Select Fall Fruits and Vegetables for a Healthy Diet

As the weather cools, many local gardeners are planting fall crops of fruits and vegetables. With the health-conscious emphasis on eating more fruits and vegetables, Fall crops can provide many varieties of these foods to include in your daily diet. Here are a few locally produced products that will start showing up in your local farmers’ market and grocery stores:

**Sweet Potatoes** — packed with vitamin A, potassium and vitamin C, this vegetable is packed full of nutrition. Choose sweet potatoes with no cracks or bruises. After purchase, sweet potatoes should be stored in a cool, dark, well-ventilated place. If stored in a too-warm place they will begin to sprout and become woody. Once cooked, sweet potatoes can be stored for up to 1 week in the refrigerator.

**Baked Sweet Potato Fries**

**Ingredients**
- 2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into wedges
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1-2 tablespoons your choice of spice (cinnamon, pumpkin spice)

**Method**
1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. Place sweet potatoes in a bowl and mix with olive oil, salt, and selected spice.
3. Remove from bowl and place on baking sheet.
4. Bake in preheated 450 degree oven for 30 minutes.

**Collard Greens and Turnip Greens** — pick greens that are young and tender and free of bruises. Greens offer high levels of folate (B-vitamin complex) and vitamins A and C. Fall greens are low in calories and high in fiber, which adds to a healthy diet. Fresh greens will keep up to a week in the refrigerator. After purchase, it is important to wash the greens several times in cool water. The stalks are generally too tough to eat, so strip leaves from the stalks and tear into small pieces before cooking.
Cooking Collards

Place in large pot with about two inches of water. Add torn collard or turnip greens to water and boil until tender (about 40 minutes). Add lean meat, salt to taste and other spices like red peppers, garlic and onion. Serve with hot pepper sauce and sliced onions or other desired relishes.

Peanuts — Nutritionally, peanuts are high in protein and niacin. Green (fresh, raw) peanuts are popular in the South and are harvested in the fall. Look for green peanuts to show up in the local farmer’s market and grocery stores in the early fall months. They have a relatively short season making them sought-after by those who have a taste for Southern-style boiled peanuts. Raw peanuts are popular for roasting, boiling and using in candy recipes.

Boiling Peanuts

Wash the unshelled peanuts several times to remove dirt and debris. This recipe can be doubled or tripled.

Ingredients

- 1 pound of raw “green” peanuts (not the color green, but fresh, raw peanuts are called green peanuts)
- ¼ cup kosher salt, or 2 tablespoons table salt
- 4 cups water

Optional seasonings

- 2 tablespoons Old Bay Seasoning, smoked paprika, shrimp-boil mix, Cajun seasoning, or even star anise

Method

1. Place water, salt, seasoning, and peanuts in a large stockpot. Bring to a boil.
2. Cover and boil gently for 2-3 hours or longer, until peanuts reach desired level of softness.
3. Drain. Peanuts are ready to eat. Any uneaten peanuts should be refrigerated for up to a week. Boiled peanuts may also be frozen.

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