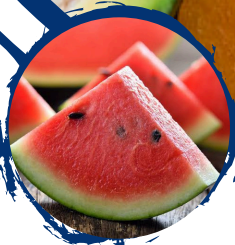


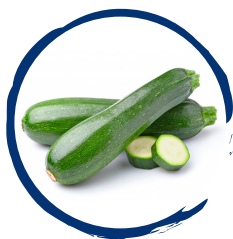


FRESH FRUIT

& Vegetable Program



A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, FREE OF CHARGE, TO ALL PRE-K TO 5TH GRADE STUDENTS. TRY SOMETHING NEW!



SERVICE DATES 2024:

OCTOBER:

29th (Watermelon), 30th (Cucumber)

NOVEMBER:

**6th (strawberry), 7th (carrot),
12th (cantaloupe), 13th (zucchini),
14th (blueberries), 19th (celery),
20th (pineapple), 21st (red pepper)**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Food Services Dept: 845-563-3424
or DJackson@necsd.net

WEB: <https://www.cn.nysed.gov/ffvp>

NEWBURGH
ENLARGED CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



BACKGROUND:

- All selected schools are expected to widely publicize within the school the availability of free fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (FFV) cannot be served as a component of the reimbursable meal or during meal service, or at the same time as the service of the breakfast or lunch or afterschool/ extended day snack program.
- **All FFV are served free of charge to all enrolled children in pre- kindergarten-5th grade.**
- Other products on their own or commingled with other foods, such as in trail mix, are not allowed.
- FFV must be available to ALL students (PK-6) any time during the school day.
- Leftovers may be recycled; however, every effort should be made to use FFV in the FFVP.
- FFV must be served at least two days a week
- FFV cannot be used as a reward or gift.
- Children cannot be denied access to the FFVP for disciplinary reasons.
- Teachers directly responsible for serving the fruit or vegetable to their students in a classroom setting may consume the FFV since they are role models. The FFVP is not available to the general teacher population and other adults in the school.
- The FFV must be consumed at school, not taken home.
- Mixed fresh fruit salads made by the school **are allowable.**
- Dips for fresh vegetables **are allowed** but should be low fat and in minimal portion. (A maximum serving size of 1-2 tablespoons of dip is recommended.)
- Salsa made at the school as part of a nutrition lesson is allowed.

Nutrition Education Schools that participate in the program are expected to implement or continue nutrition education. There are several ways that FFVP can be incorporated into the existing nutrition education curriculum. Activities should fit the students and the school community. For example:

- Plant a school garden or participate in a community garden.
- Schedule the service of fresh fruits and vegetables as classroom nutrition education activities where children can prepare the FFV with their classmates and teachers.
- Plan assemblies and/or health fairs. Have students create displays or newsletters.
- Promote FFVP on monthly menus.
- Adopt school lesson plans to include nutrition education.
- Use student address systems and student broadcasts to share educational information about the importance of eating healthy.
- Consult FFVP partners to obtain low cost or no cost promotional items (posters, banners, fliers, pamphlets, buttons).
- Hold a poster contest to promote healthy eating.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS:

- Students ate more fruits and vegetables.
- Students consumed less high calorie, high fat vending machine snacks.
- Students had better attention spans and were less hungry throughout the day.
- There were fewer discipline problems.

NYSED would like to hear about the impact FFVP has on schools throughout NYS. Please send in pictures and best practices: FFVP@nysed.gov



ALL ABOUT *Watermelon!*

DID YOU KNOW?

A Watermelon is a fruit that grows on a vine. It is related to other veggies like pumpkins, cucumbers and squash. Watermelons originated in Africa over 5,000 years ago. The first watermelon harvest recorded was in ancient Egypt, illustrated in hieroglyphics. China is the #1 producer of watermelons in the world. The United States of America is 5th in the world for watermelon production.

HOW DO THEY GROW?

Watermelons need five things to grow and produce delicious fruit: sun, water, Honeybees, nutrients and space to grow! It takes three months for melons to grow until they are ready to be picked.

FUN FACTS:

- The inside flesh of a watermelon can be red, orange or yellow! The pigment Lycopene gives it its red color.
- A watermelon is 92% water!

WATERMELON VARIETIES

Watermelons (*Citrullus lanatus*) come in a wide range of sizes, from petite personal-sized fruits to massive specimens that can feed a large gathering. The size of a watermelon is influenced by its variety, growing conditions, and the time it's allowed to mature on the vine. Let's take a closer look at the different categories of watermelon sizes.

Personal or Mini Watermelons

- **Little Darling:** Weighing in at just 5-7 pounds, this variety is perfect for small families or single servings.
- **Sugar Baby:** A popular personal-sized melon, Sugar Baby watermelons are round, with a dark green rind and sweet red flesh, typically weighing 6-10 pounds.
- **Mini Love:** These heart-shaped melons are not only adorable but also delicious, averaging 5-7 pounds.

Mid-Sized Watermelons

- **Charleston Gray:** This heirloom variety has a long, oblong shape and can weigh between 20-30 pounds.
- **Crimson Sweet:** Known for its deep red flesh and high sugar content, these melons average 15-25 pounds.
- **Bush Sugar Baby:** A compact vine variety that produces round melons weighing 10-12 pounds, ideal for small gardens.

Large Watermelons

- **Black Diamond:** A classic large watermelon, Black Diamond can reach up to 50 pounds with its dark green, almost black rind.
- **Jubilee:** These elongated melons are known for their light green stripes and can weigh 25-40 pounds.
- **Carolina Cross:** This variety holds the record for the largest watermelon ever grown, with some specimens weighing over 200 pounds.

GREAT TO EAT!

Watermelon is full of nutrients. One cup has less than 50 calories, no cholesterol and little fat or salt. It is a great source of Vitamin C, and Vitamin A. Vitamin C helps form collagen to hold your muscles, bones and tissues together, protects us from infections and bruising, aids in healing, keeps our gums healthy, helps our body absorb iron and folate from plants, and acts as an antioxidant to prevent cell damage. Vitamin A promotes good vision, supports the growth of cells and tissues, and helps regulate the immune system. Most red fruits and vegetables, like watermelon, have lycopene, a phytonutrient which may reduce cancer risks.

RESOURCES:

- Watermelon Board, www.watermelon.org
- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, www.fns.usda.gov



ALL ABOUT *Cucumbers!*

DID YOU KNOW?

Humans have been cultivating and eating cucumbers (Scientific Name: *Cucumis sativus*) for at least 3,000 years. They originated in India (South Asia) but are now grown worldwide. Cucumbers are harvested from the vine plant *Cucumis sativus* and its varieties.

Cucumbers are long, green-skinned fruits with a watery interior flesh, usually eaten raw in salads or pickled. The outer part of a cucumber is called the peel, this is the green skin surrounding a cucumber. The inner part of a cucumber is called the flesh, this is the soft, light green mass inside the peel. The center part of a cucumber contains seeds. Some cucumber varieties don't have any seeds.

There are over 120 different varieties of cucumbers cultivated. The varieties of cucumbers are separated into three groups: **slicing, pickling and burpless/seedless.**

Cucumbers are one of the most cultivated vegetables in the worldwide. The composition of a raw cucumber with its peel is 95% water.

HOW DO THEY GROW?

Cucumbers are very tender, warm-season plants that grow best in temperatures from 65° to 75°F with a minimum temperature of 60°F and a maximum of 90°F. They grow on a creeping vine that roots in the ground and grows up a trellis or a supporting frame, wrapping around those frames with thin, spiraling tendrils. They require pollination by honeybees and other bee species.

RESOURCES:

- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, www.fns.usda.gov

FUN FACTS:

- According to the USDA, over 540,000 TONS of cucumbers were processed in the United States in 2023.
- According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the world record for the longest cucumber is 42.1 inches. This record was set on September 26, 2011 by Ian Neale in the United Kingdom.
- Cucumbers are turned into pickles by soaking them in a brine often made of water, vinegar, and seasonings.

GREAT TO EAT!

One medium cucumber contains 45 calories, no fat and no cholesterol. It contains 11 grams of carbohydrates, 2 grams of dietary fiber and 5 grams of sugar. A raw cucumber with the peel is 95% water. It contains 48 milligrams of calcium, and 442 milligrams of potassium, which is a vital electrolyte in the human body.

RECIPE FOR TOMATO CUCUMBER SALAD FROM COOKING WITH KIDS:

<https://cookingwithkids.org/recipe/tomato-cucumber-salad/>

SERVES 4 TO 6 AS A SIDE DISH

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cucumber, peeled and sliced
- 2 Roma tomatoes, chopped
- 1 red or green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 green onion, thinly sliced
- ½ cup sliced Kalamata or California black olives, optional
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put all the vegetables in a bowl.
2. Add the olives, if using, parsley, lemon juice, olive oil, and feta cheese.
3. Stir lightly to combine. Serve immediately.



ALL ABOUT *Strawberries!*

DID YOU KNOW?

Strawberries are fruits that grow on small plants. They have been found in the woods, by the seaside, and on mountaintops. They are native to northern and southern hemispheres. Wild strawberries date back to the times of the Greeks and Romans. The average strawberry has around 200 seeds on it, and is not considered a **true** berry because its seeds are on the outside of the fruit. They range in color from a deep red, to light pink, to white!

HOW DO THEY GROW?

Strawberries need lots of direct sunlight in order to grow. They need space to thrive and should not be planted too close to each other.

FUN FACTS:

- The Strawberry is the official state red berry for North Carolina
- The name comes from the fact that strawberry plants are frequently mulched with straw to protect their delicate roots

STRAWBERRY TYPES:

There are three types of strawberries: **June-bearing**, **everbearing**, and **day-neutral**.

- June-bearing varieties produce flowers and fruit once each year, usually in June.
- Everbearing varieties produce two crops per year, usually in July and August-September.
- Day-neutral varieties produce a continuous crop throughout the growing season. There are more than 70 varieties of strawberries in the world.

GREAT TO EAT!

Strawberries are considered a superfood—packed with nutrients. Not only are strawberries deliciously sweet but they also help keep you healthy.

Strawberries are an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of fiber. Soluble fiber can help lower cholesterol. Insoluble fiber aids in digestion.

A cup of whole strawberries has around 50 calories and 140 percent of the vitamin C Daily Value. Strawberries are cholesterol free and low in fat and sodium. Vitamin C helps form collagen to hold muscles, bones and tissues together, protects us from infections and bruising, aids in healing, keeps our gums healthy, helps our body absorb iron and folate from plants, and acts as an antioxidant to prevent cell damage.

Strawberries have a variety of phytochemicals—flavonoids, ellagitannins, and ellagic acid. Anthocyanidins, a flavonoid sub-group, contribute to the blue, red and purple pigments of berries and other fruits. Phytochemicals act as antioxidants preventing or repairing cell damage. Anthocyanidins may help with maintaining brain and healthy immune function.

RESOURCES:

- North American Strawberry Association, <https://www.nasga.org/>
- <https://strawberryplants.org/strawberry-varieties/>
- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, www.fns.usda.gov



ALL ABOUT *Carrots!*

DID YOU KNOW?

Carrots (*Daucus carota*, subspecies *sativus*) are known as root vegetables. They were first grown about 5,000 years ago in Southwestern Asia and have become a favourite vegetable for many northern gardeners.

Eating locally grown vegetables and traditional foods helps keep our bodies healthy. Originally carrots were white. Now they can be orange, black, purple, red, white and yellow. If you are buying fresh carrots, look for the ones with a deep orange or other colour. Carrots can also be bought frozen or canned.

The most commonly eaten part of the plant is the taproot, although the stems and leaves are also eaten. Carrots can be consumed raw or cooked.

HOW DO THEY GROW?

Carrots are grown from seeds. They prefer fertile, well-drained, deep, sandy soils rich in organic matter for best growth.

FUN FACTS:

- Baby carrots are whole carrots harvested before they grow large, while baby-cut carrots are pieces from larger carrots that have been machine-cut, peeled, polished, and washed before packaging.
- Carrots may be prepared in so many ways - raw, baked, broiled, boiled, fried, steamed, pureed, and juiced.
- The seeds are so tiny, 2000 of them can fit in one teaspoon!

GREAT TO EAT!

Carrots are second only to sweet potatoes as an excellent source of beta carotene (vitamin A). Vitamin A is needed for healthy skin, bones and teeth as well as to fight sickness. Carrots are low in calories. One 7 inch long root has only 35 calories, no fat, and supplies 270% of your daily vitamin A and 10% of the vitamin C requirement.

Carrots are also a fair source of B vitamins, like niacin and B6, which help our bodies use energy from foods. B vitamins are important for growth and healthy skin, hair, nerves and muscles.

CARROT-GINGER SOUP

A simple vegan soup with just seven ingredients! Ginger gives it a unique kick!

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ medium yellow onion, chopped
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 pound carrots, roughly chopped
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 3 cups vegetable broth
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon maple syrup, optional
- Coconut milk, for garnish, optional

Instructions

- Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onions, salt and pepper and cook until soft, stirring occasionally (8 minutes). Add the smashed garlic cloves and carrots to the pot and cook 8 minutes more. Stir occasionally.
- Stir in the ginger, apple cider vinegar, and broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes.
- Let cool slightly and transfer to a blender. Blend until smooth. If your soup is too thick, add a little water. If you would like your soup a little sweeter, add the maple syrup.
- Serve with a drizzle of coconut milk, if desired.

RESOURCES:

- UCal Gardner Program, <https://ucanr.edu>
- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, www.fns.usda.gov



ALL ABOUT *Cantaloupes!*

DID YOU KNOW?

The cantaloupe is a juicy, orange summer fruit that's related to the watermelon and honeydew melon. It also belongs to the same plant family as cucumbers, pumpkins, squashes, and gourds. The semi-sweet cantaloupes most familiar to people in the U.S. are a type of muskmelon.

People have grown cantaloupes for thousands of years. Most people agree it likely first grew in Persia (modern Iran). The fruit made its way to the New World with Christopher Columbus during his second voyage in the late 1400s.

HOW DO THEY GROW?

Cantaloupes grow best in sunny locations and in fertile, well-drained soils. Cantaloupe require 35-45 days to mature from flowering, depending on the temperature and variety. The first flowers to appear on the vines are male. The female flowers, which open later, have a swelling at the base that forms the fruit. After bees pollinate these female flowers, the fruit develops.

FUN FACTS:

- Cantaloupes are named after Cantalupo, Italy. Australians call cantaloupe "rockmelon."
- It has plenty of relatives! Cantaloupe are members of a vine-crop family known as Cucurbitaceae, which includes other melons, squash, cucumbers, pumpkins, and gourds.
- Cantaloupe tell you when they're ripe. The vine will naturally slip from the fruit when it's harvest time. You'll also notice the skin will turn creamy-beige under the "netted" pattern on the melon.
- Bees have to visit each melon 10-15 times to properly pollinate them.
- California is the leading producer of cantaloupes in the U.S.

GREAT TO EAT!

The sweet and juicy orange flesh inside of the melon is the part we eat. A cup of cantaloupe has more than 100% of your recommended daily intake of vitamin A. It also has nearly 100% of your recommended daily allowance of vitamin C. Both these nutrients play a major role in maintaining skin health. Vitamin A helps protect the skin from sun damage, and vitamin C helps support your natural collagen production.

Cantaloupes hydrate you. They're filled with electrolytes. These minerals balance body fluids in your body and keep it working right. That helps you stay hydrated and full of energy. Compounds called phytonutrients in cantaloupes give them anti-inflammatory properties.

MELON FRUIT SALAD WITH HONEY, LIME AND MINT DRESSING

Ingredients

- 1 mini seedless watermelon, diced into small cubes (5 cups)
- 1 cantaloupe, diced into small cubes (5 cups)
- 1 honeydew, diced into small cubes (5 cups)
- 1 pineapple, diced into small cubes (3 1/2 cups)
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh mint

Instructions

Dice fruit (drain of any excess liquid) and add fruit to a large salad bowl. In a jar or bowl whisk together honey, lime juice and mint. Pour over fruit and toss to evenly coat. Serve immediately.

RESOURCES:

- [CookingClassy.com](https://www.cookingclassy.com)
- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, www.fns.usda.gov



ALL ABOUT *Zucchini!*

DID YOU KNOW?

The zucchini (pronounced: zoo-kee-nee) is also known as a Courgette or a Baby Marrow. It is a summer squash that grows on a vine. The fruit is harvested while the rind (also called epicarp) is still soft and edible.

Zucchini descends from squashes first domesticated in Mesoamerica over 7,000 years ago. The zucchini itself was bred in Milan, Italy in the late 19th century.

In botany (plant science), the zucchini's fruit is considered a berry (a fleshy fruit without a stone (pit) produced from the swollen ovary of the zucchini flower) with a hardened epicarp. In our kitchens, zucchini is treated like a vegetable. It can be eaten raw, but is usually cooked as a savory side dish.

HOW DO THEY GROW?

Zucchini grow from seeds. They prefer fertile, well-drained soils rich in organic matter to grow. About six weeks after planting, the zucchini plant will flower! These bright yellow flowers are then pollinated by bees. After pollination, the flowers produce the zucchini fruit.

FUN FACTS:

- Edible flowers: The flowers of the zucchini plant are edible! They have a delicate, slightly sweet taste. They can also be stuffed and are often underutilized.
- Fruit, not vegetable: Zucchini is technically a fruit because it comes from a flower!

GREAT TO EAT!

- High in water: Zucchini is made up of around 95% water, which is 3% more than watermelons and 1% less than lettuces.
- High in potassium: Did you know Zucchini contains more potassium than a banana?
- High in antioxidants: Zucchini is rich in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory phytonutrients.

- Good for weight management: Zucchini is a low energy food that can help with weight management due to its high fiber and moisture content.
- Good for hydration: Zucchini is a highly hydrating vegetable that is a good source of vitamins A and C, potassium, and magnesium.
- Vegan option! Zucchini noodles (also known as “zoodles”) are the perfect gluten-free, zucchini pasta. You can make them with a spiralizer or a julienne peeler.

STUFFED ZUCCHINI BOATS

Half and hollow out 3 medium sized zucchini. Season with spices, then placed in a baking dish. Make a simple meat sauce in a separate pot with Italian sausage, marinara sauce, garlic and onions. The sauce gets piled into the zucchini boats, then everything is topped with mozzarella and/or cheddar cheese and baked until gooey and browned.

Stuffed Zucchini Boat Variations

There are many other great ways to fill your squash!

- Mexican: Make a filling with 1 lb ground beef, 16 ounces tomato sauce, 4 ounces diced green chiles, 3/4 cup black beans and 1/2 cup corn, then top with cheddar cheese and bake.
- Vegetarian: Make a filling with sauteed onion, 2 cups cooked grains such as rice or quinoa, 1 diced red bell pepper, salt, pepper, 1 1/2 cups shredded cheese, and fresh herbs.

RESOURCES:

- Curcubits, www.hort.purdue.edu.
- Annals of Botany, <https://academic.oup.com/aob/article/118/1/53/2196164?login=true>
- <https://www.dinneratthezoo.com/stuffed-zucchini-boats/>
- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, www.fns.usda.gov



ALL ABOUT *Blueberries!*

DID YOU KNOW?

The Blueberry is the official fruit of Maine, which produces a high amount in North America. Blueberries are round, dark berries with a white / silver coating that protects them from water and from the sun.

Northern highbush blueberries are native to North America. They grow on an upright bush with a shallow, fibrous root system and woody canes. The fruit is borne on buds formed during the previous growing season in late summer. Highbush blueberry plants leaf, flower, and fruit in the month of June. They are used as hedges, shrub borders, and beautiful ornamentals or for wildlife.

HOW DO THEY GROW?

For best results, blueberries are planted in early spring. Blueberries are self-pollinating, however cross-pollination will help bring a better crop and larger berries. It is always recommended that 2 or 3 blueberry bushes be planted in proximity to each other.

FUN FACTS:

- Blueberries are technically **not** blue.
- They are actually a deep purple color, but appear blue due to a natural colorant called anthocyanins, the compound that provides blueberry's health benefits
- Blueberries were called "star fruits" by North American indigenous peoples because of the five-pointed star shape that is formed at the blossom end of the berry.
- A single blueberry bush can produce as many as 6,000 blueberries per year!

BLUEBERRY VARIETIES

There are five major varieties of blueberry grown in the United States: lowbush, northern highbush, southern highbush, rabbiteye, and half-high. Of these, northern highbush blueberry varieties are the most common type cultivated throughout the world.

GREAT TO EAT!

Blueberries are high in fiber, which supports heart health. It's a source of Vitamin C which supports a healthy immune system. It is an excellent source of Vitamin K, manganese and potassium. Manganese is a mineral that helps support our body's energy production and cell repair. Blueberries are an excellent snack after playing at school or exercising! Blueberries ranked number one in antioxidant health benefits in a comparison with more than 40 fresh fruits and vegetables.

Blueberries can range in taste from tart to sweet. They can be eaten raw, added to cereal, baked into a pie, made into a jelly, or mixed into your favorite pancake batter!

MAPLE BLUEBERRY OATMEAL

Ingredients:

- 2 cups water
- 1-1/2 cups milk
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds
- 2 cups old fashioned rolled oats
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups fresh blueberries, divided and washed

Instructions

1. Add water, milk, maple syrup, and salt to a medium pot. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
2. Once boiling, lower the heat to medium-low and add in the chia seeds, oatmeal, and 1 cup of the blueberries.
3. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the oats have thickened up and are tender, about 3-5 minutes. Stir in the vanilla extract.
4. Divide the oatmeal into dishes, adding the remaining blueberries on top of the oatmeal.

RESOURCES:

- <https://www.bcblueberry.com>
- Watermelon Board, www.watermelon.org
- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, www.fns.usda.gov



ALL ABOUT *Celery!*

DID YOU KNOW?

Celery is a cultivated plant that has been used as a vegetable since ancient times. Celery has a long fibrous stalk that tapers into leaves. Celery seed powder is used as a spice.

Celery originally came from the Mediterranean area (France, Italy, and Greece) and was transported around the world as celery seed. Now, California supplies over 80% of celery in the US, and other countries that are big producers of celery include Spain and Mexico.

HOW DO THEY GROW?

Celery likes sun and shade. The roots of celery grow very close to the surface. The stalk sprouts upward of the root. The celery stalks form a thick base at the bottom and on the surface grows into solid stalks with large green leaves. The plant will grow to a height of 18 to 24 inches, and will also regenerate (regrow) after you cut it.

FUN FACTS:

- Celery leaves were part of the garlands found in the tomb of Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun
- In ancient times, celery was used as medicine to treat toothaches, to calm nerves, and to help people sleep!

GREAT TO EAT!

Celery has a high amount of fiber, Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, and vitamin K. Vitamin K keeps our bones healthy and strong!

Celery has lots of water, which makes it a hydrating vegetable. Fiber is good for our body because it can make digestion easier, and it helps us feel full for a long period of time.

The stalks can be eaten raw, or chopped up in a salad, or as an ingredient in soups, Thanksgiving stuffing, and stews. Celery makes a great addition to juices, smoothies, and salads. Celery stalks can also be eaten dipped in hummus, ranch, or vegetable dip.

SPICY LOADED CELERY STICKS

INGREDIENTS:

- 12 stalks celery cut into 1 inch pieces
- One 8oz. package of softened cream cheese
- 4 oz. blue cheese
- 1 dash of hot pepper sauce
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ¼ tsp black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS:

Put the celery pieces on a plate. Mix the other ingredients in a bowl and blend well. Top the celery sticks with the mix.

RESOURCES:

- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, www.fns.usda.gov



ALL ABOUT *Pineapple!*

DID YOU KNOW?

Pineapples are tropical plants with an edible fruit and a waxy tough skin that has small spikes protruding from it. The inside flesh is yellow with a hard core in the middle. The leafy top, hard skin and core are not eaten. It is indigenous to South America. It is considered a type of berry, because it does not have a stone (pit) inside. The “scales” on the surface of a pineapple are actually individual flowers that have fused together.

HOW DO THEY GROW?

Pineapple plants will only produce one pineapple each growing season. Pineapples do not ripen after they have been picked.

FUN FACTS:

- Pineapples contain an enzyme called bromelain, that can be used as a meat tenderizer. The name pineapple in English came from “pina” in Spanish because it looks similar to a pinecone.

GREAT TO EAT!

Pineapples are a good source of Vitamin C, Manganese, Potassium and Dietary Fiber.

Enhancing Flavor: Sprinkle a bit of salt, chili powder, or lime juice on freshly cut pineapple to enhance its natural sweetness and flavor.

Multiple Uses: Pineapple can be eaten in many different ways. Eat it plain, add it to salads, grill it for a kabob, or cook it in a casserole.

RESOURCES:

- Create Better Health/Utah State University <https://extension.usu.edu/createbetterhealth/blog>
- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, www.fns.usda.gov

Sweet and Sour Chicken

skillet meal 

Ingredients

1 can (20 oz.) pineapple chunks
½ cup water
1/3 cup vinegar
¼ cup brown sugar
¼ tsp. ginger powder
2 Tbsp. cornstarch
1 lb. boneless skinless chicken
1 green pepper, cut into thin strips
2 carrots, thinly sliced
2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
1 onion, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

- Drain juice from pineapple into a bowl; reserve pineapple chunks.
- Add water, vinegar, brown sugar, ginger, and cornstarch to juice; mix well.
- Cut chicken into thin strips. Coat a large skillet with cooking spray.
- Over medium-high heat, sauté chicken until lightly browned.
- Add green pepper, carrots, celery, and onions; sauté until tender-crisp.
- Add pineapple juice mixture and stir while sauce thickens. Mix in pineapple chunks. Season with salt and pepper. Serve over rice.
- Yield 6 servings.





ALL ABOUT *Red Bell Peppers!*

DID YOU KNOW?

The red pepper is a variety of capsicum annum, a family that also includes varieties like jalapeño, cayenne pepper, chili pepper, and a few other hot peppers. While there are plenty of other pepper types that are red in color, only the red bell pepper is colloquially known as "red pepper."

Capsicum annum is native to Central and South America, and has existed for more than 7500 years. Over time, several varieties took shape and continue today as cultivars. Bell peppers were one of those varieties and were actively cultivated before Spanish exploration in the 1400s.

Bell peppers, sometimes called sweet peppers since they lack the spicy capsaicin, are technically a type of fruit that's treated as a vegetable.

HOW DO THEY GROW?

Bell peppers need lots of sun, water, and space to grow! Bell peppers are heat-loving summer vegetables that are pest-resistant and disease-resistant.

FUN FACTS:

- Paprika is a spice made from dried and ground red peppers from the Capsicum annum plant, which is native to Central Mexico
- A bell pepper has the highest levels of Vitamin C of any produce item. A large red pepper provides more than 300% of your daily requirement of Vitamin C and has three times more Vitamin C than an orange. Eat one today!
- Red/yellow/orange bell peppers are simply green bell peppers that have been left on the vine to continue to ripen.

GREAT TO EAT!

Bell Peppers are loaded with nutrients!

- **Vitamin C.** One medium-sized red bell pepper provides 169% of the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) for vitamin C, making it one of the richest sources of this essential nutrient.
- **Vitamin B6.** Pyridoxine is the most common type of vitamin B6, which is a family of nutrients important for the formation of red blood cells.
- **Vitamin K1.** A form of vitamin K, also known as phyloquinone, K1 is important for blood clotting and bone health.
- **Potassium.** This essential mineral is noted for improving heart health.
- **Vitamin E.** A powerful antioxidant, vitamin E is essential for healthy nerves and muscles.
- **Vitamin A.** Red bell peppers are high in pro-vitamin A (beta-carotene) which your body converts into vitamin A, which helps with our eyesight.

You can slice up a red bell pepper into strips and use it to dip into a delicious hummus, or add to a salad for a sweet kick! You can cut the top, hollow out the seeds and make a classic stuffed pepper filled with cooked ground beef, rice, tomato sauce, and cheese. It's an easy way to make a healthy weeknight supper!

RESOURCES:

- <https://www.webmd.com/diet/health-benefits-red-pepper>
- <https://www.inspiredtaste.net/15938/easy-and-smooth-hummus-recipe/>
- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, www.fns.usda.gov