



THE CO-OP Produce NEWSLETTER

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SOME TIPS FOR HEALTHIER EATING IN THE NEW YEAR

Many people visiting the Co-op in January share that they've made New Year's resolutions about healthier eating. Especially in the produce aisle, shoppers tell us about their goals and seek information about preparing produce that is new to them. We see a big jump in sales of produce in January, especially bunched greens like kales and collards, salad mixes, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, peppers, etc. It's such an exciting time for me, because everyone is enthusiastic about eating more fruits and veggies—the things I love the most at the Co-op! Last year I taught a cooking class that focused on healthier eating in the new year. I thought I'd share a few of the tips I put together for that class that have helped me to keep eating lots of fruits and veggies all year long.

1 One of the simplest things I do that greatly improves my diet is getting a lot of the food I'm going to eat ready on the weekend before I start my week. Having lots of healthy food ready to go makes it so much easier to make healthy choice for snacks and meals. I will often top salad veggies with some beans or fish, a little cooked grain (brown rice or quinoa) if I have it, maybe throw on a little cheese or a few nuts and call it a meal. I also try to make a big pot of soup on the weekend to take for lunches or to quickly warm up when I get home from work. Investing a few hours in meal prep on the weekend

makes a huge difference in the quality of food I eat during my work week.

2 When planning meals, I start with the vegetables and fruits I want to include and think about what would go well with them. Have some kale and a winter squash? Why not sauté the greens with some onions and spices, mix in some brown rice and chickpeas, and stuff the squash with it?



3 Eating healthy food isn't cheap, so when you're shopping try to buy foods you will actually eat. If you regularly find yourself composting a certain vegetable or fruit, stop buying it and save your money for the ones you know you'll actually eat.

4 Once you learn the basics of cooking, you don't have to follow recipes exactly to make food that tastes good. If a recipe calls for chard, but you have spinach, use that instead! Not every

substitution you make will work, but many of them will. Figuring out how to use something you already have on hand will reduce wasted food and can also be a great motivator to search for recipes and get inspired.

5 Cook for others and let others cook for you- find friends who want to eat similar foods and swap portions with them- this will give you a better variety of food, expose you to things you might not regularly eat, and make it less likely that you'll get tired of eating something you cooked yourself.

6 The vast majority of excess salt and sugar that people eat comes from processed foods. It's ok to use a little of these ingredients in your cooking so you will enjoy the way your food tastes.

7 My general philosophy about food and eating is pretty much this: eat a variety of foods, try to incorporate a lot of vegetables, fruits, and other high-fiber foods into your diet, drink a lot of water, enjoy what you eat, remember that no one diet is right for everyone and that there is no "perfect food"—eat what makes your body feel strong, vibrant, and healthy. ■

Happy Eating!

Erin,

**Olympia Food Co-op
Produce Manager**

Quick Tips

A SAMPLE SHOPPING LIST

Foods that I get ready for lunches & quick dinners for the week:

- 2 heads of lettuce (or buy prewashed salad mix)
- 1 bunch spinach (or baby spinach)
- 2 bunches kale
- 3 red or yellow bell peppers
- 2 cucumbers
- 1 head of red or green cabbage (or 1/2 of each)
- a few carrots
- 1 large beet
- a few stalks celery
- a pint of cherry tomatoes
- some snap peas or sunflower sprouts
- a piece of purple daikon
- ingredients for a bean or lentil based soup
- enough quinoa or brown rice to make a small pot
- nuts (you can either toast them at home, or buy pre-roasted nuts which saves time)
- feta or parmesan
- a package of smoked salmon
- package of extra firm high protein tofu*

**Recipe Tip:* The easiest marinated tofu ever!

Put some balsamic vinegar, Italian herbs, salt, and olive oil in a large ziplock bag. Put in cubed tofu, seal the bag and roll around in your hands. Allow to marinate for at least a couple of hours, it gets even better as the week goes on!

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

A few kitchen utensils that will make cooking and meal prep a lot easier:

- a salad spinner for quick and easy lettuce cleaning
- a sharp chef's knife: I recommend one good quality stainless steel knife. A ceramic knife is also a fine choice, and they don't have to be sharpened, but you have to be careful not to break the blades.
- a large cutting board
- a large container for salad greens
- a few smaller containers for storing prepped veggies and snacks
- a large soup pot

- one set of measuring spoons
- one set of measuring cups
- a lunch bag or box that you like
- wide mouth mason jars or other non-leak containers for your lunch bag
- a water bottle that you love

Other optional things that are awesome if you have them, but non-essential

- a blender for smoothie making
- an air popper for making popcorn
- a citrus juicer
- a garlic press (I actually like to chop garlic by hand, but I'm pretty sure I'm alone in that!)
- parchment paper for baking/roasting ■

RECIPE CORNER

All-Dressed Kale Chips

- approx. 1/2 bunch kale leaves
- 1/2 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1.5 tablespoons nutritional yeast
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3/4 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon fine grain sea salt or pink Himalayan sea salt
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Preheat oven to 300F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

Remove leaves from the stems of the kale and roughly tear it up into large pieces. Wash and spin the leaves until thoroughly dry.

Add kale leaves into a large bowl. Massage in the oil until all the nooks and crannies are coated in oil. Sprinkle on the spices/seasonings and toss to combine.

Spread out the kale onto the prepared baking sheet into a single layer, being sure not to overcrowd the kale.

Bake for 10 minutes, rotate the pan, and bake for another 12-15 minutes more until the kale begins to firm up. The kale will look shrunken, but this is normal. I bake for 25 mins. total in my oven.

Cool the kale on the sheet for 3 minutes before digging in! Enjoy immediately as they lose their crispiness with time. *from theresheglows.com* ■