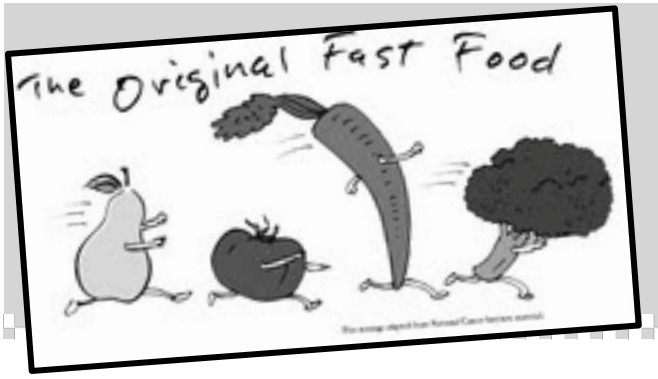

What Incredible Choices

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12-A

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables on a Budget

You often hear the claim that "*it cost more to eat healthy*." However, smart shoppers know how to plan ahead and how to buy produce in season and on sale. Here's how you can eat well on your food budget.

Plan menus ahead of time.

Planning ahead is the best way to save money on any food budget, as well as the best way to get your family the nutrition they need. Take a few minutes on the weekend to plan meals for the week, including the fruits and vegetables that your family likes to eat.

Plan around produce that goes a long way.

Buy a 2-pound bag of carrots. Cut half into sticks for snacks and salads. Use the other half as cooked carrots and put leftovers into vegetable soup. Buy a large bag of fall apples. Save some for snacks, bake some, and cook up some applesauce with the others.

Buy fruits and vegetables in season.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are less expensive in season because more are available. They usually taste better too! The produce from farmers' markets and farm stands is always in season. And, because it is farm-fresh when you buy it, it will often last longer.

Buy fruits and vegetables on sale.

Often, in-season produce is on sale. Other times, fruits and vegetables are "loss leaders," designed to get you into that store. Before you start shopping, pick up a weekly sale flyer at the front of the store – and see how the sale produce fits into your weekly menu.

Buy extra when it makes sense.

When your favorite fruits and vegetables are on sale, buy extra. You can freeze them or make a meal to be frozen for a busy night. But don't buy more than you can use or you'll be tossing money in the garbage when the produce goes bad.

How can you find a fresh vegetable or fruit bargain this week?

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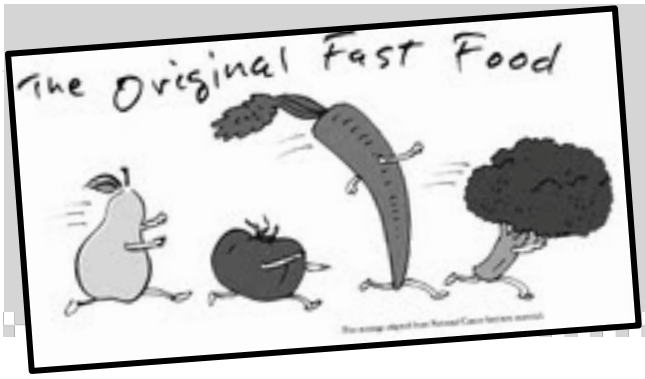

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12-B

PINEAPPLE

Pineapple images are carved into ancient ruins of Central America.

HOW TO CHOOSE

- Choose fruit with dark green leaves; avoid those with dry looking leaves.
- Check fruit (esp. bottom) for soft or dark spots.

HOW TO STORE

- Serve fresh pineapple as soon as possible after purchase.
- Refrigerate cut fruit in airtight container for 2-3 days.

NUTRITION FACTS

- Tangy, sweet pineapples are a good source of vitamin C. Like most other fruits, they are also fat-free and cholesterol-free.

Fun ways for your family to enjoy the sweet tanginess of fresh tropical pineapples

- Pineapple slices make a terrific fruit snack. Cut into pieces, it goes great in yogurt or cottage cheese.
- Chopped pineapple is a perfect addition to an entrée salad with chicken or fish.
- Fresh pineapple slices or pieces also make a zesty addition to stir-fried dishes and as a pizza topping.
- For a real treat, grill pineapple until golden (drizzle with a little oil before cooking).

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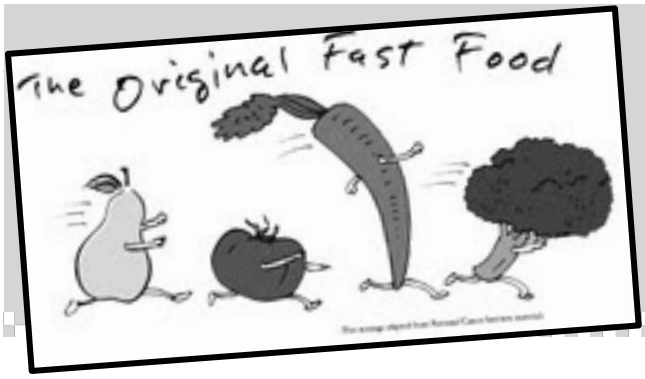

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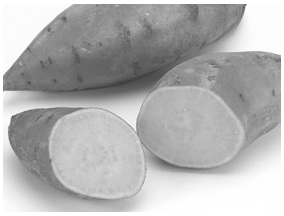
12-C

SWEET POTATO

(May be labeled as yams.)



True African yams are usually found only in specialty markets.

HOW TO CHOOSE

- Choose firm, small-to-medium tubers with smooth skin.
- Avoid soft spots, blemishes, and cracks, as well as moldy areas.

HOW TO STORE

- Store tubers in a cool place away from sunlight, like in a drawer or cupboard.
- Sweet potatoes will last for 3-5 weeks or longer.

NUTRITION FACTS

- These tasty super nutritious tubers are excellent sources of vitamins A and C, and good sources of fiber and potassium.

Easy ways for your family to enjoy the delicious flavor of sweet potatoes

- Cook sweet potatoes in same ways as white varieties (baked, boiled, and mashed).
- Baked sweet potato fries are a real treat! Cut into strips, brush with oil, bake at 400 F for 35 to 45 minutes.
- Substitute sweet potatoes for regular spuds in any potato salad recipe.
- Grill ‘em up! Cut tubers in thick rounds, rub with olive oil, and cook on grill. Drizzle with fresh lime juice.

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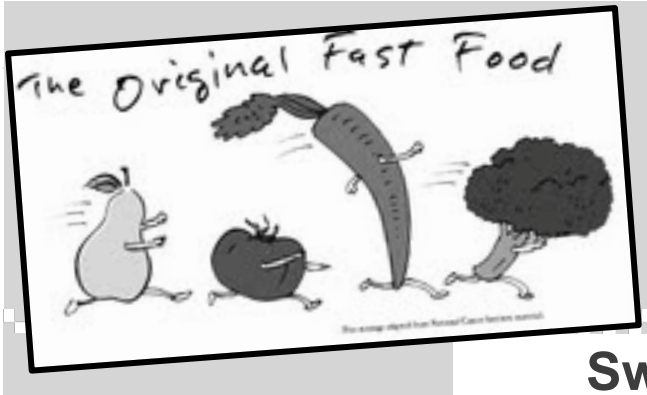

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12-D

Sweet Potatoes with Maple Syrup

This recipe is a simple substitute for the candied sweet potatoes often served at holiday dinners. It is delicious all year with chicken, turkey, and pork. Leftovers can be patted into small pancakes, fried in a little oil, and served for breakfast.

NUTRITION ANALYSIS

Serving Size: ½ cup
Calories: 114
Total Carb: 23.5 g
Dietary Fiber: 2.5 g
Protein: 1.5 g
Total Fat: 1.5 g
Calories from Fat: 12%
Saturated Fat: 0.8 g
Trans Fat: 0.0 g
Sodium: 184 mg

INGREDIENTS:

- 5 medium sweet potatoes
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup (or molasses)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Black pepper, to taste
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg (or ground cardamom)
- 1 tablespoon salted butter or margarine
-

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375° F and place oven rack in middle position.
2. Scrub sweet potatoes well, place on baking sheet and bake for 35 to 45 minutes until very soft to the squeeze. Baking time will differ depending on freshness and size of the sweet potatoes.
3. Remove potatoes from oven; cool briefly to handling temperature. Cut both ends off each potato and carefully peel each potato.
4. Place in a deep bowl and mash with potato masher, large fork, or back of a large spoon. Season with maple syrup, salt, black pepper, and ground nutmeg or cardamom, mixing well.
5. If necessary, reheat briefly in microwave. Scoop into serving bowl and top with butter.

YIELD: 4 cups

SOURCE:
This is a Fruits & Veggies – More Matters® recipe. It meets the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's strict nutrition guidelines as a healthy recipe. Find more recipes and tips at **www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/**

IDEAS/SUBSTITUTIONS:

- Use honey or orange juice concentrate in place of the syrup.
- For different flavors, substitute other spices for nutmeg. Options include ground cinnamon, cumin, ginger, or a little chili powder.
- Several fruit flavors pair perfectly with sweet potatoes. Cooked apple, pear, or pineapple (about a cup) can be added before mashing.

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