

Virginia Hunger Solutions

Nutrition

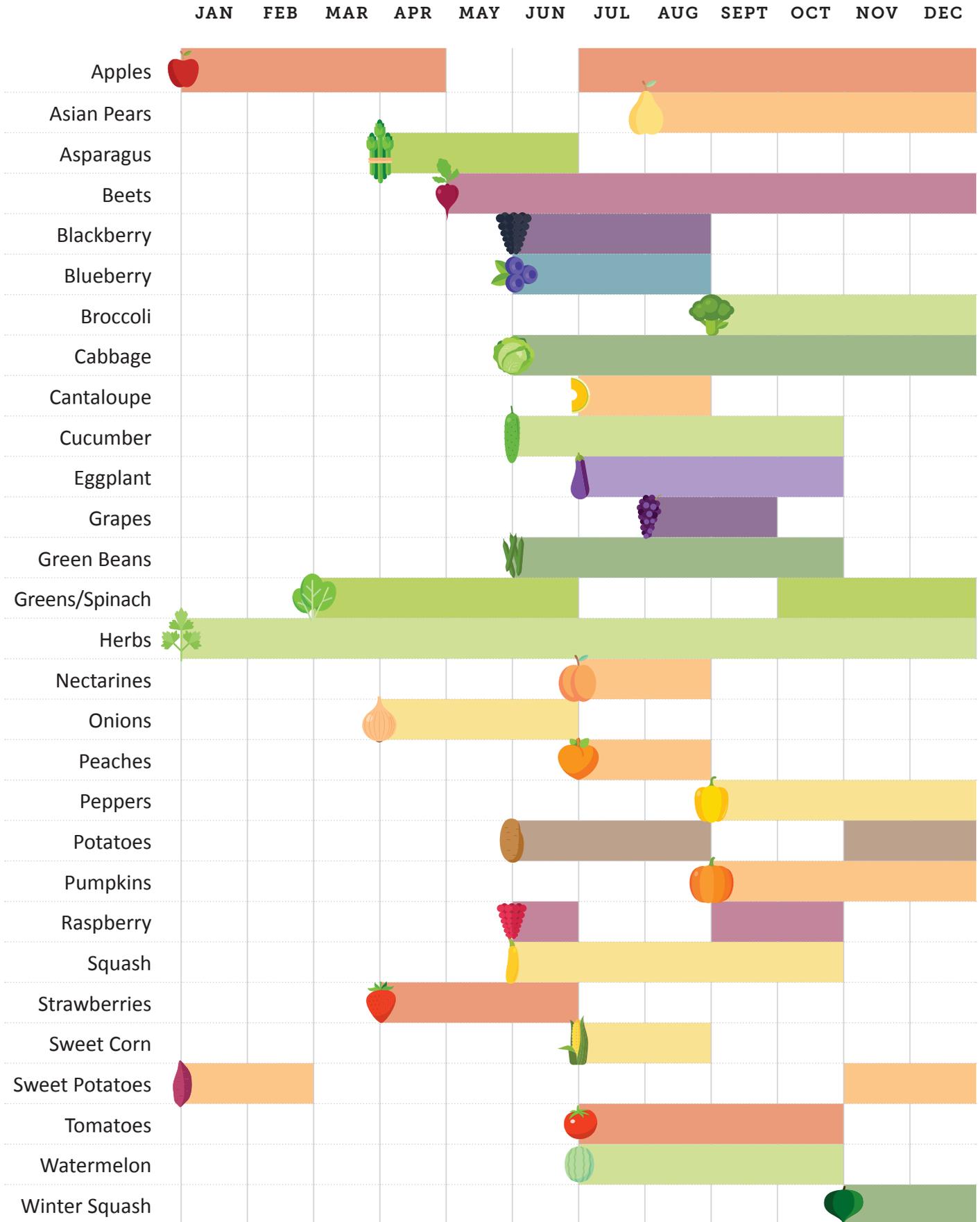
GUIDE

Additional information and resources:
www.vahungersolutions.org



VIRGINIA
Hunger Solutions

VA Seasonal Availability



Introduction

Locally grown foods are beneficial for the body, local community, and agriculture.

Whether you live in a rural community surrounded by sprawling farmland or a metropolitan city center, you know the importance of eating locally sourced foods. Locally grown foods are generally more nutritious, encourage sustainable practice, and contribute to local economies.

Not only is it important to know where your food is coming from, but it's important to know that the food you are eating is benefiting your health. The most common chronic diseases, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, can be attributed to lifestyle choices, especially our diet.

Nutrition

Eat the Rainbow!

It is very important to eat a diet that is full of fresh fruits and vegetables to maintain optimum health. Eating produce that is a variety of colors is the best way to get the nutrients your body needs.

Dirty Dozen/Clean Fifteen

The dirty dozen are produce that test positive for high levels of pesticide residue even after being cleaned or peeled, and if available should be purchased as certified organic.

- **Dirty 12:** Strawberries, spinach, nectarines, apples, grapes, peaches, cherries, pears, tomatoes, celery, potatoes, sweet bell peppers

The clean fifteen are produce that are least likely to contain pesticide residue.

- **Clean 15:** avocados, sweet corn, pineapples, cabbage, onions, frozen sweet peas, papayas, asparagus, mangoes, eggplant, honeydews, kiwi, cantaloupe, broccoli, cauliflower

Community aspect

- Going to the farmers market is an experience
- Cooking demos, nutrition education resources, local growers
- Incentive programs/matching

Local Impact/Environment

Food waste and importance of buying "imperfect" vegetables

"Imperfect produce is the biggest single component of US landfills and incinerators." -EPA

Food waste:

- In a 2010 study, the USDA Economic Research Service found that 133 billion pounds of food, out of an available 430 pounds, was wasted on a retail and consumer level.
- When you buy local, you are able to help cut down on food waste. Produce that may not meet grocery store quality standards may be sold at local farmers markets.

Your Local Market

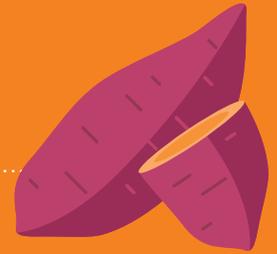
Follow these best practices when shopping at your local farmers' market....

- Look for "imperfect" vegetables that may have minor cosmetic flaws. Vendors are more likely to give you a better deal on these items, since they can't sell them to stores. These vegetables are just as nutritious as non-flawed vegetables.
- Buy produce closer to the end of the market. Most vendors/farmers do not want to take their produce back home. They won't be able to sell it at the next market and are likely to throw it away. By buying at the end of the market vendors might be willing to sell their remainder for cheaper.
- If you use SNAP benefits, your farmers market may double your SNAP dollars

JANUARY–FEBRUARY

Sweet Potatoes

Vitamins A, C, Fiber, and Low Glycemic Index.



Sweet Potato Hash

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups of sweet potato, diced into 1 inch cubes
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 1 bell pepper (any variety,) diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons of smoked paprika
- 2 teaspoons of chili powder
- 1-2 teaspoons black pepper and salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil of choice and cook onions and garlic lightly.
2. Add potatoes and cover, cook until slightly softened.
3. Season and add bell pepper, cook uncovered until peppers are done.

TIP

Roasted

Sweet potatoes taste great baked plain with butter.

Bake the sweet potato at 400° F for 50-60 minutes, or fork tender, then add butter! Additionally, you can cube them, toss with olive oil and season them with black pepper, thyme, and basil, and bake for 20-40 minutes for a savory side dish.

Mashed

Simply boil sweet potatoes until tender. Manually mash or use a hand mixer to blend potatoes and milk/milk alternative until creamy, add butter, cinnamon, maple syrup, or your own combination.



Frozen Produce

During the winter months it's harder to find quality fresh produce. Frozen produce is a great way to make sure you're still getting fresh nutritious fruits and vegetables year round.

Whether you buy it from the grocery store or have produce frozen from the past growing season, they are just as nutritious as fresh fruits and vegetables since they are frozen at peak freshness.

FEBRUARY Fiber



Gut, Digestive, and Cardiovascular Health

Grain Bowl

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups sweet potato, cubed
- 1 pound Brussels sprouts, cut in halves
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 1 16 ounce can of black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup of barley/brown rice/quinoa (*grain of choice*)
- 2-3 teaspoons salt and pepper
- 2-3 teaspoons ground chili/garlic/cumin powder

Optional

- 1-2 tablespoons oil, for roasting vegetables
- 1-2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, dressing

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400° F.
2. Cook grain of choice as indicated on package.
3. Combine diced sweet potato, cut brussels sprouts, and onion in large bowl, add optional oil, season with black pepper, ground chili/garlic/cumin.
4. Roast vegetables 20-35 minutes, or until tender.
5. Heat black beans with cumin and garlic powder.
6. Combine ingredients together, with grains as the base, and top with balsamic vinegar.

TIP

Grain Bowls are excellent ways to eat a variety of different vegetables, legumes, and whole grains! Be sure to substitute whatever vegetables are in season.

Fiber February

What is fiber?

Fiber is a beneficial type of carbohydrate that enhances gut and digestive health in addition to cardiovascular health. Since fiber is not digested by the body, it helps regulate blood sugar and hunger levels. There are two types of fiber: soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber is dissolved in water and can help lower cholesterol and blood glucose. Insoluble fiber, which cannot dissolve in water, helps food pass

through the digestive tract aiding in regularity and limiting constipation.

Fiber is exclusively found in plant sources: whole grains, fruits and vegetables, nuts and legumes. Try increasing your fiber intake by eating more whole grains such as oatmeal or whole wheat pasta, raw fruits and vegetables, or substitute beans or legumes in place of a meat once in a while.



MARCH–APRIL

Spinach

Vitamins B2, B6, K, E, A, Magnesium, Iron, Folate, Calcium, and Fiber



Green Goddess Smoothie

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups of spinach
- 1 apple of choice
- ½ cup frozen mango
- 1 frozen banana
- 1 cup of milk alternative or water (*more as needed*)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Blend all ingredients together until desired thickness, add more liquid as necessary.

Sauteed Spinach and Mushrooms

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups of spinach
- 8 ounce package of cremini mushrooms, chopped
- 1 white onion, diced
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 1 thumb size knob of ginger, minced
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Saute onion until soft.
2. Add ginger and garlic and cook until fragrant.
3. Add mushrooms, cook until soft.
4. Add spinach, cover, and cut off heat. Let steam for 1-2 minutes.
5. Serve as is or over pasta or rice.

APRIL

Asparagus

Vitamins C, A, E, B, Thiamin, Riboflavin, Niacin, Iron, and Copper



Grilled Asparagus

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound of asparagus
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ tablespoons soy sauce
- black pepper, to taste
- cooking spray

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Break off tough ends of asparagus.
2. Combine balsamic vinegar, lemon juice, olive oil, soy sauce and pepper in a zip lock bag.
3. Place asparagus in the bag and marinate for 30 minutes.
4. Remove from bag and place asparagus on a grill rack coated with cooking spray.
5. Grill for 5 minutes, rotating each side.

TIP

Best cooking methods

- Grilled Asparagus
- Steamed Asparagus & Pasta
- Raw, Shaved in Ribbons in a salad

Asparagus Fettuccine

INGREDIENTS

- 16 ounces fettuccine noodles
- salt to taste
- 6 ounces thin asparagus, cut into pieces
- ¼ stick butter
- ½ cup thinly sliced cooked ham
- ½ lemon (*juice only*)
- pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a pot of salted boiling water, add fettuccine noodles and cook per instructions.
2. Drain and add into a large saute pan.
3. Add butter, lemon, asparagus saute on low heat
4. Toss several times, add cooked ham, toss again, add pepper to taste

MAY

Beets & Strawberries



Beets: Folate, Betalain Antioxidant, Manganese, Potassium, Copper, and Fiber

Strawberries: Vitamin C, Manganese, Folate, and Potassium

Best Beet Cooking Methods

It is best to cook beets for a short amount of time to preserve their nutritional benefits.

- Steaming
- Roasting for under an hour on a low temperature

Fruit with Poppyseed Dressing

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 teaspoons white vinegar
- 2 teaspoons mustard
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ½ cup canola oil
- 1 teaspoon poppy seeds
- 1 fresh pineapple, cut into 1 ½-inch cubes
- 3 medium kiwifruit, halved and sliced
- 2 cups fresh strawberries, halved

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a small bowl, whisk the first 5 ingredients.
2. Gradually whisk in oil until blended. Stir in poppy seeds; let stand 1 hour.
3. In a large bowl, combine fruits. Drizzle with dressing; toss gently to coat.

TIP

Strawberry picking can be a fun, family friendly event. Make it a scavenger hunt and see who can collect the most berries.

JUNE

Cabbage



Vitamin C, K, B6, Fiber, and Potassium

Lightly Fried Cabbage

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium cabbage, chopped
- 1 medium white onion, diced
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 tablespoons of oil
- 1-2 teaspoons crushed red pepper (*to taste*)
- 1-2 tablespoons salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat pan and oil, fry onions for 1 minute.
2. Add cabbage and carrots, cook for 5 minutes or until tender with minimal stirring.
3. Add water to pan if cabbage starts to burn or stick.

Quick Pickle

INGREDIENTS

- ½ large red cabbage, shredded
- ½ cup of white vinegar
- ½ cup of apple cider vinegar
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup of pure cane sugar
- 3 teaspoon salt

Optional

- mustard seed
- caraway seed
- fresh cracked pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place shredded cabbage in glass jar.
2. Boil remaining ingredients, until sugar has dissolved.
3. Pour over cabbage, stir and seal jar.
4. Allow jar to come to room temperature or stand for at least an hour.
5. Once cooled place jar in refrigerator for up to two weeks, cabbage can be eaten after a full 24 hours.

TIP

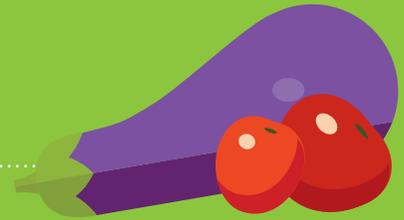
Pickled and fermented foods offer probiotic benefits to the body as good bacteria in your gut flourish in the presence of these foods. These healthy probiotics help to boost the immune system and strengthen the intestinal lining, warding off infection and disease.

Kombucha, kimchi, and pickled red cabbage are all good sources of probiotic rich fermented foods.

JULY

Eggplant

Fiber, Most B Vitamins, and Folate



Grilled Eggplant Provolone

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano
- 4 small eggplants, cut in half lengthwise
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- ½ pound deli-style thick-sliced mild provolone
- salsa to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk together the vinegar, oil, and oregano and brush on the cut sides of the eggplants. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
2. Preheat a gas grill to high; adjust the heat to medium after 15 minutes. (If cooking over charcoal, allow the coals to burn until they are covered with gray ash.)
3. Grill the eggplants cut-side down until browned, about 5 minutes.
4. Flip the eggplants and top each half with a slice of provolone. Grill 3 minutes more or until the cheese is bubbly.
5. Top with salsa to taste

TIP

You can cook eggplant with the skin on for added texture or peel some or all of the skin off. The fiber in plants is generally found in its skin, so cook with some of it to receive added fiber!

Late-Summer Sides

Tomatoes

Tomatoes are a good source of antioxidants, have anti-inflammatory effects, and are a source of Vitamin C, K, Biotin, and Potassium.

Best cooking method

Tomatoes are a food that are nutritionally more beneficial after being cooked:

Saute lightly, roast for a short amount of time, or add to soups and stews.

Sweet Corn

While being low in fat, corn is high in vitamin C, magnesium, and fiber.

Sweet corn is a staple VA crop that can be great grilled, roasted, or boiled! Sweet corn is a great edition to summer salads or right off the cob!



AUGUST

Summer Squash & Peaches

Copper, Fiber, and Vitamin C



Baked Squash Spears

INGREDIENTS

- 2 zucchinis, quartered lengthwise
- 2 yellow squash, quartered lengthwise
- ½ cup parmesan, grated
- ⅓ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt (or sea salt)
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoons olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and then lay an oven-safe cooling rack over the parchment paper.
3. Rub the cooling rack with ½ the olive oil to coat and then set aside.
4. In a small bowl, combine the parmesan, thyme, oregano, garlic powder, kosher salt, and pepper.
5. Place the sliced zucchini and squash in a medium mixing bowl and drizzle the remaining ½ tablespoons. olive oil over. Toss to coat evenly.
6. Add the parmesan-spice mixture and toss to coat.
7. Place the zucchini and squash spears onto the prepared cooling rack on the baking sheet.
8. Sprinkle any remaining parmesan-spice mixture from the bowl over the squash and zucchini.
9. Place into the oven and bake until tender, about 15-18 minutes.

Peaches

- Peaches are a great source of vitamins A, C, and fiber.
- Peaches can be great grilled or roasted for added complexity and flavor in many savory dishes.

TIP

Freezing produce for winter

Freezing your excess produce is the best way to make sure you have high quality fruits and vegetables through the winter months!

In order to prepare your vegetables for the freezer some varieties, such as peaches, green beans, peppers, tomatoes, and blueberries, may need to be blanched. Blanching is a process that helps maintain the flavor of the vegetables by partially cooking and flash freezing them.

SEPTEMBER

Winter Squash

Vitamins A, C, B6, and Fiber



Easy Roasted Spaghetti Squash

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium spaghetti squash
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (*oil of choice*)
- 1-2 teaspoons black pepper
- 1-2 teaspoons of sea salt
- garlic powder
- basil
- oregano
- favorite seasonings of choice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400° F.
2. Halve spaghetti squash and scrape out the pulp and seeds.
3. Lightly coat cut side of squash with oil, and season with salt, pepper and seasoning of choice.
4. Roast, cut side down, for 40-55 minutes or until the flesh pulls away easily with a fork.
5. Add your favorite marinara or meat sauce and vegetables and you have a quick and delicious side or main dish!

TIP

Try roasting any variety of winter squash for an easy side dish or add quinoa, black beans and peppers and stuff your squash for a hearty main dish.



Pickling/food storage for winter

Pickling or canning is an excellent way to make use of the abundance of fresh produce during the growing season.

Quick Pickle

Also known as refrigerator pickles, requires that vegetables be pickled in a vinegar, water, and salt solution, then stored in the refrigerator.

Traditional

Canning requires that vegetables and fruits be processed in a brine, boiling water, or syrup and sealed in an airtight container through boiling or pressure cooking.

OCTOBER

Collard Greens & Peppers



Vitamins C, A, B, K, Fiber, Calcium, Manganese, and Folate

Raw Wraps

INGREDIENTS

- 2 collard green leaves
- 2 carrots
- 1 medium cucumber
- 1-2 tablespoons hummus
- 1 bell pepper, sliced into strips
- 1 cup of green or red cabbage, shredded
- ½ cup of cooked quinoa

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Steam collards for 5 minutes, cool and trim stem.
2. Layer hummus, quinoa, and vegetables and roll wrap.

Black-eyed Pea and Collard Stew

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound of black-eyed peas (*preferably fresh, but works well with dried or frozen out of season peas*)
- ½ pound of collard greens
- 1 large onion, diced
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 can of stewed tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon sea salt
- crushed red pepper to taste
- garlic powder to taste
- chili powder to taste
- cumin to taste
- 1-2 tablespoons light oil of choice
- 4 cups water or vegetable broth (*or half and half*)
- Optional: 2-3 slices of smoked meat

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Saute onions and garlic until fragrant.
2. Add peas and cook for 1-2 minutes, and water and/or broth combo and bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat add collards, seasonings and stewed tomatoes.
4. Cook until peas are tender (aprx. 30-40 minutes).

Versatile Vegetables

Peppers

Bell peppers are an excellent source of Vitamins C, A, and B6.

Peppers can be eaten raw, sauteed, used in stir fry, and grilled. They are especially versatile, nutritious vegetables.

NOVEMBER Broccoli



Vitamins C and K, Chromium, Folate, and Fiber

Simple Steamed Broccoli

INGREDIENTS

- 1 head of broccoli, cut into florets
- 1 white onion, sliced into strips
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons of oil of choice
- 1-4 tablespoons of water as needed

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Saute onions and garlic in oil until onions are translucent and garlic fragrant.
2. Add 1-2 tablespoons of water and broccoli, cover and steam for up to 10 minutes.

TIP

The best way to retain all the nutrients from broccoli is to steam it, and expose it to as little direct water contact as possible. The best cooking time is around 5 minutes, no longer than 10 minutes due to nutrient loss.

Stir-fry

INGREDIENTS

- 2 heads of broccoli, cut into florets
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, sliced into thin strips
- 4 ounces of sliced mushrooms
- 1 cup of string beans

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine ingredients to make sauce, set aside.
2. Saute onions add carrots and cook for 1-2 minutes.
3. Add broccoli and string beans, cook until both are tender.
4. Add mushrooms and let cook until soft, add sauce and lower heat. Stir until sauce has thickened, this should happen rather quickly.
5. Eat over rice or as an easy side dish.

SAUCE

- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons or to taste of sriracha
- 1-2 tablespoons of maple syrup or brown sugar
- 3 cloves of garlic minced
- 1 nub of ginger minced
- ¼ cup water + 2 tablespoons cornstarch

TIP

If you have leftover rice add it to the vegetable mixture before adding sauce, warm rice, and add sauce for an easy at home vegetable fried rice!

DECEMBER

Potatoes

Vitamin B6 and Potassium



Mixed Potato Stew

INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium yellow potatoes, cubed
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, cubed
- 1 15 ounce can of black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup of frozen corn
- 1 can of diced tomatoes (*drained*)
- 1 medium onion
- 3-4 cloves of garlic minced
- 2 cups of vegetable stock
- 1-2 cups of water
- smoked paprika
- curry powder
- sea salt
- black pepper/
crushed red pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Saute onions until soft with 1-2 tablespoons of oil (or 2 tablespoons of water) add garlic, cook until fragrant.
2. Season with black and red pepper, smoked paprika, and curry powder.
3. Add yellow and sweet potatoes, cook for 2-3 minutes without covering.
4. Add vegetable stock and water as needed, cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook for 25-30 minutes, until potatoes are fork tender.
5. During the last 10 minutes add corn and tomatoes.
6. Serve as main dish or side.

Are Carbs the Enemy? Busting the Carbohydrate Myth

Everything has "carbs"

While everything has carbs, processed carbs are what most people want to watch. Processed carbs, such as white bread, can spike blood sugar while alternatives like whole grain bread don't cause a spike in blood sugar and have fiber.

Processed/refined foods

Refined carbohydrates such as white bread and white rice are products that have been stripped of many of their nutritional properties, in particular fiber. This makes these foods higher in calories and filled with processed sugars and fat (i.e. snack pastries and ready to eat meals).





Virginia Hunger Solutions is an initiative of the Virginia Poverty Law Center to fight hunger and improve the nutrition, health, and well-being of children and families throughout the Commonwealth who struggle with poverty.

The project was launched on November 1, 2013, with funding from the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC). Its mission is advanced through public education, advocacy, and outreach.

This nutrition guide was written by Imani Duck and Kathleen Murphy. With gratitude to sponsors for their contributions to make this guide possible.

Learn more at www.vahungersolutions.org