Fruit of the Month
February 2017:
Dates

Dates are a naturally dehydrated fruit because of their very low moisture level. Because of this they have a long shelf life and do not require refrigeration. They can be stored at room temperature in an airtight container for several months and be refrigerated for up to one year. Dates are high in fiber and a good source of potassium and manganese. They also contain calcium, magnesium, zinc, copper, iron, selenium and potassium, which are minerals that work together to lower blood pressure. Dates also contain polyphenols, a type of antioxidant. They have the highest amount of polyphenols compared to the most commonly consumed fruits and vegetables.

Banana - Date Smoothie

Makes 4 servings
Ingredients:
2 medium bananas
1/4 cup dates
2 tsp. chia seeds
1/2 tsp cardamom
2 cups plain unsweetened soy milk
Juice from 1/2 lime and lime zest
1 dash salt
Ice

Directions:
Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.

Nutrition Facts:
128 calories, 4g protein, 26g carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 16g sugar, 2g fat, 0g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 98mg sodium.

How to eat Dates:

- Make 3-ingredient energy bars with dates. In a food processor add 1 cup nuts, 1 cup dried fruit and 1 cup dates. Process for 30 seconds. Line a square glass dish with parchment paper and press in the mixture. Chill overnight and cut into bars.

- Use chopped dates instead of sugar to add sweetness to yogurt or oatmeal.

- Add dates to herbed rice or couscous for a sweet and savory side dish.

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Veggie of the Month
February 2017: Brussels Sprouts

Brussels Sprouts are green leafy vegetables that look like miniature cabbages. Although they come from the same plant family as cabbages, they are not actually baby cabbages. They get their name from their origin in Brussels, Belgium. Today, all of the U.S.’s Brussels sprouts are grown in California. Brussels sprouts are a good source of fiber, high in vitamin C and vitamin K and a good source of folate. Brussels sprouts contain a phytochemical called sulforaphane that is known for its potential anticancer properties.

Roasted Brussels Sprouts

Makes 4 servings
Ingredients:
- 1 1/2 pounds Brussels sprouts
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper

Directions:
1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Cut the bottom of each Brussels sprout off and then slice in half.
3. Toss Brussels sprouts with the olive oil and seasoning.
4. Place on a single layer on a baking dish and roast for 25 minutes or until Brussels sprouts are slightly browned and tender throughout.

Nutrition Facts:
- 137 calories, 4g protein, 10g carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 2g sugar, 10g fat, 1g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 318mg sodium.

How to eat:
- Brussels sprouts are great shredded into a salad.
- Cut off ends of the Brussels sprouts and cut in half. Marinate overnight in olive oil, salt and pepper. Sauté on medium heat in a pan until slightly browned.
- Add sliced Brussels sprouts to homemade pizza.

Shopping tips:
- Brussels sprouts are typically sold off the stalk, but during peak season you can find them on the stalk. The ones on the stalk last longer.
- The smaller the Brussels sprout the more tender and sweet it is.