



Focus on Fresh

JUNE IS NATIONAL FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES MONTH and that special season when we start to see more produce coming to market. The observance began in 1991 to promote growers and the grilling season.



June through the fall harvest will provide us all with an abundance of fresh produce at the stores and the farmers' markets. So, skip the canned and frozen aisle and check out the delicious fresh fruits and vegetables arriving at the grocery store, farmers' markets and even your own backyard garden. There is no better season to increase the amount and variety of fruits and vegetables you eat. In addition, buying fresh, local, seasonal produce ensures you get the most nutrition and taste from your fruits and veggies.

Some tips to help you enjoy adding fresh produce to your meals all summer long:

- Try some *new* (to you) produce and get all your favorites while they are at the peak of freshness.
- Make fruits and vegetables the star of every meal.
- Be an influencer by eating fruits and vegetables with the children every day.
- Include fresh produce in every meal and snack you prepare for children, giving them more opportunities to enjoy them.
- Serve children fruits and vegetables with an encouraging attitude. A positive sensory and emotional experience is more likely to be repeated.
- Serve fresh fruit for a refreshing and healthy dessert.
- Bring home a rainbow of colors the next time you buy produce; more color means a greater amount and diversity of nutrients.
- Grow your own garden, it's not too late!
- Visit a pick-your-own-fruit-and-vegetable farm and bring home the fruits of your labor.

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Cultural Cuisines > Greece <



Origins & Roles of Food

Greek cuisine is rich and has many influences including Middle Eastern and Mediterranean. Greece is known for its fascinating history, enchanting islands, magnificent weather, and some of the healthiest and tastiest food in the world!

Food Customs

Dinner is typically served late in the evening and dining out is a social event. One of the most iconic Greek foods is moussaka, a combination of minced meat, potatoes and aubergines (eggplant) topped with a creamy layer of béchamel sauce.

Staple Foods

Greeks eat a "Mediterranean diet" with plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes, bread, cheeses, yogurt, olives, olive oil and small quantities of meat and fish. The climate and terrain favor raising goats and sheep over cattle.

Dining Etiquette

A meal with friends or family is more than just food, it is a way to have discussions, socialize and enjoy other's company. To quote the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus, *"We should look for someone to eat and drink with before looking for something to eat and drink, for dining alone is leading the life of a lion or wolf."*

Focus on Fresh

— Continued from front page

From early summer produce such as cherries, peas, avocados, beets, cucumbers, strawberries, kale, spinach and asparagus to late fall pumpkins, produce provides fiber, a variety of vitamins, antioxidants, phytonutrients and minerals. In addition, most produce is naturally low in calories, fat and sodium. Whether we eat them as a snack, or part of breakfast, lunch or dinner, it's important to have five or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

Fruits and vegetables support overall health in many ways. For children they provide vital nutrients for growth and development. They also help prevent certain diseases like cancer and diabetes, promote maintenance of a healthy weight and can even improve the immune system, skin, hair and nails! Other benefits of getting enough fruits and vegetables include an improved mood, better concentration, more energy and even enhanced academic performance.

Unfortunately, most Americans don't eat the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables each day and according to a shocking new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly half of all children between the ages of 1 and 5 do not eat a single vegetable on a daily basis and only about a third of young kids eat fruit daily. By celebrating National Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Month in June, you can learn new habits that will help you eat more servings all year long with summer being the most delicious time of the year to begin to form these new habits.

Try some of these simple cooking activities with children to spark their interest in eating a wider variety of fresh fruits and vegetables:

- Create a friendship fruit salad or vegetable salad. Let each child choose a fruit or vegetable to rinse, peel, tear, chop, scoop, slice or grate. Take turns tossing and enjoy together.
- Make lettuce or spinach leaf roll-ups with cottage cheese, egg salad or tuna salad. Hold in place with a tooth pick.
- Squeeze a variety of citrus fruit such as grapefruit, orange, tangerine, lemon and lime. Look at the seeds and taste the juice.



- Help children make a fruit or vegetable skewer from a variety of pre-cut chunks of fresh produce.
- Let children top individual pizzas with a variety of veggies.
- Make crunchy snacks by putting a spoonful of dip at the bottom of individual cups with veggie sticks on top. Try carrot, celery, jicama, zucchini and lightly steamed asparagus.
- Spread celery or apple slices with nut or seed butter and decorate with grape halves.

***Reach for a peach! Pass the peas, please!
Don't be glum, have a plum!***

CA farmers market list: <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/docs/CurrentMrktsCounty.pdf>

— Catherine Stafford, Manager,
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CocoKids

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Lead Poisoning and Prevention

WHILE OUR SOCIETY has made progress toward remediating lead exposure, such as removing lead from paint and gasoline, lead poisoning still remains a very real concern, especially for children. Lead poisoning is a preventable disease caused by breathing or swallowing a substance with lead in it, such as paint, dust, water or food. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that children in over 4 million U.S. households are being exposed to lead and those living at or below the poverty level are at greatest risk.

Lead can be found in almost every part of our environment including the air, soil, water and inside our homes. Lead poisoning occurs when lead accumulates in the body, which can take months or years. Children under the age of 6 are most vulnerable because their growing bodies absorb more lead than adults and they may ingest more lead dust because they frequently put their hands and other objects in their mouth.

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF EXPOSURE TO CHILDREN

- Chewing on or eating lead paint chips.
- Breathing or ingesting lead dust from peeling or cracked paint.
- Putting soil into their mouth from around a house that has lead paint chips flaking off.
- Drinking water that flows through old lead pipes or pipes that have lead solder.
- Eating food stored in bowls with lead in the glaze or paint.
- Putting soil in their mouth that was contaminated by leaded gasoline. Gas with lead is now banned but the lead in the soil remains, especially next to busy roads and highways.
- Putting old or imported toys, jewelry, pottery and cosmetics into their mouth.
- Being around a caregiver who is exposed at work (for example, through welding, auto repair or construction) or through a hobby (like stained glass, home remodeling or lead soldering).

Lead can damage almost every organ system. In children, too much lead can cause lasting problems with growth and development, affecting behavior, hearing and learning. Even low levels of lead can affect IQ and the ability to pay attention and focus. Unfortunately, the signs and symptoms of lead poisoning



often are not apparent until dangerous levels of lead have already accumulated.

SIGNS OF LEAD POISONING

- Developmental delays or learning difficulties
- Irritability
- Loss of appetite or weight loss
- Sluggishness and fatigue
- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Constipation
- Hearing loss
- Seizures

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The Environmental Protection Agency suggests these steps to help eliminate lead exposure:

- Check all painted surfaces for chips or flaking, be sure to prevent deterioration.
- Wipe surfaces with a damp cloth regularly to clean up any potential lead-based dust.
- Check your water for lead, many older buildings have lead pipes that can leach into drinking water. Let water run to flush out the pipes and always use cold water for food and drinking.
- Teach children to keep their hands and toys out of their mouth and wash hands often.

TREATMENT

Treatment for lead poisoning varies depending on how much lead is in the blood. The most important part of therapy is immediate reduction of lead exposure.

Calcium, iron and vitamin C are important parts of a healthy diet and also help to decrease the amount of lead the body absorbs. A doctor may recommend supplements, if there are not enough of these nutrients in a child's daily diet.

Thankfully, lead poisoning can be prevented and a blood test can diagnose lead exposure. Children should be tested for lead at one to two years old. If a child has not been tested or you suspect lead exposure, talk to your pediatrician.

— Sources: *NSC.org, KidsHealth.org*

Horiatiki (Traditional Greek Village Salad)

This simple salad consists of tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, red onions, kalamata olives and blocks of Greek feta cheese made from sheep's milk. The vegetables are typically cut into large chunks and there is no lettuce. Top with a dash of kosher salt, dried oregano, a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and a splash of red wine vinegar.

Tzatziki Sauce

English cucumber peeled and grated	1	Lemon juice	2 Tbsp
Salt	1/4 tsp	Dill, fresh, chopped	2 Tbsp
Greek yogurt	2 cups	Salt and pepper	to taste
Garlic, minced	2 cloves		

1. Use a grater to grate the cucumber in a small bowl. Add 1/4 tsp of salt and mix, then let it sit for about 10 to 15 minutes. This will draw out the water from the cucumber. Place it in a bowl over paper towels or cheese cloth, then squeeze out liquid.
2. In a medium bowl, combine the yogurt with the cucumber, garlic, lemon juice and dill. Stir well and season with salt and pepper.
3. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for at least 4 hours before serving. Serve as a dip or sauce for veggies, meat, fish or bread.

Yield: 3 cups

Chicken Souvlaki

Chicken breast, boneless, skinless, bite sized pieces	1 1/2 pounds	Pepper	1 tsp
Garlic, minced	5 cloves	Lemon, juiced	1
Olive oil	2 Tbsp	Whole wheat pita bread	4
Oregano	1 Tbsp	Greek salad	2 cups
Salt	1 tsp	Tzatziki sauce	1 cup

1. Combine the chicken pieces with seasoning and lemon juice. Seal, cover and refrigerate to marinate 30 minutes or up to a day.
2. Remove from marinade and thread the chicken onto skewers. Grill 8-10 minutes, turning once. Alternatively, broil skewers of chicken in oven 8-10 minutes, turning once.
3. Place chicken on pita bread, top with Greek salad and tzatziki sauce. Roll up and slice in half.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for whole grain-rich and meat/meat alternate.

— *Gimmesomeoven.com*



Fuel & Fitness

A FATHER'S DAY ADVENTURE

Plan and map a hike around the neighborhood or another scenic spot. Children can use their creativity to make a customized map to give to Dad with a thoughtfully plotted route. Encourage them to use their math skills to calculate the distance of their planned hike and their artistic skills to make the map detailed and beautiful.

Bring a back pack with: Water, energy snacks like nuts and seeds or trail mix, a hat, sunscreen and insect repellent.

More ideas for an outing with your Pop:

- Take Dad and a frisbee or football to a nearby park.
- Play miniature golf, badminton or croquet.
- Plan a bird-watching outing, bring binoculars and a book on birds.
- Go on a family bike ride.
- Go fishing, it's as much about the experience of being together as the thrill of reeling one in.
- Find an open space and fly a kite.



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Food Q. How do you make a vegetable into a necklace?
Funny A. String Beans!