



Fit Business Tips of the Month

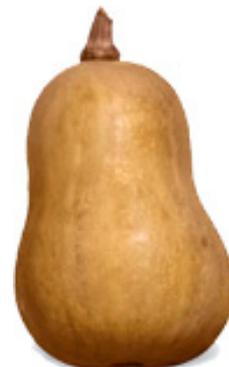
NOVEMBER

It's that time of year again when we stop to give thanks for the abundance of fruits and vegetables that are available year round in California. In this issue, you'll get tips for gathering and tracking your family's health history and ideas for using fruits and vegetables as a way to control how much you eat. This month's fruit and vegetable of the month – cranberries and butternut squash – are great choices to make this Thanksgiving a healthy one.

QUICK AND SIMPLE TIPS

Family History: Knowing your family's health history is an important part of keeping yourself healthy. Your grandfather's high cholesterol, your mother's type 2 diabetes, and your sister's breast cancer all provide a glimpse into health problems which may effect you. As you sit down for your Thanksgiving feast, ask your family members about their health and the health of other blood-relatives. Be sure to discuss what you find out with your doctor so that together you can come up with a plan for prevention and find any health risks before they become a serious problem. A fun and easy way to create a picture of your family's health can be accessed for free at www.hhs.gov/familyhistory.

Portion Control: Want to control your portions during Thanksgiving dinner? Start off with an appetizer of fresh fruit and/or veggies. Fruits and vegetables provide lots of bulk from fiber and water, but for their size, only a small number of calories. Their bulky nature makes you feel full quickly and will help you to eat less later in the meal.





November's Fruit of the Month

CRANBERRIES

Fun Fact

Cranberries are one of only three major fruits that are native to North America. Did you know that this small berry was most often used by Native Americans for its ability to draw poison from arrow wounds?

Health Benefits

Cranberries are a great source of vitamin C and rich in fiber. Including cranberries in your low-fat diet along with a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables may help you control high blood pressure, slow some effects of aging, and help to lower your risk of heart disease and some cancers.

Selection

Good, ripe cranberries will bounce, which is why they are nicknamed "bounceberries." They should be shiny and plump and range in color from bright, light red to dark red. Shriveled or soft berries or those with brown spots should be avoided.

Storage

Store fresh cranberries in a tightly-sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator. Be sure to keep an eye on them, because if one starts getting soft and begins to decay, the others will quickly turn bad also. If you plan to store fresh cranberries for more than a few days, be sure to sort out the soft ones first. Cranberries are a hearty little fruit and can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 months. Also, you can enjoy cranberries year round if you store them in an airtight bag in the freezer.

Preparation Ideas

Cranberries are usually too tart to be eaten raw, so most cranberries are cooked before they are served. If you are using frozen cranberries, do not thaw them before cooking, otherwise the fruit will break down and become mushy. Cranberries make great sauces and relishes, and also are yummy in baked goods.

FEATURED CRANBERRY RECIPE: CRANBERRY APPLE CRISP

Ingredients

- 1 nonstick cooking spray
- 5 cups thinly sliced apples (about 6 medium apples)
- 1 ½ cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ cup butter

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Lightly grease a 9-inch square baking pan with nonstick cooking spray.
3. Layer apples and cranberries in pan sprinkling with sugar as you layer.
4. Topping: Mix flour, brown sugar, and cinnamon. Work in butter until light and crumbly.
5. Sprinkle topping evenly over apples and cranberries.
6. Bake 45 minutes or until apples are tender.

Makes 9 servings.

Nutrition Information Per Serving

Calories 210, Carbohydrate 39g, Protein 1g, Total Fat 6g, Saturated Fat 2g, Cholesterol 15mg, Sodium 64mg, Dietary Fiber 3g

Recipe courtesy of the *National 5 a Day Program*.





November's Vegetable of the Month

BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Fun Fact

Butternut squash is in the family of winter squash, and best known for its sweet, golden orange flesh. Squash is native to North America and was one of the “Three Sisters” planted by Native Americans. The “Three Sisters” were the three main indigenous plants used for agriculture: corn, beans, and squash.

Health Benefits

Butternut squash is packed with Vitamin A and beta carotene and is a great source of fiber. Including butternut squash in your low-fat diet along with a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables will help you maintain good vision, strengthen your immune system, and help to lower your risk of heart disease and some cancers.

Selection

This bell-shaped squash is typically about 12 inches long and weighs between 2 to 4 pounds. Choose a butternut squash that has smooth, blemish-free skin and is heavy for its size. If the skin can be easily nicked or scraped with a fingernail, then it has been picked too early and its flavor will be compromised.

Storage

If stored in a cool place (55-60°F), whole butternut squash will stay fresh for up to 3 months. However, if you need to store your squash someplace cold, like in the refrigerator, be prepared to use it within 1 to 2 weeks, as it will spoil quickly. Squash that has been cut into pieces should be tightly wrapped, refrigerated, and used within a week. If you have left-over cooked or pureed squash, place it in an airtight container and freeze for later use as a side dish or to add flavor and color to soups.

Preparation Ideas

Butternut squash, unlike other winter squash, has a thin skin that is easy to remove with a vegetable peeler, making it easy to cut and prepare. Baking enhances its sweet, moist, and nutty flavors. Although butternut squash soup is a winter staple, this flavorful squash is also great in lasagna or roasted with a hint of butter and brown sugar.

FEATURED BUTTERNUT SQUASH RECIPE: CREAMY BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

Ingredients

2	pounds butternut squash, peeled and cut into chunks	¼	teaspoon cayenne pepper, or to taste
4	cups low-sodium, low-fat vegetable broth	1	nonstick cooking spray
1 ¼	cup nonfat sour cream	1	cup mushrooms
2	tablespoons butter	¼	cup chives, cut into 1-inch pieces
			pinch of salt and black pepper

Preparation

1. Combine the squash and vegetable broth in a saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat.
2. Reduce the heat to medium, and simmer for about 20 minutes or until the squash is very tender.
3. Let cool, and then puree the mixture in a blender. (You may prepare the recipe in advance up to this point; you can keep the mixture refrigerated in a covered container for up to 2 days.)
4. Return the puree to the saucepan and turn the heat to medium-low.
5. Stir in the nonfat sour cream along with the butter, salt and black pepper, and cayenne pepper. Cook and stir until heated through (do not boil). Keep warm over low heat.
6. Meanwhile, spray a skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Heat skillet over medium-high heat until hot, then sauté mushrooms, stirring, until golden brown, about 5 minutes. Serve the soup with sautéed mushrooms and chives.

Makes 8 servings.

Nutrition Information Per Serving

Calories 152, Carbohydrate 22g, Protein 6g, Total Fat 4g,
Saturated Fat 1g, Cholesterol 11mg, Sodium 174mg, Dietary Fiber 2g

Recipe courtesy of the *National 5 a Day Program*.

