



» Eating should be an adventure, not a bore, so try something new on your next trip down the produce aisle

LIKE THIS?

TRY THAT!

BY SAM MITTELSTEADT

W

ith the variety of fruits and vegetables available at most supermarkets, a trip down the produce aisle could be a culinary adventure. (Rutabagas! Star fruit! Bok choy!) Most of us, though, tend to stick to a tried-and-true itinerary, from broccoli and potatoes to apples and oranges.

It could be that we don't know what to do with a parsnip. Or we may have developed a distaste for brussels sprouts in childhood, then never tried them again as adults. But the routine of the same fruits and vegetables leads to boredom, which in turn puts us at risk for not consuming the recommended 4.5 to 6 cups of fruits and vegetables daily.

"Each time you go to the grocery store, pick up one new fruit or vegetable to try," says nutrition consultant Keri Gans, R.D., a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association and author of *The Small Change Diet*. "You're bound to find something you like." Here are a few suggestions to get you started.



YOU LIKE:
APPLES



TRY:
PEARS

WHY: Pears have a similar "crunch factor" as apples and come in about as many varieties, usually with more fiber. Plus, they're a great source of vitamins C and K, which play a role in blood clotting and may boost bone strength.

SUGGESTED SERVINGS: "Anything you can do with an apple, you can do with a pear," says Gans, who suggests adding thinly sliced wedges to a salad. For a summer dessert, brush pear halves with butter and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar, then place face-down on the grill and broil until tender and caramelized. Top with a dollop of plain Greek yogurt.

Don't Freeze Out FROZEN FOODS

Nutrition consultant Keri Gans tells her clients that the best place to purchase fruits and vegetables is their local farmers market, where produce is so fresh it may have been picked that morning. But don't discount the produce in your grocery store's freezer aisle, either.

Gans, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association, says that national food manufacturers have developed such speed and proficiency that their frozen offerings usually have the same nutritional benefits as fresh-picked produce. "Even though the food has been frozen, it was frozen *fresh*," she says. "It may not retain the same fresh appearance, but it does retain the same nutrients." So frozen broccoli, for example, may be preferable in that regard to the fresh heads on display at the same supermarket.

Open Mouths, OPEN MINDS

There's no guarantee that every new food you try will please your palate, but that shouldn't be an excuse to stop sampling, says registered dietitian and American Dietetic Association spokeswoman Keri Gans.

"When my clients say, 'I don't like brussels sprouts,' I ask them, 'Well, when's the last time you tried them?'" Gans says. "Your tastes change as we grow older, and often it's just a matter of finding the right way you enjoy a food prepared." (Gans steams brussels sprouts, then keeps them chilled in the refrigerator for a quick one-bite snack. Her husband, however, remains resolutely against them.)

A good way to gradually acclimate to a new fruit or vegetable is to include it in a salad or soup, where its flavor mixes with others. Instead of serving up a side of nothing but parsnips, for example, Gans suggests adding them to the carrots and potatoes that accompany your next roast.

ONLINE

Find Fresh Food Fast!

Summer is prime time to find fresh local produce at farmers markets. Find the hours and locations of ones near you at apps.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets.



YOU LIKE:
KIDNEY BEANS



TRY:
GARBANZO BEANS

WHY: Their versatility has made garbanzo beans, also known as chickpeas, the world's most widely consumed legume. They're high in folate, iron and protein, making them a wise choice for a vegetarian entrée, and their high fiber content promotes bowel regularity. To save on prep time, Gans suggests buying low-salt canned beans, then double-rinsing (to remove any sodium added as a preservative or extra flavoring).

SUGGESTED SERVINGS: Grind into hummus with garlic, olive oil and lemon juice, then use as a dip for crudité or substitute for mayonnaise when making egg or tuna salad. Or add the whole beans to pasta with lemon juice, prosciutto, roasted asparagus, chopped parsley and Parmesan cheese.



YOU LIKE:
ORANGES



TRY:
CLEMENTINES

WHY: "Oranges can sometimes be hard to peel and the juice may run on your hands and get messy," says Gans, who reaches instead for a clementine when she's ready for a citrus fix on the run. The smaller-sized fruit is easier to peel but retains the orange's high levels of vitamin C, potassium, folate and fiber.

SUGGESTED SERVINGS: The fruit is delicious eaten out of hand but also could be sectioned and added to a baby spinach salad topped with cranberries, feta cheese and walnuts.



YOU LIKE:
CARROTS

TRY:
BEETS

WHY: Golden and red beets are low in calories but high in fiber, manganese and folate, and their amino acid profile may help the body extract a more complete protein from the meats and fish you're already serving.

SUGGESTED SERVINGS:

Think beyond boiling: Gans' preferred method of preparation is oven roasting, drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with fresh herbs. (Try this also with asparagus, carrots, or even cauliflower and broccoli.) "It adds a sweet, intense flavor without leaching the vitamins and minerals," she says.



YOU LIKE:
POTATOES

TRY:
PARSNIPS

WHY: Like their starchier fellow root vegetables, parsnips contain protein, vitamin C and iron but pack more than twice the fiber and have a sweeter, nuttier taste, Gans says. They're also high in folate, the B vitamin that helps prevent anemia and plays a vital role in the creation of red blood cells and healthy DNA. (It's the naturally occurring version of folic acid, the maternity vitamin staple.)

SUGGESTED SERVINGS: Pan-glaze chunks of peeled parsnips with butter, brown sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon for a sweet side dish reminiscent of candied sweet potatoes. Or simply toss into the roast pan with similar-sized pieces of carrots and potatoes. (If you do, be sure to reserve several pieces to be pureed, which will add flavor and thicker texture to vegetable soups or gravies.)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DREAMSTIME



YOU LIKE:
LETTUCE

TRY:
DARK GREENS

WHY: Iceberg and romaine can't hold a nutritional candle to kale, spinach and collard greens, which can offer up to 354 percent of the daily value of vitamin A and more than 1,000 percent of the daily value for vitamin K. They're also rich in minerals such as calcium, manganese and copper, which help keep everything from blood vessels to the immune system in optimum condition.

SUGGESTED SERVINGS:

Use raw baby spinach as the base for a hearty salad; temper the "bite" of stronger-tasting greens such as kale and collards by braising over low heat with vegetable broth. Add a crumbled piece of bacon during cooking for savory flavor, or finish off with a splash of tangy balsamic vinegar. **V&V**