



Enjoy Fruits and Vegetables in Season

Check out the delicious fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season in the spring.

“In season” means they are at their best quality and price.

Avoid wasting fresh fruits and vegetables by storing them correctly, using them within a few days or freezing them. Visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/food and click on “Food Preservation” for information about freezing extra fruits and vegetables.

In many grocery stores, you will find fresh asparagus, strawberries and sweet onions (such as Vidalia), among many others, in the spring.

Asparagus

- Choose asparagus that is a rich green. Asparagus should have compact tips and smooth spears.
- Store refrigerated and use within a few days.
- Rinse the asparagus spears under running water and trim the ends.
- Prepare asparagus by roasting, grilling and many other methods.
 - **To roast:** Preheat an oven to 425 F. Rinse asparagus under running water and trim the ends. Place the asparagus in an oven-safe dish and drizzle with your favorite cooking oil. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, Parmesan cheese and/or your favorite seasonings. Bake until tender, about 12 to 15 minutes.
 - **To grill:** Preheat the grill. Follow the preparation directions for roasting. Place the asparagus on the grill or in a grill basket. Grill about three minutes or to the tenderness you like.



Strawberries

- Choose fruit that is deep red, with dark green caps and a nice aroma. Strawberries should be plump.
- Store in your refrigerator in the crisper drawer.
- Just before eating, place strawberries in a colander and rinse under cool, running water. Do not soak strawberries. Spread them on paper towels or leave them in the colander to remove extra water.
- Remove the green cap and stem using a paring knife or strawberry huller.
- Slice, dice or serve whole. Try the salsa recipe included with this newsletter.
- If you have extra strawberries, place the clean, whole berries on a cookie sheet with some space. Freeze until firm, then place them in freezer bags labeled with the date you froze them.



Sweet Onions (Vidalia)

- Choose firm onions with little scent. Avoid onions with cuts, bruises or blemishes.
 - To reduce chances of crying when preparing onions, refrigerate them for 30 minutes before preparation.
 - To remove the onion smell, rub your hands with lemon juice or salt.
 - Cut off the top/stem of the onion.
 - Remove the papery layers, then dice or slice as you wish.
- Try grilling onions:
 - Cut each large onion into about eight wedges. Place them on a sheet of aluminum foil. Place pats of butter on the onion (about 1 teaspoon per wedge). Sprinkle with garlic salt or seasoning salt. Wrap well so the aluminum foil seams are tight. Place another layer of aluminum foil under the onion packet, and place the packet and foil sheet on a preheated grill for 30 to 40 minutes.
- Want to view a video about preparing onions? Visit www.onions-usa.org to learn more.



Here's a recipe featuring seasonal strawberries.
Try substituting other fresh fruit, such as blueberries,
pineapple or mango, to make your own version of fruit salsa.

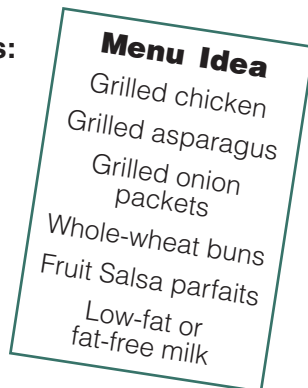
Fruit Salsa

- 1 c. strawberries, diced
- 1 banana, diced
- 1 kiwi, peeled and diced
- 1 apple, cored and diced
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice (or less to taste)
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar
- ¼ tsp. nutmeg
- ¼ tsp. cinnamon

Prepare fruit as directed.
Combine fruit in a bowl and add lemon juice. Stir in sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon. Refrigerate.

Use this salsa in various ways:

- Serve as a snack with whole-grain chips or crackers.
- Layer with nonfat vanilla yogurt in glasses to make parfaits.
- Serve as a side dish with grilled chicken or fish.



Makes four servings. Each serving has 100 calories, 0 grams (g) fat, 1 g protein, 26 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber and 0 milligrams sodium.



Just for Fun

What do you call
a sad strawberry?
A blueberry!

I have seen some foods labeled “natural.” What does that mean? Is it healthier?

The word “natural” on food products usually means the food has no added color, artificial flavors or other man-made substances. However, the Food and Drug Administration does not have a legal definition for the word “natural.” “Natural” food isn’t necessarily better for you. Compare the Nutrition Facts labels on foods to learn more about what you are eating.

Tip of the Month

Handle Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Safely

- ✓ Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling fresh fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Clean all surfaces and utensils, including cutting boards, countertops, peelers and knives that will touch fresh fruits or vegetables, with hot water and soap before and after food preparation.
- ✓ Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten, under running tap water. Use a produce brush if needed.
- ✓ Never use soap or bleach to wash fresh fruits or vegetables.



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Contact the local office of the
NDSU Extension Service
for more information
on food and nutrition or
managing your food dollar.

