Fruit of the Month
October 2016: Pear

Pears are a great fall fruit packed with fiber and nutrients. The skin of the pear is especially important because it contains half of the pear's total dietary fiber and phytonutrients that have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties.

Pears also contain flavonoids that have been proven to improve insulin sensitivity and reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes in both men and women.

There are many varieties of pears. The Anjou is red or green and great for salads or baking. Asian pears are crunchy like an apple. Bartlett pears are sweet and soft and are great for snacking. Bosc pears have thick brownish skin and are very sweet when ripe and are best for baking.

Fall Salad with Pears

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients:
1 package (10 oz.) baby spinach
1 package (10 oz.) spring lettuce mix
3 medium pears, sliced
½ cup dried cranberries
4 tbsp. olive oil
2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 tbsp. maple syrup
1 tsp mustard
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:
In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, red wine vinegar, maple syrup, mustard and salt and pepper to taste. Just before serving toss dressing with lettuce, spinach and pears. Serve immediately.

Nutrition Facts:
185 calories, 2g protein, 26g carbohydrate, 5g dietary fiber, Sugar 17g, 10g fat, 0mg cholesterol, 88mg sodium

How to eat Pears:

- Cut a pear in half and remove the core. Fill the center of each half low-fat yogurt. Sprinkle with granola and cinnamon for a healthy snack.
- Add sliced pears to spinach salads for a sweet crunch.
- Toss chopped pears, onions, bell peppers, and mangos with a touch of cilantro and lime juice. Serve with baked corn chips for a quick salsa everyone will love.

Shopper’s Tips

- Pears are highly perishable once ripe. Pears at the market are usually unripe and require a few days before eating.
- Choose pears that look bright colored, with no bruises or holes.
- To check for ripeness, press gently near the stem, If soft it is ready to eat.
- If pear needs to be ripened, in a bowl near apples or in a paper bag.
- Store ripe pears in the refrigerator.
- To keep pears from browning sprinkle with lemon juice or apple juice.

For questions, please contact Nicole Collins, MPH, RD Wellness Program Specialist, at Nicole.collins@ucr.edu or 951-827-5082
Veggie of the Month
October 2016: Winter Squash

Winter Squash is an excellent source of vitamin A, a powerful antioxidant that is involved in reducing inflammation through fighting free radicals. Vitamin A is also know for its role in maintaining healthy vision, healthy skin and more. Winter squash is also a great source of vitamin C and fiber. One cup of cooked winter squash has 5 grams of fiber. Winter squash have hard shells, large seeds and inedible skins. Varieties include acorn, butternut, hubbard, kabocha, pumpkin, spaghetti and turban squash.

How to eat Winter Squash:

- Bake, boil, roast, sauté, or microwave winter squash. Use it in stews, soups, salads, dips, breads, and even pies.
- Roast cubes of butternut squash seasoned with thyme and sage. Blend roasted butternut squash cubes in a blender with just enough chicken broth to make a thick and creamy soup.
- Bake acorn squash halves in about quarter-inch of water at 400°F until tender (about one hour). Sauté one chopped apple, cinnamon, nutmeg, and a sprinkle of brown sugar until soft. Fill each half with the apple filling and bake for 10 minutes more.

Orzo with Butternut Squash & Spinach

Serves 4-6
Ingredients:
2 ½ cups butternut squash, cubed
1 tablespoons olive oil
¼ teaspoon sea salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
1 cup whole-wheat orzo
2 cups shredded baby spinach
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 clove garlic, minced

Directions:
Preheat oven to 425°F. Toss cubed butternut squash with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Spread onto a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake until squash is tender and starting to brown, 35 to 40 minutes.
Place the spinach in a large bowl and set aside. In a small skillet, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil until just warm. Stir in garlic, remove from heat, and allow to sit until ready to use.
Bring water to boil in a pot, add dry orzo and reduce to a simmer, and cook until tender but not mushy, 8 to 9 minutes. Drain and immediately pour the hot orzo on top of the spinach. Add butternut squash, garlic and olive oil. Toss until well combined and serve warm.

Nutrition Facts:
Calories 314, fat 20.6 g, carbs 28.8 g, fiber 2.1 g, sugars 2.1 g, protein 7.2 g, cholesterol 8.4 mg, sodium 292 mg.

Shopper’s Tips

- When choosing a squash look for one that is firm, heavy for its size and have dull skins (not shiny).
- The squash should be hard, without any cracks or soft spots.
- Be sure to store your uncut squash in a dark, cool, dry place.
- Once cut, the squash can be kept for about one week in the refrigerator sealed tightly.

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