

June 30, 2022

Release Date: July 13, 2022

Carrie Sorenson, MPH, AFC®
Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Sciences

HAVE A BERRY GOOD SUMMER!

As the days grow warmer and we get deeper into the summer season, one of my favorite foods starts appearing more often: berries. Strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and so many other bright flavors and colors are all over the place. For me, it reminds me of summer evenings with family and friends enjoying all sorts of different berries for snacks, meals, and dessert! Strawberries typically start the earliest with harvests beginning in May. Then, June and July bring harvests of cherries, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries. And finally as we reach August, there are peaches and nectarines. So, with all of this beautiful fresh produce available, I hope you take some time to enjoy the fruits of the summer season.

As many of us are probably aware, fruits are an important part of a healthy diet. If you visit the USDA's <https://www.myplate.gov/>, you can see that they recommend that at least half of your plate be fruits and vegetables. We often struggle to eat as many fruits and vegetables as we should, myself included! Sometimes we look at shelves of ice cream, cookies, chips, and other snacks and have a hard time reaching for the carrots instead. For me at least, fruits have always been a little easier. I love the tart and sweet taste of a variety of fruits and often find myself truly craving a juicy peach or a handful of ripe strawberries.

Fruits are a big part of the MyPlate recommendations because they contain so many important things that help keep us healthy. If you visit the [fruit page of the MyPlate website](#), it explains some of these important benefits. One of the things they share is that fruits are a great source of fiber which can lower your risk of heart disease and reduce cholesterol. It is important to keep in mind that fruit juice usually doesn't have much fiber, so you'll want to go for whole fruit to get this benefit. Additionally, fruits also have nutrients like vitamin C and potassium, which are also important for keeping your body healthy and working the way it should.

If you're like me and looking forward to getting some berries this summer, the good news is that you have several options as far as where to get them. Grocery stores are the first option for many of us. They typically have sales of different types of fruit throughout the summer, so keep your eye on the local ads so that you know when the prices are best. You could also check out local farmers markets and farm stands. It's great to be able to support local businesses and their fruit is typically fresh and deliciously ripe! One final option is to make a day of it and check out a local farm where you can pick your own berries. It's a great way to spend some time with family and friends, get some physical activity, and get some delicious fruit. If you're looking for some farms

in Frederick, [Homegrown Frederick](#) is a great resource and has a lot of information about farms and other great local products.

Regardless of where you get your berries, keep in mind that you should wash them before eating them. Just a quick wash in normal water should be fine, no need to add soaps or anything like that. Also, you may want to take advantage of the lower summer fruit prices and buy some extra fruit. Any that you can't eat before it goes bad can always be kept in the freezer for later. Although frozen fruit can't be used exactly the same way as fresh fruit, it goes great in smoothies, cobblers, and other recipes.

If you need some inspiration, check out these recipes for some tasty ways to incorporate berries into your summer menu. The fruit salsa is a personal favorite of mine, as it brings back memories of eating it on the 4th of July with my family each year. I hope you all have a wonderful summer full of many delicious berries!

FRUIT SALSA WITH CINNAMON CHIPS Yield: 10 servings

For salsa -

16 ounces strawberries, diced
2 peaches, washed and diced
8 ounces blueberries
3 tablespoons of strawberry preserves

Note: Fruits can be swapped depending on what is fresh or on sale. Other great options include apples, raspberries, and melon

For cinnamon chips –

10 whole-wheat tortillas
2 teaspoons cinnamon
2 tablespoons sugar
Cooking spray

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Rinse all fruit (if necessary, peel or core fruit as well)
3. Dice all fruit (except blueberries) and place in a mixing bowl
4. Add strawberry preserves to the fruit, mix well, and set aside
5. Cut tortillas into quarters and put on a baking sheet.
6. Combine cinnamon and sugar in a small bowl and mix well.
7. Spray tortillas with cooking spray
8. Sprinkle each tortilla with a pinch of the cinnamon sugar mixture
9. Place tortillas in oven and bake for 8 to 10 minutes, until crisp
10. Use tortillas to dip fruit salsa. Enjoy!

Recipe courtesy of University of Maryland Extension's SNAP-Ed program. Fruit Salsa recipe can be found at <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/family-consumer-sciences/snap-ed/eat-smart/recipes/fruit-salsa> and Crunchy Cinnamon Chips recipe can be found at <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/family-consumer-sciences/snap-ed/eat-smart/recipes/crunchy-cinnamon-chips>

SNAP PEA AND BERRY SALAD Yield: 6 servings

1/2 pound sugar snap peas, trimmed
1 cup fresh raspberries
2 tablespoons raspberry vinegar, red wine vinegar, or balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 teaspoon sugar
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup fresh blueberries
2 cups mixed salad greens

1. Boil water in a pot large enough to hold the snap peas. Place snap peas in pot and cook 1 to 2 minutes. Drain, rinse under cold water, and set aside.
2. Place about 1 1/2 tablespoons of raspberries in a small strainer over a bowl, and crush with a spoon. Discard pulp. Mix vinegar, olive oil, sugar, salt, and pepper with the strained raspberry juice.
3. In a large bowl, gently toss the dressing with the snap peas, remaining raspberries, and blueberries. Cover, and chill at least 30 minutes in the refrigerator. Toss with greens just before serving.

Recipe from University of Maryland Extension's SNAP-Ed program. Find it at <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/family-consumer-sciences/snap-ed/eat-smart/recipes/snap-pea-and-berry-salad>

STRAWBERRY SMORES Yield: 1 serving

1 graham cracker, broken in half
2 tablespoons low-fat vanilla yogurt
2 strawberries, washed and sliced

1. Spread yogurt on top of one graham cracker half.
2. Place strawberries on top.
3. Top with the other graham cracker half.

Recipe from University of Maryland Extension's SNAP-Ed program. Find it at <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/family-consumer-sciences/snap-ed/eat-smart/recipes/strawberry-smores>

For more information about the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County Office check out our website <https://extension.umd.edu/locations/frederick-county> . University programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, religion, protected veteran status, genetic information, personal appearance, or any other legally protected class.

Carrie Sorenson, MPH is a Certified Health Education Specialist and an Extension Educator in Family and Consumer Sciences.

CS:ls