MyPlate Nutrition Education Series: Liven Up Your Meals with Vegetables and Fruits¹

USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, with an Introduction by Linda B. Bobroff²

After introducing MyPlate in June 2011, USDA provided a series of one-page fact sheets to help consumers use the dietary advice of the Dietary Guidelines 2010. The USDA added new fact sheets in December 2011 and continued adding fact sheets in 2012, 2013, and 2014. These fact sheets are distributed by UF/IFAS Extension for Extension faculty, health professionals, and consumers.

This fact sheet is Liven Up Your Meals with Vegetables and Fruits, and it can be found on the following page.

Figure 1.
Credits: http://choosemyplate.gov

1. This document is FCS80046, one of a series of the Family, Youth and Community Sciences Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date May 2014. Visit the EDIS website at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu.

2. Linda B. Bobroff, PhD, RD, LD/N, professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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liven up your meals with vegetables and fruits

10 tips to improve your meals with vegetables and fruits

Discover the many benefits of adding vegetables and fruits to your meals. They are low in fat and calories, while providing fiber and other key nutrients. Most Americans should eat more than 3 cups—and for some, up to 6 cups—of vegetables and fruits each day. Vegetables and fruits don’t just add nutrition to meals. They can also add color, flavor, and texture. Explore these creative ways to bring healthy foods to your table.

1 fire up the grill
Use the grill to cook vegetables and fruits. Try grilling mushrooms, carrots, peppers, or potatoes on a kabob skewer. Brush with oil to keep them from drying out. Grilled fruits like peaches, pineapple, or mangos add great flavor to a cookout.

2 expand the flavor of your casseroles
Mix vegetables such as sauteed onions, peas, pinto beans, or tomatoes into your favorite dish for that extra flavor.

3 planning something Italian?
Add extra vegetables to your pasta dish. Slip some peppers, spinach, red beans, onions, or cherry tomatoes into your traditional tomato sauce. Vegetables provide texture and low-calorie bulk that satisfies.

4 get creative with your salad
Toss in shredded carrots, strawberries, spinach, watercress, orange segments, or sweet peas for a flavorful, fun salad.

5 salad bars aren’t just for salads
Try eating sliced fruit from the salad bar as your dessert when dining out. This will help you avoid any baked desserts that are high in calories.

6 get in on the stir-frying fun
Try something new! Stir-fry your veggies—like broccoli, carrots, sugar snap peas, mushrooms, or green beans—for a quick-and-easy addition to any meal.

7 add them to your sandwiches
Whether it is a sandwich or wrap, vegetables make great additions to both. Try sliced tomatoes, romaine lettuce, or avocado on your everyday sandwich or wrap for extra flavor.

8 be creative with your baked goods
Add apples, bananas, blueberries, or pears to your favorite muffin recipe for a treat.

9 make a tasty fruit smoothie
For dessert, blend strawberries, blueberries, or raspberries with frozen bananas and 100% fruit juice for a delicious frozen fruit smoothie.

10 liven up an omelet
Boost the color and flavor of your morning omelet with vegetables. Simply chop, saute, and add them to the egg as it cooks. Try combining different vegetables, such as mushrooms, spinach, onions, or bell peppers.

Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.