
















February 2018

FFVP



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ITEMS MAY CHANGE DUE TO AVAILABILITY				1  Star Fruit	2  Veggie Sweet Peppers	3
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STARFRUIT



- ❖ Starfruit is also known as carambola or five-corner fruit.
- ❖ The fruit grows on trees that are native to India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. Star fruit is common in the south of Asia, Australia and all of the islands around Australia.
- ❖ Starfruit is rich source of dietary fibers, vitamins C, B2, B6 and B9 and minerals such as phosphorus, potassium, zinc and iron. 100g of fruit contain only 31 calories.
- ❖ Because of insects and disease, whole carambolas cannot be taken into the USA. In the USA, star fruit is grown in Florida, Puerto Rico and Hawaii.
- ❖ The entire fruit is edible. It has texture like grapes. Taste resembles a blend of pineapple, plum and lemon. Star fruit tastes best ripe (yellow with a little green). It will also be brown on the five edges and feel hard. If the star fruit is overripe it will be yellow with brown spots. The flesh is crunchy, firm and extremely juicy.
- ❖ There are two varieties of starfruit: sweet and tart. The sweet variety can be consumed fresh or it can be used for the preparation of juices, cocktails, jams and sweet desserts. The tart variety is used as garnish and for the preparation of stews, curries, dishes made of poultry, fish and seafood.
- ❖ The fruit is about 2 to 6 inches in length and is an oval shape. It usually has five prominent longitudinal ridges, but in rare instances it can have as few as four or as many as eight. In cross section, it resembles a star. The skin is thin, smooth, and waxy and turns a light to dark yellow when ripe. The flesh is translucent and light yellow to yellow in color. Each fruit can have 10 to 12 flat light brown seeds about 0.25 to 0.5 in width and enclosed in gelatinous aril. Once removed from the fruit, they lose viability within a few days.
- ❖ Fruit and juice of starfruit help get rid of excess water from the body. They are also used in treatment of cough, jaundice, constipation and bacterial infections. Leaves and root are used in treatment of chickenpox, headache and ringworms.
- ❖ Starfruit is very high l vitamin C and is a good source of fiber. The fruit contains many other vitamins and minerals.
- ❖ Some caution is required if starfruit is consumed while on certain medications, and the fruit can be dangerous for those with kidney-related health issues.



SWEET PEPPERS

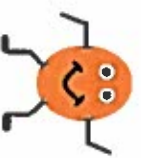
- ≈ The pepper plant is a member of the Solanaceae or "nightshade" family, which also includes tomatoes and potatoes.
- ≈ Peppers were originally from South and Central America and was introduced into Europe for the first time at the beginning of the 16th century. Peppers were named by Christopher Columbus and Spanish explorers who were searching for peppercorn plants to produce black pepper.
- ≈ Botanically, peppers are a fruit of Capsicum plants. However, in the culinary world, people recognize peppers as a vegetable.
- ≈ Nearly 2,000 varieties of pepper are cultivated worldwide. They are commonly grouped into two categories: hot (chili) peppers and sweet peppers.
- ≈ Sweet pepper plants offer sweet peppers that differ greatly in color, shape and size. Sweet peppers are often green or red in color, but sometimes also yellow, white, purple or black. Green sweet peppers start out green and are green when ripe. Red, yellow, orange, etc. sweet pepper start out green and then turn red, yellow, orange, etc. when ripe.
- ≈ Compared to green peppers, red peppers are known to have more vitamins and nutrients and contain the antioxidant lycopene.
- ≈ The inside of the sweet pepper is hollow and subdivided by partitions, to which the seeds are attached. The pulpy white inner cavity of the bell pepper is a rich source of flavonoids and can be eaten. The outside of sweet peppers have a very shiny skin.
- ≈ Major nutrients in sweet peppers are vitamin C, vitamin B6, Copper, vitamin K and manganese. Regular consumption of sweet pepper is recommended for the following health benefits: treatment of cancer, helps treat anemia, arthritis, improves bone density, epilepsy, Alzheimer's disease, digestive health, restless leg syndrome, prevents muscle cramps and maintains skin health.





KUMQUAT

- The kumquat is a tiny orange/yellow, football-shaped fruit native to Eastern Asia. Coming from China, kumquats have long been cultivated there and in Japan. They were introduced to Europe in 1846 by Robert Fortune, who was collector for the *London Horticultural Society*, and a short time later into North America.
- Kumquats were originally considered to part of the *Citrus* family, but in 1915, they were given their own genus, *Fortunella*. So technically, even though they look like oranges, they're not actually citrus fruit.
- The fruits can be eaten skin and all, but wash thoroughly before eating.
- They are like reverse oranges – the peel is sweet and the pulp inside is sour.
- Kumquats aren't just eaten raw. They can be pickled, candied, made into a relish or marmalade, used in desserts or added to meats.
- There are also hybrids produced with limes, oranges and other citrus fruit, known by names such as limequat, orangequat, citrangequat, etc.
- The kumquat is also called "kinkan".
- There are two main varieties of kumquats – Marumi and Nagami. Marumi are less common. They are round in shape, golden yellow in color and a just a bit sweeter and juicier than Nagamis. Nagamis are more oval in shape, about the size of an olive, have a deeper orange color and are much easier to find.
- Throughout Southeast Asia, the kumquat used as an ornament on bonsai trees.
- Kumquats are made up of a wide variety of essential oils, including limonene, alpha-pinene, monoterpenes and many others. They also contain fiber, potassium, calcium, vitamin C, beneficial fats and vitamin A.
- Health benefits – aids in digestion, controls diabetes, boost immunity, helps promote healthy skin and eyes, helps build strong bones, boost energy, assists weight loss and enhances hair and teeth quality.



GREEN ASPARAGUS



- Asparagus is a member of the lily family and is related to garlic, onions and leeks. It has multi-branched, feathery, fern-like leaves. Spears can be green, white or purple. After removal of the woody end of asparagus, spears can be boiled, microwaved, cooked, fried, marinated or pickled.
- It originates from Europe, North Africa and West Asia, but it can be found around the world today. The Romans started to cultivate asparagus more than 2,000 years ago. By that time, it was familiar (as food or medicine) to the Spanish, the Syrians and the Egyptians. It arrived in Northern California in the 1850s, along with the California Gold Rush – luxury food for miners who had struck it rich.
- Asparagus was very popular in the ancient Egypt. Bunch of asparagus can be seen on the walls of many tombs.
- Asparagus was the favorite type of food of King Louis XIV. Frenchmen started to cultivate asparagus in the greenhouse to ensure year-round stashes of this vegetable.
- Asparagus is perennial plant. First harvest takes place 3 years after planting. Asparagus produces spears until the age of 15 to 20 years. Asparagus has stout stem that can reach 39 to 59 inches in height.
- Asparagus is one of three vegetables common in North American cuisine that comes from a perennial plant (along with artichokes and rhubarb). Once established, the harvest begins almost as soon as the plants emerge from dormancy each spring. When the ground defrosts, the massive underground root system pushes out the edible spears at a rate of 6 inches or more each day.
- China outdoes the world in asparagus production, by far with 57,000 hectares. The United States ranks fifth with about 14, 400 hectares, virtually all of which is in California, Washington and Michigan.
- Emperor Caesar Augustus would bark “*Velocius quam asparagi conquantur!*” or “Faster than cooking asparagus,” which can be loosely translated as, “Get going already!” Augustus was such a connoisseur of the elegant vegetable, he organized elite military units to procure it for him. The famed *Asparagus Fleets* made rounds in the empire to import the best varieties back to Rome, while the fastest runners were employed to carry fresh spears high in the Alps, where it could be frozen for later use.
- In ancient and medieval times, asparagus tips were crushed and used to treat swelling and alleviate pains due to bee stings, wounds, and infections. In the past, asparagus was used as a laxative and treatment of toothache and poor eyesight.
- The word asparagus is derived from the Greek word *aspharagos* meaning “sprout” or “shoot”.
- Asparagus is low in calories and high in protein and fiber. It is also loaded with potassium and folic acid. Health benefits of asparagus: good source of vitamin K, which is a blood clotting vitamin; contains anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties; serves as natural diuretic; nourishes the digestive tract; good source of fiber; high in vitamin B1, thiamin and helps fight cancer.



RED BANANA

- ◆ Red bananas have several names, depending on its growing region, including the Red Spanish, Red Cuban, Colorado or Lal kela. However, its official botanical name is Red Dacca.
- ◆ It is a vigorous, highly resistant grower, producing bunches with up to one hundred fruits.
- ◆ Red bananas are the most sought after “alternative” banana variety to common yellow bananas within industrialized countries of the world.
- ◆ Red bananas are smaller in size than a common banana and the peel is a deep red or purple.
- ◆ It has a creamy white to pink flesh, with a slight raspberry-banana flavor.
- ◆ Although a ripe red banana can be great for fresh-eating, it is preferred as a baking variety for desserts and semi-savory dishes.
- ◆ Red bananas come from Costa Rica and are a favorite in Central America, Mexico and in some areas in Australia.
- ◆ Benefits of Red Bananas:
 - Great source of beta-carotene ~ it’s been found that red bananas contain more beta-carotene than any other variety of bananas.
 - Good for your kidneys ~ great source of potassium, which helps prevent the formation of kidney stones.
 - Good source of vitamin C ~ crucial in strengthening the immunity system as well as for fat metabolism.
 - Good source of dietary fiber ~ helps prevent constipation.
 - Good for your blood ~ red bananas can help improve your hemoglobin count and improve the quality of your blood.
 - Gives you lovely hair ~ mash the red banana with coconut, sesame or almond oil to moisturize your hair and relieve problems like dandruff, hair fall and dry hair.
 - Great for your skin ~ red bananas have nutrients like vitamin C and B6 that are essential for skin. These nutrients help in keeping the skin tight and elastic.



ORANGE CAULIFLOWER



The orange color in this cauliflower is a result of a genetic mutation, which allows the vegetable to hold more beta carotene, or Vitamin A.

The first Orange cauliflower was discovered in 1970 in the Bradford Marsh, just north of Toronto, Canada. In 1981, it was hybridized by breeder, Michael Dickson, at the New York State Agricultural Station in Geneva, part of Cornell University. Development was tricky, however, partly because cauliflower had never been developed as a hybrid before. Using conventional methods, Dickson crossbred the Orange cauliflower with selected successive generations of white cauliflower until he had a large, market-friendly variety.

Orange cauliflower can be steamed, roasted, fried, pickled or boiled.

The entire cauliflower, its leaves, trunk, stems and florets are all edible.

Orange cauliflower contains a fair amount of folate, calcium, potassium and selenium and is high in both fiber and vitamin C. It also contains a higher amount of Vitamin A than traditional Cauliflower.

Orange cauliflower is also dubbed "cheddar" cauliflower, though it tastes nothing like cheese. Its flavor is mild, slightly sweet, and creamy. Orange cauliflower is also known as Orange Bouquet cauliflower.



BABY APPLES



What are baby apples?

- Baby apples are miniature versions of regular sized apples you are familiar with. The apples are about the size of apricots. There are many varieties of baby apples: Gala, Fuji, Granny Smith and Red Delicious.

How to eat

- You can eat them as a small snack or slice and use for baking, fruit salads or fruit and cheese platters.

How to choose

- Choose apples with bright color that are free from bruising, brown spots or broken skin.

How to store

- Store in refrigerator for 1-2 weeks

When are they in season?

- Year-round

Ever wonder why apples float? It's because 25 percent of their volume is made up by air.

Did you know?

- ❖ There are more than 2,500 varieties of apples grown in the U.S. That means if you had an apple a day, it would take you nearly seven years to eat each kind.
- ❖ There are more than 1,500 varieties of apples grown around the world. It would take you more than 20 years to try them all if you ate one a day.
- ❖ Apples ripen up to 10 times faster when you leave them out then when you refrigerate them.
- ❖ Pomology is the science of apple-growing.
- ❖ Apples contain high levels of boron, which increases mental alertness.

Health Benefits

Eating apples to keep the doctor away may be cliché, but it has its origins in the truth. Apples provide multiple nutrients and compounds that help promote good health and weight management.

WHITE ASPARAGUS



DID YOU KNOW?

- The way white asparagus is grown is that it's covered in a thick layer of mulch and dark plastic so that no sunlight reaches the spears. This way the vegetable never gets a chance to turn green because no photosynthesis takes place. This process, termed etiolation, creates pale white asparagus spears that have a more delicate flavor than their green cousins.
- It is one of the most labor-intensive vegetables to grow. It can't be collected by machine because the process is too rough, and a broken spear is useless. Each individual spear has to be carefully extracted from the soil by hand using a special knife. The earth has to be loosened around it and the stalk cut before a spear is pulled out of the ground.
- White asparagus has been referred to as the "vampire of the vegetable world".
- The Netherlands, Spain, France, Switzerland and Germany are all big white asparagus consumers.
- There is a bit of difference between white and green asparagus when cooking. An important preparation must not be skipped. Make sure to peel the bottom two-thirds of each spear because white asparagus tends to have a thick and bitter skin. Boiling in salted water is the best technique for cooking white asparagus. However, it is also good roasted or grilled.
- White asparagus is much softer in texture and a bit stringier than green asparagus, and has a much more subtle, delicate flavor.
- The German word for white asparagus is "Spargel".
- In Germany, from April to June, there are white asparagus festivals where asparagus queens are crowned and asparagus peeling contest take place.



HEALTH BENEFITS

- Good source of vitamin K, which is the blood clotting vitamin
- Contains anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties
- Serves as a natural diuretic
- Nourishes the digestive tract
- Good source of fiber
- High in vitamin B1 Thiamine
- Helps fight cancer



BABY ZUCCHINI

Baby green zucchini is simply classic zucchini picked at its immature stage of growth. It is petit and cylindrical with a smaller stem end than when fully mature. Its skin is glossy and deep green in color with faint cream freckles. Its crisp flesh is creamy white in color with an underdeveloped seed cavity due to its youth. Younger zucchini is chosen over mature as their seeds are barely developed and the flesh offers higher moisture content than that of mature zucchini. In addition to the fruit of the plant, the leaves and the flower blossoms are also edible.

Green zucchini is the quintessential summer squash, easily the most grown of all summer squashes and perhaps one of the most versatile and flavorful.

Baby green zucchini is known for its high water content and is more than 95% water by weight. It may be boiled, steamed, baked, sautéed, pickled, deep-fried, grilled or roasted. Baby zucchini is so mild and tender it can be eaten raw.

Zucchini is believed to be native to Italy with the first documented record of it being found in a 1901 Italian seed pamphlet from Milan, the squash was named zucca quarantina vera nana. While Italy may be the birthplace of the famous zucchini, in the United States, it was Southern California that really put it on the map and spurred its rise to become the most popular summer squash in America.

The United States would see its first zucchini around the time of World War I, via Italian immigrants. While academic research does not mention zucchini until 1937, in the United States, it is well documented in archives of the Los Angeles Times as well as local seed catalogs as early as 1919. In 1918, it was listed as “Italian squash” in the Los Angeles Germain Seed and Plant Co. seed catalog. Then, in 1919, it was renamed and first listed in the same catalog as zucchini. The baby green zucchini, used around the same time to some degree, would not become a commercially successful variety until the 1980’s when baby-sized vegetables were growing in popularity among home cooks and restaurant chefs.



Zucchini Nutrition Benefits:

- High source of antioxidants and vitamin C
- Has anti-inflammatory properties that can improve heart health
- High source of potassium
- Helps improve digestion
- Low in calories and carbs
- Helps maintain eye health
- Good source of energizing B vitamins
- Can help control diabetes





- Tamarind is a type of pod-like tropical fruit which is also a legume. It is grown on the tamarind tree which is originally from Africa, but today can be found growing in tropical regions. It is particularly common in South Asia and Mexico.
- The fruit is called an Indehiscent legume, which means it doesn't open naturally at maturity, but remains closed. Inside the pods are a few large seeds and a sticky, tart pulp, which becomes even tarter after the pods are dried.
- Tamarind can be consumed fresh or dried. The flesh from inside the brittle shells can be eaten from fresh pods, but the pods are also commonly dried.
- Tamarind is a common ingredient in Indian cooking. It makes a great base for chutneys, sauces, marinades and stews. It also make great desserts.
- Sweet but tart, and sometimes sour, tamarind is potent. A little goes a long way. While tamarind pulp can be eaten alone, it is most often mixed with sugar and/or diluted to mellow the strong flavor.
- Tamarind is sometimes referred to as the "date of India".
- Tamarind can tenderize your meat.
- Tamarind extract is one of the secret ingredients of Worcestershire sauce.
- India currently produces the most tamarind, but Thailand and Mexico are also major producers.
- Different Forms of Tamarind:
 - Raw pods: These pods are the least processed form. They're still intact and can be easily opened to remove the pulp.
 - Pressed block: To make these, the shell and seeds are removed and the pulp is compressed into a block. These blocks are one step away from raw tamarind.
 - Concentrate: Tamarind concentrate is pulp that has been boiled down. Preservatives may also be added.
- Home Uses:
 - Tamarind pulp can also be used as a metal polish. It contains tartaric acid, which helps remove tarnish from copper and bronze.



TAMARIND



- Health benefits:
 - The polyphenols in tamarind have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties which can help protect against diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.
 - The seed extract may also help lower blood sugar, while the pulp extract may help you lose body weight and reverse fatty liver disease.
 - Eases stomach discomfort, aids digestion, used as a laxative. Tamarind preparations are used for fevers, sore throat, rheumatism, inflammation and sunstroke.
 - Improves circulation
 - Boost immunity

Word of caution: The main concern is that tamarind lowers blood pressure and is a blood thinner, so it can be difficult to reduce bleeding in case something happens. If you are taking aspirin or other blood thinners, be careful while ingesting an excessive amount of tamarind.