

Extension

June 2012 Newsletter

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Grilling Summer Vegetables

By Glenda Wentworth Family & Consumer Science Eagle County

The warm weather is here and many of us are inspired to grill outdoors. Adding vegetables to the grill is one way to make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

Always start with a clean grill. Scrub vegetables before cutting or slicing them.

Cut or slice vegetables into uniform pieces so they will cook in the same amount of time. They should be large enough so the pieces do not fall through the grill. Small pieces may need to be cooked in a basket or skewered together.

Vegetables that are high in water content do well on the grill. Examples include asparagus, peppers, mushrooms, eggplant, summer squash, okra, onions, tomatoes and corn-on-the-cob. More dense vegetables should be pre-cooked (either by boiling or microwaving) so that they are softened to avoid burning on the outside while the denser inside is cooking. These include vegetables such as potatoes and carrots.

Large vegetables can be cooked directly on a clean grill grate. Lightly brush the veggies with olive oil before grilling to help seal in moisture. This also provides flavor and prevents them from sticking to the grill.

A marinade can increase flavor. Blend one-half cup of olive oil with one-fourth cup of red wine vinegar. Place on vegetable kabobs about 15 minutes before grilling.

Tools to make grilling vegetables easier include a metal basket that smaller veggies can be grilled in. Metal, wooden, or bamboo skewers can be used for vegetable kebabs. Utensils such as tongs or spatulas should be used; but avoid cross-contamination and use utensils for vegetables only and not to turn raw meat. Vegetables usually take about 15 – 20 minutes to cook on the grill over medium heat. They should be tender but not mushy and usually only need to be turned once.

Vegetables can also be grilled in aluminum foil. Place a large sheet of aluminum foil on the counter and spray with cooking spray. Spread the veggies on top and cover with another sheet of aluminum foil. Then roll the two pieces of aluminum foil into each other to make a pouch. This essentially steams the vegetables while grilling.



Let's Talk:

Your children will love to make their own vegetable foil packet. Show them how to clean the vegetables, peel them (if needed) and cut them up (if age appropriate). Then let them choose what vegetables they want in their foil packet. Write their name in permanent marker on the foil. After grilling, they will want to eat their own foil packet of vegetables.

Recipe for Health: Grilled Vegetables

Ingredients

- 3 Sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced about ½" thick
- 2 T. Vegetable oil
- 2 Garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 3 Corn on the cob, cut into 2-inch sections
- 1 Eggplant, sliced about ½" thick
- 12 Green onions, trimmed

Directions

1. Place sweet potatoes in a microwave-safe dish. Microwave on high for 3 minutes.
2. In a large bowl, mix oil and garlic. Add sweet potatoes, corn, eggplant, and onions, Stir well.
3. Wrap in foil, making a packet
4. Place packet directly on the grill.
5. Cook 10 minutes, turning packet twice, until vegetables are tender.

