

## Best Buys: Vegetables and Fruit

Healthy eating starts with shopping for a variety of healthy foods from the four food groups in **Canada's Food Guide**. Shopping is an important skill for everyone to learn. By planning ahead, you can save money, time and get better food value for your dollar.

Vegetables and fruit are a great way for your body to get vitamins, minerals, fibre, and other substances that are important for good health. Choose dark green and orange coloured vegetables and fruit more often for even more nutrients.

**Canada's Food Guide** recommends:



- Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.
- Enjoy vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.
- Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.

### Vegetables and Fruit:

#### Recommended number of *Food Guide* servings per day

Gender	Age	Recommended Number of <i>Food Guide</i> Servings per Day
Girls and Boys	2–3 years	4
Girls and Boys	4–8 years	5
Girls and Boys	9–13 years	6
Females	14–18 years	7
Females	19–50 years	7–8
Females	51+ years	7
Males	14–18 years	8
Males	19–50 years	8–10
Males	51+ years	7



## One Food Guide Serving is:

1 medium-sized vegetable or fruit	1 cup (250 mL) salad
½ cup (125 mL) raw, cooked, frozen or canned vegetable or fruit	
½ cup (125 mL) 100% vegetable or fruit juice	¼ cup (60 mL) dried fruit



## Shopping tips

### Fresh

- Buy locally grown produce when in season for a good price.
- Shop at local farmers' stands or markets to save even more money.
- Some vegetables and fruit are a good buy all year round. (e.g. apples, bananas, cabbage, carrots, potatoes and spinach)
- It is less expensive to buy bags of produce, such as apples, oranges and potatoes, instead of single pieces. Share with a friend or be sure that you can use them all before they spoil.
- Visit pick-your-own farms. Freeze or can if you can't eat it all before it starts to spoil.
- Grow your own vegetables. You can get started with a small garden or window box.

- Join a food-buying club to help lower costs. For information on the Good Food Box call FoodShare at 416-363-6411. For information on the Afri-Can Food Basket call 416-248-5639.

### Frozen and Canned

- Frozen and canned vegetables and fruit are low cost and nutritious.
- Cook vegetables from frozen; this will help keep the nutrients.
- Try not to cover vegetables in a lot of breading or sauces. These are higher in fat.
- Look at the price of canned products using the unit price (price/100mL) on the store shelf sticker to find the best buy.
- Save money by buying "No Name" or store brands.



## Best Buys...When in Season

The following chart indicates the main season for Ontario harvest. The dots indicate optimum availability and peak "pick your own" season.

Fruits/Vegetables	June				July				August				September				October			
Apples																				
Blueberries																				
Cherries																				
Grapes																				
Peaches																				
Pears																				
Strawberries																				
Beans (wax)																				
Broccoli																				
Carrots																				
Cauliflower																				
Peas																				
Squash																				
Tomatoes																				

Source: Foodland Ontario

## Juice

- Frozen concentrated juices are the best buy.
- Don't buy fruit "punches", "beverages" and "drinks". They only have a small amount of fruit juice, if any. Look for the words '100% juice' on the label.
- A juice box costs more per serving than juice bought in a larger container. For lunches use a small thermos or bottle to bring juice from home.

## Value For Your Food Dollar

- Store vegetables and fruit separately to prevent them from spoiling.
- Use up fresh vegetables and fruit first. Then go to canned and frozen products.
- Choose smaller sized fruit for children or cut fruit into smaller pieces.



- Use leftover vegetables in a stir fry or add to a tossed salad.
- Add ripe fruit to cereal or mix into batter for baked goods (e.g., muffins, bread).
- Freeze fruit that is over-ripe. Use later in baking or in fruit shakes.

## Quick and Easy Stir Fry

*Cooking time: 15 minutes*

### Ingredients:

2 cups	cooked brown rice	500 mL
2 tbsp	vegetable oil	30 mL
½ cup	chicken or vegetable stock, low-sodium	125 mL
2 tbsp	soy sauce, low sodium	30 mL
1 tbsp	cornstarch	15 mL
1 tsp	white sugar	5 mL
¾ lb	chicken, beef or pork, thinly sliced	350 g
2	garlic cloves, minced	2
1	medium onion, thinly sliced	1
4 cups	assorted vegetables cut into bite-sized pieces	750 mL

*Makes 4 servings*

*Source: Cooking Healthy Together, Toronto Public Health, 1998*

### Nutrition Information

Per serving (359g): 340 calories, 10 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 50 mg cholesterol, 300 mg sodium, 38 g carbohydrate, 4 g fibre, 7 g sugars, 25 g protein, 0% DV vitamin A, 380% DV vitamin C, 4% DV calcium, 8% DV iron.



*in the kitchen*



### Directions:

1. Prepare rice according to the directions on the package. Mix together the stock, soy sauce, cornstarch, and sugar. Set aside.
2. In a wok or large frying pan, heat 1 tbsp of the oil over medium heat. Add meat and stir fry for 4 to 5 minutes until cooked through. Remove and set aside.
3. Add remaining oil and heat as before. Add the garlic and onion and stir fry for 1 minute. Add the other vegetables starting with the harder ones. Stir fry 1 to 2 minutes between each group of vegetables.
4. Add the meat and sauce to the stir fry. Continue to cook until the sauce is clear and thickened. Serve over rice immediately.

## Apple Crisp

Cooking time: 40 minutes



### Ingredients:

4–5 cups	large baking apples, thinly peeled, cored and sliced	1–1 ¼ L
½ cup	rolled oats	125 mL
¼ cup	whole wheat flour	50 mL
½ cup	packed brown sugar	125 mL
½ tsp	ground cinnamon	2 mL
¼ cup	non-hydrogenated margarine	50 mL

Makes 6 servings

Source: *Invite Us Along*, Toronto Public Health, 2004

### Nutrition Information

Per serving (136g): 220 calories, 7 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 100 mg sodium, 40 g carbohydrate, 3 g fibre, 29 g sugars, 2 g protein, 0% DV vitamin A, 6% DV vitamin C, 4% DV calcium, 6% DV iron.

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. Place the apples in a medium-sized baking dish.
3. In a large bowl, mix the rolled oats, flour, brown sugar, cinnamon and margarine until combined. Sprinkle over top of the apples.
4. Cover and bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes.
5. Remove, uncover and bake for an additional 10 minutes or until apples are tender. Serve warm.

## Veggie Fries

Cooking time: 20 minutes



### Ingredients:

2	medium potatoes	2
1	sweet potato	1
1	parsnip	1
2	carrots	2
2 tbsp	vegetable oil	30 mL
¼ tsp	each salt and pepper	1 mL
2 tbsp	fresh parsley, cilantro, rosemary or dill, chopped (optional)	30 mL

Makes 4 to 6 servings

### Nutrition Information

Per serving (113g): 150 calories, 8 g fat, 0.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 100 mg sodium, 18 g carbohydrate, 3 g fibre, 3 g sugars, 2 g protein, 130% DV vitamin A, 20% DV vitamin C, 2% DV calcium, 4% DV iron.

### Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C). Lightly oil 2 baking sheets.
2. Scrub, peel and cut vegetables in wedges, all about the same size. Place in a bowl, add the remaining oil and toss to coat vegetables.
3. Spread vegetables in an even layer over a baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes until crisp and lightly brown. Turn the fries over half way through baking.
4. Sprinkle lightly with salt, pepper and fresh herbs (if using). Serve immediately.

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