



July 2021 Newsletter

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Fruits of Summer

Sheila Gains, Family and Consumer Science Agent, Arapahoe County Extension



Juicy, sweet and refreshing. That is a perfect description of summer fruit. Fresh summer fruits, from apricots to watermelon, are a great source of water, fiber and various vitamins and minerals. So when taking a break from working in the hot sun, a hike or other summer activity, reach for a piece of fruit for a refreshing burst of energy.

Some whole fruits, like a peach, are packaged by nature in the perfect portion for one person to enjoy. Others, like watermelon, are meant for cutting and sharing. While fresh fruits are most often eaten raw and unadorned, they can also be used as an ingredient in sauces, salsas, salads, soups, beverages (juice, cooler or smoothie), snacks, sandwiches or desserts. Consider all the ways you can prepare fruit; sliced, diced, pureed, stewed, sautéed, or frozen, etc. The possibilities for fruit based recipes are endless.

When you purchase Colorado grown fruit you are supporting local growers. Locally grown produce is often at its peak of freshness, best flavor and best price. Colorado fruits that are in-season in July and August include apricots, cantaloupe, cherries, grapes, honeydew melon, peaches, pears, plums, strawberries and watermelon. For a state calendar for what produce is in season visit the [Colorado Produce Calendar](#).

Know what to look for when selecting fresh fruit:

Apricots: Should be a light peach-apricot color, smell like an apricot and be plump. Avoid pale yellow or green, very hard or soft or shriveled ones. Apricots will continue to ripen (sweeten and soften) on the counter or in a brown bag. Apricots are a good source of Vitamins A and C.

Cantaloupe: A ripe cantaloupe should smell like a cantaloupe and the blossom end should yield to gentle pressure. Vine ripened cantaloupes have a depression where the stem was attached. Avoid cantaloupes that look shriveled, bruised or have punctures or cracks. Cantaloupe is a good source of Vitamins A and C.

Cherries: Purchase cherries that are plump with firm, smooth and brightly colored skins. Quality cherries are sold with the green stems attached. Avoid mushy, shriveled and dull cherries. Cherries are a good source of fiber and Vitamin C.



Honeydew Melon: Look for melons that have creamy, yellow rinds and smell like a honeydew. Honeydew provides a good source of Vitamin C.

Peaches: Peaches are ripe when the background color (backside of the fruit) has changed from green to white or yellow. A ripe peach will smell like a peach, even if it still a little firm to the touch. They will continue to ripen on the counter or in a brown bag. Peaches are a good source of Vitamins A and C.

(Continued on page 2.)

(Continued from page 1.)

Pears: Pears are not picked fully ripe, but they will continue to ripen on the counter. Select pears that still have their stems and that yield slightly at their neck. Pears are a good source of vitamin C

Plums: Plums come in many colors, so pick them when they have a slight give when you gently squeeze them. They will continue to ripen on the counter or faster in a paper bag. Refrigerate when ripe. Plums are a good source of vitamin C.

Watermelon Choose a symmetrical watermelon that is heavy for its size. The belly of a ripe watermelon will be cream-colored instead of white or green. The rind should look dull. Watermelon is a good source of Vitamins A and C.

Let's Talk



Let children know that reaching for a piece of fresh fruit, a fruit popsicle or fruit smoothie can help them recover their energy quicker than a candy bar or other high sugar snack. Discuss how part of their recovery is about replacing fluids (water) and important vitamins and minerals. Fresh fruits pack carbohydrates, water, fiber and nutrients into every bite. Have children help you experiment with ways to incorporate more fresh fruits into your summer snacks and meals. Their creativity might surprise you!

Recipe for Health

Fresh Peach Salsa - Serve with baked pita chips

Ingredients:

- 1 cup chopped ripe fresh peaches
- 1/2 red sweet pepper (finely chopped, about 1/2 cup)
- 1/4 red onion (finely chopped, about 1/4 cup)
- 1 Tablespoon fresh cilantro (finely chopped)
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Wash hands and food contact surfaces with soap and water.
2. Use a vegetable brush or hands to wash and rub produce under running water.
3. Peach skins do not need to be removed.
4. Chop peaches, sweet pepper, onion and cilantro.
5. In a medium bowl, stir together all ingredients.
6. Cover and refrigerate at least an hour or until ready to use.



Important Information For Families:

If you know youth 18 and under who could benefit from a free meal, please let them know about the Summer Food Service Program. It provides free breakfast, lunch, snack and supper to youth in Colorado all summer long. An important part of connecting more youth and families to summer meals is raising awareness of the program and where to locate a summer meal site (text Food or Comida to 877-877 or visit kidsfoodfinder.org).

Helping families increase physical activity and enjoy healthy foods...