Tasty Choices

September Harvest

TOMATOES!

☆ Americans eat 22-24 pounds of tomatoes per person per year! 93% of American gardeners grow tomatoes in their yards.

☆ Look for tomatoes in your meals. They are in salsa, in tomato sauce, or fresh in a salad.

☆ Tomatoes were first cultivated in 700 AD by the Aztecs and Incas. The word “tomato” comes from the Aztec word “tomatl.” The scientific term for tomato is *lycopersicon lycopersicum* which also means “wolf peach”.

☆ Snack idea: Serve a small bowl of cherry tomatoes for a delicious snack. They go great with a low fat dip or a cheese stick!

☆ Fresh, ripe tomatoes are a good source of vitamin C. They are also a source of vitamins A and K, and the mineral potassium.

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The Bartlett pear is the most popular variety. It was first planted in 1797 in Dorchester, Massachusetts. There are more than 3,000 varieties of pears worldwide!

Look for pears at school breakfast and lunch; they taste great, take a big bite!

Pears grow on trees and are handpicked. In Massachusetts they are ready to pick from September through November, so enjoy them when they are fresh and locally grown.

Snack idea: Cut a pear in half and cut out the core with a spoon; fill the center of each half with nut or seed butter or yogurt.

A medium pear has about ¼ of the daily value of fiber and contains vitamin C.

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KALE!

Kale tastes sweeter when grown in the fall after the weather turns frosty. It is a member of the cabbage or *brassica* family of plants.

Look for kale in your meals. It may be a side vegetable, in a stir-fry, or in a soup!

Kale has been grown for over 2,000 years. Thought to have originated in Asia or the Eastern Mediterranean, it became a staple crop in colder climates where it tolerates winter weather.

Snack idea: Make Kale Chips. Use clean scissors to cut the stem off each leaf then cut it into pieces. Toss the pieces in a bowl with a splash of olive oil and a sprinkle of salt. Spread in one layer on a cookie sheet. Bake in the oven at 350° until the edges are brown, about 10-15 minutes.

Kale is a nutritional superstar! It is rich in many vitamins and minerals, and is one of the best sources of vitamin K, which is beneficial for bone health.

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A baby carrot is not really a baby. They are made from small pieces of carrots and cut to have a rounded end. Carrots may be orange, purple, white or yellow.

Look for carrots in your meals and snacks. You may find them in a salad, a carrot stick snack, or even baked in muffins.

Thousands of years ago carrots were not orange like the carrots we eat today. They were smaller, branched, and other colors like white and yellow.

Snack idea: Grab a handful of baby carrots or carrot sticks and dip into a little hummus or nut or seed butter. Yum!

Carrots have vitamin A which is important for vision and keeps you healthy.
Did you know that 25% of an apple’s volume is air? That is why they float, and that makes dunking for apples so much fun!

Look for apples at breakfast, lunch and snack! You may find whole apples, or see them sliced, or served as applesauce.

There are over 40 varieties of apples grown right here in Massachusetts. Look for local apples in the fall when they are picked fresh from the tree!

Snack idea: Crunchy, juicy, yum! Fresh apples are delicious and make a great snack. Serve them freshly sliced with a sprinkle of cinnamon. Apples go great with a cheddar cheese cube!

Fresh apples have vitamin C, potassium and other nutrients, especially if you eat the peel which contains many of the nutrients and fiber.

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Squash has been part of Native American diets for more than 5,000 years. Squash got its name from the Narragansett Native American word “askutasquash”.

Look for squash in your meals. It may be in soups, served as a side dish, or baked in a pie.

The most popular variety of butternut squash is the Waltham Butternut that originated on a farm in Stow, Massachusetts.

Snack idea: Cinnamon cubes! Toss ½ inch cubes of peeled and cut up squash in a bowl with a small splash of olive oil and a generous sprinkle of cinnamon and just a little brown sugar. Bake in the oven on a cookie sheet in a single layer at 350° until the edges are brown, the outside is dry, and cubes are soft in the middle, about 15 minutes.

Butternut Squash is very nutritious. It is an excellent source of vitamins A and C, and a good source of magnesium, potassium, and fiber.
Each day, a cow produces 6.3 gallons of milk, eats about 100 pounds of food, and drinks 30-50 gallons of water!

Where do you find dairy in your meals? Look for milk, cheese, and yogurt. It may also be hidden in a fruit smoothie, soup, or salad dressing.

Cheesemaking dates back at least 5,000 years. Archeologists have found evidence that cheese was make in ancient Egypt!

Snack idea: Cut up an apple or orange and dip slices in yogurt!

Dairy has calcium, protein and carbohydrates. An 8 ounce glass of milk supplies 30% of your calcium for a day, a cup of yogurt supplies up to 45%!

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Potatoes were the first vegetable to be grown in space by NASA in 1995. They come in many colors; orange, blue, purple, light yellow, and red.

Look for potatoes in your meals! Look for baked potato, mashed potato, baked sweet potato fries, potato in soup, and baked potato wedges.

The potato first originated in the South America where it was cultivated 10,000 years ago. The word “potato” comes from the Spanish word “patata” which originated as a compound from the Central American, Taino word “batata” for sweet potato and the South American, Quechua word “papa” for potato.

Snack idea: Cut a potato into wedges, and bake at 350° for 15 minutes until soft in the middle. Make a dip for the potato wedges: add a sprinkle of chopped parsley and a little salt and pepper to ½ cup of plain yogurt (you can also add chives or other herbs). Dip and enjoy!

Eat the skin for the best nutritional boost! Potatoes are a good source of vitamin C, potassium, and fiber.

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May Harvest

Seedlings and Herbs!

☆ Start some herb seedlings this spring! Fresh herbs add flavor to your meals. Herbs are the fresh and dried leaves of plants and are usually green in color.

☆ Herbs can be added to salads, soups, sandwiches or just about any meal. Try parsley, basil, chives, thyme, oregano and more! Look for them in your CitySprouts garden and have a taste!

☆ Evidence of early herb gardens date back to Europe in the Middle Ages. Egyptian schools of herbalists have existed since 3000 B.C.

☆ Snack idea: Make an herb dip for cut up veggies! Mix about a teaspoon of fresh herbs into ½ cup of plain yogurt and sprinkle in a little salt and pepper. Try one kind of herb or a mixture of several. Discover your favorite!

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Strawberries are sweet, juicy and full of flavor! Strawberries are freshest and taste best in June when they are ripe and ready to pick and eat from the garden or find them at the farmers market!

- Top your cereal, add strawberries to salads, and put some in a container for a snack. Make smoothies with strawberries and yogurt. Look for them growing in the CitySprouts garden!

- Native Americans grew strawberries as early as the 1640’s. The Wampanoag tribe grew strawberries long before the colonists from other countries arrived.

- Snack idea: Eat whole strawberries as a snack or make a smoothie with fresh strawberries and vanilla yogurt.

- Strawberries are a good source of Vitamin C, potassium and dietary fiber.

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Cucumbers taste cool, mild and delicious. You will want to eat them up when served in chunks with dip, chopped in salad, or sliced as rounds for a snack.

Look for cucumbers on salad bars, in salads and in soups and condiments. Pickles are made from cucumbers too! Pickles are a cucumber that has been prepared with vinegar or fermented and aged with flavorful spices.

Cucumbers originated near India and have been grown for food for at least 3,000 years. They spread to ancient Rome where cucumbers became very popular, and were grown all year in enclosed structures similar to green houses.

Snack idea: Slice cucumbers into rounds and dip in low fat ranch dressing! Or get a fresh, firm cucumber at a farmers market, wash it, and bite into it like an apple!

Cucumbers are low in calories and a good source of vitamin C.

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Peaches are juicy, sweet and delicious! They have a pit inside that looks like an almond. That is because they are in the same plant family.

Look for fresh peaches when you shop at the farmers market or at your local corner store; they taste great, get one and take a big bite!

Peaches grow on trees and the best ones are handpicked right here in Massachusetts. They are ready to pick from August through mid-October, so enjoy them when they are fresh and locally grown.

Snack idea: Slice a peach and arrange the slices on a whole grain toasted waffle. Top with a dollop of vanilla yogurt. Yum!

Peaches contain vitamin A and potassium.

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