

# eat well

BOUNTY

Bananas come in their own convenient packaging, are a good source of vitamin C and vitamin B6 and offer up a decent dose of

**superfood**

**BRILLIANT BANANAS**

fiber. But, while vitamins C and B6 are vital—for immune and brain function respectively—the star nutrient in bananas is potassium, an essential electrolyte used by the body to maintain blood pressure and regulate fluid balance. Diets rich in potassium and low in sodium are connected to lower risk of high blood pressure and stroke. Some studies have shown that adding bananas to the diet can help children recover faster from the stomach flu. Thanks to a well-established import-export market, bananas remain affordable and available throughout the year. Bananas should not be kept in the refrigerator (where they will turn black), but instead in a bowl on the counter. To tell if a banana is ready look for a fully-yellow peel and to ripen faster, add an apple to the bowl; apples emit a gas called ethylene which speeds the chemical reactions that cause fruit to ripen. When bananas are overly ripe, they develop brown spots on the peel, making them best for baking or mixing into smoothies. You can also peel and place ripe bananas in a ziplock bag, freeze them and remove as needed for smoothies or baked goods. Over-ripe mashed banana is a great addition to oatmeal or spread on toast with peanut butter.

**Butterscotch Banana Bread**



Created by Anna Bullett, MS, RD

1 1/2 cups mashed ripe bananas (about 2) . 1/3 cup plain fat-free yogurt . 5 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil . 2 large eggs  
 1/2 cup granulated sugar . 1/2 cup packed brown sugar  
 1 cup all-purpose flour . 3/4 cup whole wheat flour  
 1 teaspoon baking powder . 3/4 teaspoon baking soda  
 1/2 teaspoon salt . 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice . 1/2 cup butterscotch chips  
 Cooking spray

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
  2. Combine bananas, yogurt, oil and eggs in a large bowl; beat with mixer on medium. Add sugars, mix well.
  3. Combine flours with baking powder, baking soda, salt, ground cinnamon and allspice then add to banana mixture, beating until just blended. Fold in butterscotch chips.
  4. Coat a 9x5-inch loaf pan with cooking spray, pour in batter. Bake for 55 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. After removing from oven cool 10 minutes, then release the bread from pan and let cool completely before cutting.
- Makes 16 servings.

calories per serving 200; fat 7g; protein 3g; carbohydrate 33g; dietary fiber 1g; cholesterol 25mg; sodium 150mg, sugar 20g

## PRESERVING the Garden Harvest



Before refrigeration, people harvested, hunted and stored food using methods such as drying, fermenting, salt curing, pickling and freezing. Some of the methods ancient cultures used for food storage would never be considered safe by today's standards. You'd be ill-advised to dig a hole in your yard for storage of food-filled urns on wooden planks covered in leaves and soil—a method called banking, practiced in Ancient Egypt. So how do you extend the life of the bounty from your garden and farmers markets? The good news is, you don't have to host an apple-eating contest to get through a bushel. Use these simple recipes and techniques for preserving seasonal sustenance. When dining on pasta with fresh pesto from the freezer in the dead of winter your efforts will be well worth it. Find specific directions and recipes on the National Center for Home Food Preservation website: [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu).

**FREEZER TOMATO AND VEGETABLE SAUCE** Core, peel, seed and chop (or blend in food processor) 6 pounds of ripe tomatoes. In a large stock pot heat 1/3 cup of olive oil. Add 1 heaping cup of chopped onion, 1/2 cup of chopped bell pepper, 1/2 cup of chopped carrot and 1/2 cup of chopped celery. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the tomatoes, one 6-ounce can of tomato paste, 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder, 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, 1/2 teaspoon oregano and 1 teaspoon salt. Bring to a boil then reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cool completely and ladle into quart size freezer bags, seal tightly, label and date then lay bags on their side in the

*continued on back page*



The bounty of the harvest and coming holidays provide inspiration to tie on your apron and create. Start with our butterscotch banana bread recipe (front cover). Then, whip up a hearty salad; this time of year does not mean the end of field greens when they include hearty toppings like roasted squash and toasted nuts. Learn all about lettuces (at right) and then switch up your salad selections in a snap.

It is not news that the price of healthy groceries can run higher than the price of packaged foods, but that doesn't mean it is impossible to shop and eat healthfully on a budget. Check out Food Fiction for affordable and nutritious food shopping suggestions.

We love veggie variety and so does the planet. The health and future of agriculture depends on biodiversity; check out the sustainability section to find out why. But, before taking a bite of that apple, make sure you know how to clean your produce properly.

Make sure to visit the back page to brush up on your Bs—three cool-weather-loving crops sure to please palates of all ages.

Eat well,

Anna Bullett, MS, RD  
CulinArt Culinary Development  
and Nutrition Specialist

Have a nutrition question for Anna?  
E-mail her at [nutrition@culinartinc.com](mailto:nutrition@culinartinc.com).  
If we use it in a future newsletter,  
lunch is on us.

# A Guide to Greens



*You* already know that greens are great. Leafy lettuces are high in fiber, contain the B vitamin folate, and are low in calories, so they help fill your plate and stomach without compromising on nutrition. But if the sound of a salad makes you shake your head and think “rabbit food,” maybe you just haven’t found the leaf for you. Grocery stores, restaurants, farmers markets and CulinArt cafés offer up more lettuce variety than ever, so if basic iceberg isn’t your thing, perhaps spicy arugula, buttery Boston or mild mache will get you going green. To clean greens, submerge leaves in water, swish around, lift out of the water with clean hands and spin dry in a salad spinner or pat with paper towels. Make a meal-worthy salad with toppings of a chopped hard boiled egg, colorful vegetables like carrots and tomatoes, and nuts or seeds for crunch. You can add lean protein or whole grains (quinoa!) for a super salad bowl. Also, a little fat helps the body absorb vitamins A, D, E and K so use 1 tablespoon of regular salad dressing or olive oil with salt and pepper. Check this green guide to find your preferred salad flavor profile, then hit the salad bar and heap on the healthy!

## Arugula

Also called rocket, arugula is a very popular Mediterranean green. It has a **peppery and slightly bitter taste** which makes it a great salad partner for **sweet fruits** and **creamy dairy toppings**. To further balance the bitter, mix with a more neutral salad green.

## Boston

Very similar to bibb, and also known as butterhead or butter lettuce, Boston is **smooth, and delicate**. Thanks to its **slightly sweet flavor** Boston lettuce barely needs salad dressing and is great paired with **spicy or hearty toppings**, like Thai-spiced beef or walnut chicken salad. Its round leaves are the perfect shape for burgers, sandwiches or as a wrap itself. Try using it to hold your taco or fajita fillings.

## Leaf Lettuce

Green and red leaf lettuces are a common salad green due to their **mild flavor and slight crunch**. Leaf lettuce can be cut into ribbons or simply ripped into small pieces for an easy-to-eat salad. Leaf lettuce pairs well with **citrus**, such as orange segments, or **lemon dressing** and provides a perfect canvas for tuna salad or taco salad with salsa and black beans.

## Romaine

Crunchy and stiff, Romaine is most famous as the main ingredient in traditional Caesar salad. Although the middle rib is slightly bitter, the leaves are **neutral in flavor** and go great when paired with **hearty salad toppings** such as avocado, chipotle-seasoned chicken, grilled corn or roasted chickpeas.

## Spinach

Baby spinach is better than full-grown spinach for salads. While the flavor is still **bolder** than some lettuces, the middle rib is soft and easy-to-eat. Tender baby spinach is a great addition to salad green blends or can stand on its own with **other strong flavors**, such as strawberries and blue cheese or roasted garlic and toasted nuts. Baby spinach can also be tossed with warm dressing or warm toppings, cooking it ever-so-slightly, releasing even more flavor.

## Mache

Sometimes called lamb’s lettuce or corn salad, mache is **mild, sweet and very delicate**. Mache works best when combined with **other more bitter greens or solo** with only a light dressing of oil and vinegar since any heavy salad toppings will crush the fragile leaves. A handful of mache leaves are excellent atop a piece of grilled fish or tossed with fresh herbs and grape tomatoes.

# Food fiction?

## Healthy food is more expensive than junk food.

Yes. And no. The first and simplest step to low-cost healthy eating is to purchase food as close to its original form as possible and cook at home. A bag of dried beans is one of the least expensive and highest yielding products in the grocery store and it packs protein, fiber and iron. Canned tomatoes often go on sale and have more lycopene than fresh tomatoes. Pork remains one of the most affordable animal proteins on the market. And, a whole chicken, which can feed a family, costs less than frozen, breaded, packaged chicken tenders. Shopping produce in-season and perusing circulars for sales can also help stock your kitchen with healthy selections that don't break the bank. When pushing a cart through the grocery store it can be shocking to realize soda costs less than milk, but remember: Food manufacturers are mostly in the business of selling processed food and have built large infrastructures over many years to ensure that high-calorie, high-saturated-fat, high-sodium, low-nutrient foods are readily available. Additionally, the more pastries and pop people purchase, the lower the price. However, that low price is a false low, because the long-term effects of a diet high in calories, sodium and saturated fat and low in nutrients results later in high-cost health ailments like diabetes and heart disease. According to the CDC, American medical care costs associated with obesity totaled \$147 billion dollars in 2008.

**Bottom Line: Cooking from scratch with whole, fresh foods and shopping wisely may cost more at checkout, but can certainly save you money in the long term.**



# Healthy home

## wash produce



You may want to forgo giving produce a bath, especially when grocery stores display vibrant towers of brilliant hues with no visible dirt. Remember, though, raw does not mean ready-to-eat, as the country realized a few years ago when serious food-borne illness outbreaks were traced back to raw spinach. Any fruit or vegetable that travels from harvester to produce worker to grocery store bin to cashier needs to be washed, even if you are going to cook it, because cooking temps are not always high enough to completely kill bacteria. Also, it is a good idea to wash right before you are about to eat or cook, as washing and then storing can lead to faster spoilage.

🏠 Cold running water and a good rubbing with a brush is best for produce with edible rinds. Even fruits with inedible rinds need a scrubbing as your knife can drag outside particles (bacteria, soil, wax, pesticides) through the fruit to the flesh. Lettuce, herbs and other leafy vegetables should be separated, submerged in cold water, sloshed around to loosen dirt, then lifted out and spun (salad spinner) or air dried.

🏠 Produce washes and detergents are not regulated by the FDA and may leave trace amounts on your food that could be ingested, so best to stick with running water and good old-fashioned elbow grease!

## Sustainability: Be Botanically Biodiverse

If you are still not sold on increasing your fruit and veggie intake for your own goodness, then how about doing it to promote botanic biodiversity? Say what? Botanic biodiversity in agriculture means growing and harvesting a variety of different types of each plant. Many farms grow just one type of corn, one kind of soybean, one species of tomato. In the short term, this might be fine because the farmer knows that people like a certain kind of plant and it will sell well. Or the farmer knows that a food company needs a particular corn to make its cereal or crackers. However, it also means that customers might not get the chance to enjoy other types of corn, fruits or vegetables. Did you know that some varieties of apples are actually pink inside? Have you ever had a purple potato or white eggplant? When farmers do not plant different types of seeds each year that yield various plants, the seeds may be lost over the years and eventually certain species of vegetables, fruits and flowers may become extinct. If a farmer only plants one type of tomato and a certain bug eats all of the crop then everything will be wiped out. But if a farmer grows a variety of tomatoes, the bug may only attack a certain species and the farmer can still sell the survivors. Plant diversity also promotes soil health and helps maintain a balanced ecosystem. Strive to support local farmers who grow heirloom seeds and seek out interesting veggie varieties for you and your family. Look for cauliflower in vibrant yellows and purples; reach for the ugliest tomatoes available; try different flavors of apples and pears. Become a more adventurous eater and help protect the earth's ecosystem while expanding your palate.



## PRESERVING the Garden Harvest *continued*

freezer. Defrost in the refrigerator when ready to eat and use within one year.

**PICKLED CARROTS** Peel and trim stems off of 2 pounds of baby carrots with tops. Place in a shallow, clean glass container, or in a canning jar. In a small pot, combine 2 2/3 cups cider vinegar, 2 cups water, 2 cups sugar, 2 teaspoons onion powder, 1 tablespoon mustard seeds, 1 tablespoon salt, and for a spicy version 2 teaspoons crushed red pepper flakes and/or whole mini chili peppers. Bring to a boil. Once the liquid boils, pour over the carrots, completely covering. Cool completely then cover the container and refrigerate for at least 4 days. Serve carrots for up to 2 weeks.

**FREEZER PESTO** Place the cleaned, dried leaves from 2 large bunches of basil in a food processor, add 3 cloves of minced garlic, 1/2 cup of olive oil, 1/2 cup of toasted walnuts (or pine nuts, hazelnuts or almonds), 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper and process until smooth, adding more oil, salt and pepper to taste. Spoon into an ice cube tray and freeze 12 to 24 hours. Remove from ice cube tray and place pesto cubes in freezer bags, label, date and tightly seal. To defrost simply add frozen cubes to pan during cooking or defrost in a small bowl in the refrigerator. Use within 6 months.

## What To Eat Right Now Food for Thought: Bring on the Bs...

Bursting with nutrients and flavor, broccoli, beets, and butternut squash are cold-weather-loving vegetables ready to play a starring role on your dinner table. Now is peak season for these vegetables in the Northern United States, so seek out local options at grocery stores and farmers markets and add these beautiful “Bs” to your next buffet.

**broccoli** A relative of cabbage and kale, and an excellent source of vitamin C and calcium, tree-like broccoli florets have experienced a rise in palate popularity, possibly because many home cooks now blanch or steam this green wonder-food until al dente. When autumn hits, broccoli is best, so bag up a bunch with firm stalks and compact heads, then use within two to three days of purchase. For the best broccoli, plunge into boiling water for just one minute; when bright green, remove with a slotted spoon and immediately submerge in ice water to stop cooking; eat as is or saute in stir fries or salads.

**beets** This lusciously sweet round root is a staple of the season thanks to its long shelf life in cool, dry places. Beets come in dazzling crimson, gold and stripes; vibrant, rich colors in fruits and vegetables often indicate the presence of great antioxidants and nutrients and these little beauties are no exception. Beets boast betalains and polyphenols—both powerful antioxidants—and are a good source of vitamin C, iron, magnesium, fiber, folate, potassium and manganese. Great with goat cheese and delish roasted with tarragon, sea salt and balsamic, beets are easier to prepare than their gnarly exterior lets on. Roasting is not only the tastiest way to prepare beets, it is also the best way to keep hands from turning red. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Scrub any dirt off of beets, trim ends, and cut extra large beets in half. Place on a sheet of tinfoil and drizzle with olive oil. Fold beets into a packet, crimping edges and sealing in the heat. Roast for 1 hour or until fork tender (note: smaller beets will cook faster). Allow to cool and then slip skins off with hands or a paper towel. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and serve as a side, atop a salad, with other roasted roots, braised fennel and onions as a main, or just plain solo.

**butternut squash** Arguably the tastiest member of the gourd family, butternut is ready to grace the dinner table as a smooth pumpkin-like vegetable side or shine in entrees such as butternut baked macaroni and cheese or cumin-spiced butternut and chickpea curry. Free of fat or cholesterol and very low in sodium, butternut is a good source of vitamin E, the B vitamins thiamin, niacin, B6 and folate, and the minerals calcium, and magnesium. Butternut is also a very good source of vitamin A—vital for excellent eyesight—along with vitamin C and potassium. While its size may be daunting, butternut flesh gives in easy to a peeler and is halved quickly with a large, sharp knife. Scoop seeds out with a spoon then chop. Perfect boiled or baked, butternut tastes equally wonderful mashed or mixed into pasta and rice dishes or cubed, roasted and tossed with arugula, toasted pine nuts and pomegranate seeds for a hearty fall salad.