

VEGETABLES



Fresh vs. Frozen or Canned Vegetables

When it comes to fresh vegetables this time of year, the pickings are slim.

Are we giving up nutrition for convenience?

Recommended Daily Intake

Americans typically eat only one-third of the recommended daily intake of fruits and vegetables, just 3 servings out of 9. So if you're in a bind, a vegetable in any form is better than no vegetable at all.

Adjusting to Vegetables During Off Season

As winter approaches, fresh produce is limited or expensive in much of the country, which forces many of us to turn to canned or frozen options. While canned vegetables tend to lose a lot of nutrients during the preservation process (notable exceptions include tomatoes and pumpkin), frozen vegetables may be even more healthful than some of the fresh produce sold in supermarkets, says Gene Lester, Ph.D., a plant physiologist at the USDA Agricultural Research Center in Weslaco, Texas. *Why?*

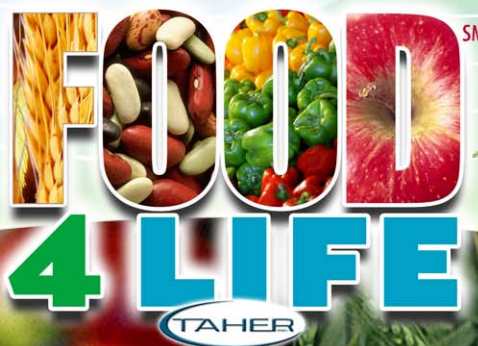
Fruit and vegetables for freezing are grown especially for that purpose and the processing preserves much of their nutritional value. Freezing plants are usually located in the vegetable production areas so the harvested vegetables can be quickly brought to the plant for processing at their peak ripeness, a time when—as a general rule—they are most nutrient-packed.

On the other hand, fruits and vegetables destined to be shipped to the fresh-produce aisles around the country typically are picked before they are ripe, which gives them less time to develop a full spectrum of vitamins and minerals and will never have the same nutritive value as if they had been allowed to fully ripen on the vine.

In addition, during the long haul from farm to fork, fresh fruits and vegetables are exposed to lots of heat and light, which degrade some nutrients, especially delicate vitamins like C and the B vitamin thiamin.

The bottom line...

When vegetables are in-season, buy them fresh and ripe. During the "off-season," frozen vegetables will give you a high concentration of nutrients.



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