to Pesticide in Produce to guide your choices.

| Dirty Dozen (most contaminated) Buy organic to decrease exposure | Clean Fifteen (least contaminated) |
|---|--|
| Apple | Cantaloupe |
| Grapes | Grapefruit |
| Imported nectarines | Kiwi |
| Peaches | Mango |
| Strawberries | Papaya |
| | Pineapple |

Fresh, frozen, canned or dried/dehydrated? Fresh seasonal sources which are grown locally and eaten soon after they are harvested will generally provide the most nutrient density. Frozen options are also good as they are often frozen shortly after harvesting. Choose frozen varieties without any added sugar or sauces. Canned fruits have been heat treated decreasing nutrients that are heat sensitive and are often preserved in a sugary solution increasing their calorie and sugar content. When buying canned fruit, look for fruit in its own juice or packed in water. Dried/dehydrated fruit can be expensive, sometimes includes added sugar and is calorie dense; buy pure sources without additional sugar and use sparingly for weight control or management of diabetes.

Raw or cooked? Cooking fruit can decrease heat sensitive nutrients but it can also liberate other nutrients such as lycopene in grapefruits or watermelon. Some people experience raw fruit to be more gas forming. In general, eat a variety of raw and cooked sources.

Juice or whole? The benefit of whole fruit is that it contains fiber, whereas, the benefit of juicing whole fruits is that it delivers extreme nutrient density that allows one to consume more nutrients than they might otherwise eat. Juicing can be a great option for nutrient density, detoxification plans or to help as a meal replacement for weight loss. Consider doing both for their special benefits.

Use the chart on the following page for inspiration and ideas on making fruit pleasing to your palette to help you reach your optimal intake for promoting health and preventing disease.

| 50 Ways to Eat Your Fruit... | | | | |
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| Add chopped apple or pear to salad | Blend melon for cold soup | Freeze seedless grapes solo or on a kabob for refreshing snack | Make a fruit pizza with rice cakes, pita or English muffin; cream cheese, top with fresh fruit | Freeze juice in ice cube trays, add popsicle stick when slightly firm |
| Freeze ripe bananas without peel and use for smoothies | Mix fruit juice with seltzer to make natural soda | Make your own fruit leathers with a food dehydrator | Fill ice cream cones with cut fruit | Combine sautéed fruit with cinnamon, honey, ricotta and vanilla; top with crunchy nuts |
| Add diced pineapple or mango to traditional salsa | Bake a peeled apple, drizzle with maple syrup and walnuts | Add chopped apple or pear to stuffing | Skewer cubed fruit and present as a fruit bouquet | Cut peeled banana in half, dip in chocolate and roll into nuts |
| Cook mixed berries into sauce/topping | Blend strawberries into vinaigrette salad dressing | Blend with yogurt or silken tofu for creamy protein-rich smoothies | Slice fruit and dry in oven without a dehydrator | Add honey, lemon juice and fresh grated ginger to fruit salad |
| Skewer pineapple and grill | Add dried fruit to chicken or tuna salad | Layer fruit with vanilla yogurt and angel food cake for a trifle | Slice watermelon and use a cookie cutter to cut into shapes. | Add to non-alcoholic mock-tails |
| Add sliced bananas to peanut butter/jelly sandwich | Add thinly sliced apples to sandwich | Make homemade lemonade or limeade | Slice apples, sprinkle with cinnamon and bake in oven | Grill peaches and use in place of tomatoes for insalata Caprese |
| Sprinkle dried fruit onto salad | Use all-fruit preserves for a sandwich condiment | Dip apple slices in peanut butter | Use hand-immersion blender or food processor to blend any fruit for smooth sauce or preserves | Spread all fruit preserves on squash halves before baking |
| Add dried fruit to favorite nut for trail mix | Cut into cube size pieces and dip in chocolate fondue | Use as a base for a sweet or savory salsa | Add chopped fruit to cottage cheese and sprinkle with nuts | Shred apples and sauté in butter and brown sugar; add to oatmeal or yogurt |
| Add to plain yogurt with vanilla extract and cinnamon | Blend into cream cheese | Top grilled chicken or fish with a blended fruit sauce | Peel & section oranges or clementines and dip half in chocolate | Dip washed grapes in lemon juice, coat with granulated sugar |
| Freeze berries in small zip bags for use in winter | Add to juice extractor with veggies for sweeter juice | Slice apples, dip in orange juice and pack for lunch | Add cut strawberries or raspberries to ice cube tray, fill with water, freeze and serve with seltzer | Grill melon, pineapple, apples, pears or peaches |

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