

Fabulous Foods for Fall

Along with cooler temperatures and changing colors, fall brings an abundance of nutritious foods with it. Eating seasonally can help you save money since fruits and veggies are less expensive during their peak growing times. Not only that, but seasonal produce tastes better than other times of the year. Here are some delicious and nutritious foods to include in your diet this fall.

Squash

Winter squash comes in many varieties, each offering a distinct flavor. Varieties include acorn, butternut, buttercup, banana, spaghetti, and Hubbard. Unlike its summer counterparts, the skin of winter squash is hard and inedible. It is more nutritious and richer in vitamins than summer squash. Depending on the variety, a half cup of squash has 40 to 60 calories and 3 to 5 grams of fiber and is a good source of potassium, vitamins A and C and folate. **Include More in Your Diet:** Winter squash goes well in pies, soups, stews and sauces or mixed with grains and beans. Try serving squash cooked and mashed with a drizzle of maple syrup, cinnamon, ginger or allspice or give it a spicy kick with a dusting of chili powder. Try adding a cup of roasted squash to your favorite waffle recipe or serve cooked spaghetti squash like you would serve pasta - top it with olive oil, tomatoes and basil.

Sweet Potatoes

One of the best vegetables around, sweet potatoes are full of vitamin C, beta carotene, potassium, iron and fiber. This veggie is particularly high in beta carotene, which can lower the risk for cancer, improve immunity and protect the skin from damage. **Include More in Your Diet:** Sweet potatoes are very versatile and can be used in entrée recipes, side dishes and even desserts. Try a baked sweet potato topped with a little maple syrup, puree and add to soups as a thickener, or slice sweet potatoes into wedges, salt and bake at 425°F for 15 minutes for a guilt-free treat.

Apples

An apple a day really does keep the doctor away! With the peel, apples are nutrition powerhouses. The peel contains most of the fiber, specifically pectin, which can help lower cholesterol. The peel also gets credit for providing quercetin, an antioxidant that is good for heart health. An apple with the peel has only 80 calories and about 4 grams of fiber, so it fills you up without filling you out. There is a large variety of apples available this time of year, with each offering their own unique flavor and texture – from sweet to tart and soft and smooth to crisp and crunchy. **Include More in Your Diet:** Eat them alone or with peanut butter or string cheese for a healthy snack, chop and add to oatmeal, chicken salad or lettuce salad, puree and serve with pork chops or make a savory dessert.

Pumpkin

Pumpkins are for more than carving – they are packed with nutrition! Pumpkin is low in

calories and fat and a good source of fiber, iron and beta carotene. If you want to save time and money, buy canned pumpkin rather than the actual pumpkin, just be sure to pick “100% pure pumpkin” instead of pumpkin pie mix, which is much higher in calories and fat. **Include More in Your Diet:** Go beyond pumpkin pie! Toast the seeds, add to soup or chili, or spice up vanilla pudding. You can liven up mashed potatoes by stirring in 1/2 cup of canned 100% pure pumpkin into each cup of spuds. Give breakfast a boost with pumpkin pancakes or waffles and light maple syrup.

Pears

Pears are favorite among many, and it's no wonder since they are good and good for you! One medium pear boasts 5 grams of fiber and only 100 calories. Pears ripen after they are picked, giving them great texture, juiciness and a sweet flavor. They can range in color from golden yellow to green to red-orange. **Include More in Your Diet:** Add sliced pears to a lettuce salad, pair with low-fat cheese for a filling snack, add thin slices to your grilled cheese sandwich, include in a relish or chutney, bake crisps or cobblers or simply substitute pears for apples in a recipe.