

Unusual vegetables offer variety for menu

For health reasons, there has been a renewed interest in vegetables. Many grocers are carrying some very foreign looking vegetables right alongside the familiar carrots and broccoli.

For variety as well as nutrition and good taste, these vegetables are worth trying. Some of these vegetables may even come with a label that offers tips on handling and cooking. Many can be eaten raw and are easy to cook, low in calories and relatively high in vitamins, minerals and fiber. Perfect for everyone.

Carrot-top carrots, shaped like carrots as a joke, are usually crisp and spicy. Some raw in salads or use for dipping. Add to soups, stews and stir-fry. A half cup has about 10 calories and has some vitamin C and potassium.

Fennel is common in Italian cooking. It has a mild licorice or anise flavor. This is a feathery-topped veg-

et that's good raw in salads or



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etables resembling celery. Trim, slice and serve raw in salads or as a cooking vegetable. Add to soups and stir-fry. A half cup serving has about 15 calories, plus beta carotene and calcium.

JERUSALEM ARTICHOKES are also called "sunchoke" or "sugar roots." Raw chokes are crispy and crunch with a nutty flavor something like a water chestnut. Peel, slice and serve raw in salads or as a topping or substitute for potatoes. A half cup serving has 37 calories, plus some calcium, iron and phosphorus.

Salsify is an oyster plant that's carrot-shaped with a black or white skin. It has a mild flavor somewhat like asparagus. Steam whole. Then peel and slice for a side dish or addition to soup. (It darkens like potatoes very quickly when peeled.) A half cup serving has 35 calories, plus some calcium and iron.

Select a hard, glossy, yellow or straw-colored, flattened salsify. Cut in half lengthwise and steam until tender. Then use a fork to shred the pulp into "spaghetti" strands. Salsify can be served plain or with pasta sauce or tossed with a small amount of olive

oil and grated cheese. Cooked and cooled it can be added to salads. The salsify is a flavorful yellow flesh that supplies vitamin B6. Best of all, salsify squash has only 22 calories in a half-cup serving.

Chayote squash is a dark green zucchini-like flavored vegetable, sometimes called mango squash. Peel, boil, bake or stir-fry like any other squash. The large seeds are also edible. Unpeeled halves can be stuffed and then baked. A half-cup serving has 19 calories, plus beta carotene, vitamin C and potassium.

A Mexican potato is called a jicama. It is light-skinned, round but slightly flat, with crisp, sweet and white flesh. Peel before using in salads or dips. A half-cup serving has 25 calories and loaded with vitamin C.

Celeriac is celery root that can be peeled, sliced and eaten raw or

cooked in soup and tastes like celery. Peel and slice or julienne. Good raw if marinated in lemon juice or a flavorful dressing. A half-cup serving has 20 calories, plus small amounts of beta carotene, iron and calcium.

Bok choy or Chinese mustard cabbage is probably very familiar. Choose large white stems that have green leaves, mild flavor and are shaped like a head of celery. It can be stir-fried, added to soups or eaten raw in coleslaw or salad like

any cabbage. Half-cup serving (cooked) has 10 calories, some calcium, vitamins and beta carotene.

You can add lots of variety and lots of nutritional value to dull meals by trying a vegetable that is new to you. If you tried a half cup of each of these you have listed you would have 4½ cups with only 213 calories — unbelievable, not to mention the vitamins and minerals. Widén your choice of vegetables, try them. I'm sure you will like them.

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Onion and cheese good grilled

Make these sweet golden appetizers up to 1 hour before serving time. Then toast them on the grill over medium-hot coals alongside your main dish.

ONION AND CHEESE BITES
1 large onion, halved and thinly sliced
1 tablespoon olive or cooking oil
½ cup coarsely chopped walnuts
1 teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon herb mustard or Dijon-

style mustard
sixteen ¼-inch-thick slices baguette French bread or other long, thin, firm bread
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan or Romano cheese

In a large skillet cook the sliced onion in hot oil about 3 minutes or until tender. Add nuts and sugar.

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Continue to cook and stir about 5 minutes or until onion is slightly caramelized and walnuts are lightly toasted. Stir until tart.

Spoon onto a slice of bread. Sprinkle with cheese. If desired, cover and let stand at room temperature up to 1 hour.

To serve, place bread slices, onion

side up, directly over medium-hot coals about 2 minutes or just until bottoms are toasted and slices are heated through. Watch carefully the last ½ minute to avoid overbrowning. Makes 8 appetizer servings.

Nutrition information per serving:

138 cal., 5 g pro., 13 g carb., 7 g fat, 5 mg chol., 242 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 10 percent calcium.

Picnic sandwich big meal

AP — This meal-sized sandwich is styled after the New Orleans muffuletta, traditionally loaded with meats, cheese and marinated vegetables.

MUFFULETTA-STYLE PICNIC LOAF
one 16-inch loaf French bread
Italian salad dressing
2 cups thinly sliced zucchini or yellow summer squash
½ cup Italian salad dressing
8 ounces sliced turkey salami, cut into strips
6 ounces sliced provolone or mozzarella cheese
3 tablespoons sliced, pitted, ripe olives
½ cup alfalfa sprouts
2 medium tomatoes, thinly sliced

Slice bread in half horizontally. Hollow out bottom half; brush both cut halves with some Italian salad dressing. In a bowl, toss zucchini or squash with ½ cup Italian salad dressing; add top half to rest of sandwich. Wrap loaf with plastic wrap; chill in cooler for up to 3 hours. Slice to serve. Makes 6 servings.

Nutrition information per serving:
460 cal., 20 g pro., 37 g carb., 26 g fat, 52 mg chol., 1,210 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 15 percent vit. A, 16 percent vit. C, 21 percent thiamine, 20 percent riboflavin, 18 percent niacin, 27 percent calcium, 16 percent iron.

Peanut butter in creamy pie

AP — So delectable and so easy. Just whip the ingredients for this creamy pie together and spoon into a prepared crust. Chill in the freezer about 15 minutes or until the filling is firm but not frozen. Pass fox-plate-flavored syrup to spoon over each serving, if you like.

PEANUT BUTTER CREAM CHEESE PIE
one 8-ounce package cream cheese, cut up
½ cup peanut butter
1 cup sifted powdered sugar
2 tablespoons milk
one 4-ounce container frozen whipped dessert topping, thawed
1 chocolate-flavored crumb pie shell or graham cracker crumb pie shell
2 tablespoons coarsely chopped peanut butter-flavored syrup (optional)

In a large mixer bowl combine cream cheese and peanut butter, beat with an electric mixer until combined. Add powdered sugar and milk; beat until combined. Fold in whipped topping. Spoon into the pie shell. Sprinkle with peanuts. Cover and chill in the freezer for 15 minutes. Cut into wedges; top with chocolate-flavored syrup, if desired. Makes 8 servings.

Nutrition information per serving:
507 cal., 9 g pro., 45 g carb., 34 g fat, 31 mg chol., 403 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 30 percent vit. A, 11 percent riboflavin, 26 percent niacin.



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