

Get to Know Your Gourds!!

Fall 2017 Nutrition Newsletter

We are currently in the season of “Pumpkin spice everything” but beyond pumpkin there are many other gourds that provide great taste and nutritional benefits to meals and snacks. All of the gourds listed can be found at your local grocery stores or farmer’s markets. Read below to learn how to incorporate some of these vegetables into your everyday routine and enjoy the fruits of Fall.



Spaghetti Squash: Spaghetti squash is not only full of a wide variety of nutrients but it is also a wonderful substitute for pasta. Upon roasting a spaghetti squash the flesh of the squash can be scrapped out and looks just like thin noodles. Spaghetti squash provides a host of different B-vitamins along with folate which is very important in fetal development and also in preventing certain types of anemia in adults. If you are trying to watch your weight or control your blood glucose level, replace a cup of pasta (240 calories and 45g of carbohydrates) with one cup of spaghetti squash which is only 40kcal and 10g of carbohydrates. Top the spaghetti squash with pesto or red sauce for a low-carb side dish to a main entrée.



Acorn Squash: Acorn squash gets its name since it is shaped similar to an acorn. This winter gourd packs a huge punch of both vitamin A, which assists with eye health and the health of your skin and also Vitamin C which is also good for your skin since it helps with collagen production. Acorn squash is a wonderful side dish to any holiday meal. Replacing mashed potatoes (which come in at 200 calories and 35 grams carbohydrates per cup) with mashed acorn squash will reduce the total carbohydrate and calorie value of the side dish along with increasing satiety since it boasts 6 grams of dietary fiber per cup.



Butternut Squash: Nothing quite says fall like roasted butternut squash! 1 cup of butternut squash contains over 500mg of potassium, 7g of fiber and only 100 calories. Butternut squash can also help boost immune function and promote whole body health due to its high content of vitamin C and other antioxidants which makes this the perfect side dish during flu and cold season. Butternut squash is simple to turn into a luscious soup (see the back for a recipe) but is also delicious roasted or mashed.



Pumpkin: Pumpkin is so much more than a classic Halloween decoration; the most famous fall gourd is just as high in potassium and Vitamin C as the other gourds and is also very low in total calories (only 50 calories per cup cooked) so it can be mixed into oatmeal, smoothies and other baked goods to provide tons of flavor with none of the guilt. Roasted pumpkin seeds are also a huge asset to your heart health since they contain phytosterols that have been shown to help reduce LDL cholesterol.

Creamy Butternut-Leek Bisque

(Recipe from Cooking Light Website: www.cookinglight.com)

Ingredients:

- 2 Tbs. Olive Oil
- 2 Large Leeks (2 ½ cups chopped)
- ½ cup of uncooked quinoa rinsed and drained
- 3 cups of water
- 1 ½ tsp. of Kosher salt
- 2 (12oz) packages of pre-chopped fresh butternut squash
- 3 sprigs of thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ tsp. ground white pepper
- 1 cup of 2% Greek yogurt, divided
- 6 Tbs. of sliced almonds
- 3 Tbs. Chopped Flat leaf parsley



Instructions:

- Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium. Add leeks; cook, stirring often, until tender, about 5 minutes. Add quinoa; cook, stirring constantly, until toasted, about 3 minutes.
- Add water, salt, squash, thyme, bay leaf, and pepper.
- Increase heat to high; bring to a boil.
- Cover and reduce heat to medium-low; cook until squash is very tender, about 15 minutes.
- Discard thyme and bay leaf.
- Pour squash mixture into a blender; add ½ cup yogurt.
- Remove center piece of blender lid (to allow steam to escape); secure lid on blender. Place a clean towel over opening in lid. Process until smooth.
- Ladle soup into bowls; top with remaining yogurt and almonds. If desired, sprinkle with parsley.

Nutrition Information

- Serves 6 (1 cup of soup + 4Tbs of Yogurt & 1Tbs of Sliced Almonds)
- 1 serving= 226 calories, 9.2g of fat, 1.5g of saturated fat, 31g of carbohydrates, 5g of fiber, 6g of sugar, 8g of Protein, 128mg of calcium, 506mg of sodium