



MEDIA RELEASE
For immediate release

7th April 2016

Take comfort in a rich autumn harvest

As the days grow shorter, and the temperature starts cooling, autumn offers a spectacular harvest of goodness to create healthy meals, says 5+ A Day.

From juicy mandarins and crisp nashi pears, to hearty pumpkins and nutritious greens, autumn's produce offers plenty of tasty options.

"Throughout the cooler months it is important to eat at least five servings of fresh fruit and vegetables to stay healthy," says Sue Pollard, CEO of the New Zealand Nutrition Foundation.

"Autumn produce contains vitamins, minerals, fibre and phytochemicals that have different disease-fighting elements. These compounds may be important in reducing the risk of many conditions, including heart disease, and boosting immunity before winter sets in."

Here are some quick tips on how to enjoy autumn produce.

Mandarins

For a healthy workday lunch, gently toss together mandarin segments, salad greens, chopped cucumber, snow peas, thinly sliced spring onion, sliced capsicum and cooked shredded chicken. Squeeze over the juice of half a lemon and a drizzle of olive oil. Freshly made salsas are a great way to add a sweet and tangy flavour burst to autumn dishes. Peel and dice mandarin segments and mix with finely chopped red onion, a squeeze of fresh lemon juice, olive oil and chopped coriander. For an extra kick, add some chilli. Mix gently and serve with grilled chicken breast or with tacos.

Why are mandarins good for you?

Orange fruit and vegetables have an array of antioxidants that have a variety of health benefits. Important in this group are carotenoids, which are important for eye health and functioning of cells. Mandarins are a good source of vitamin C, which helps fight infection.

Butternut

Naturally sweet and creamy, butternut is a versatile and popular vegetable that tastes similar to pumpkin. The flavour of pears and earthy goodness of butternut makes a great combination. For an easy soup, heat oil in a pot and add a large diced onion. Cook until translucent. Add a peeled, seeded and diced butternut and two peeled diced pears. Pour over vegetable stock and simmer until butternut is soft. Remove from heat, leave to cool, then puree with a stick blender. For a zesty zing, toss butternut slices with olive oil and chilli powder. Roast in an oven until soft. Whisk together lime juice, coriander, honey and olive oil. Arrange salad greens on a plate then top with the roasted butternut. Drizzle over the dressing.

Why is butternut good for you?

Carotenoids are a group of pigments that give fruit and vegetables their vibrant orange, yellow and green colours. Some carotenoids can be converted into vitamin A by the body, which is important for growth, supporting the immune system and maintaining normal vision. The brighter and stronger the colour of a butternut, the more carotenoids it will contain.

Nashi pears

Also called the Asian pear, this fruit is crisp, sweet and juicy with the texture of a pear. Smooth and round, with a yellow skin, nashi pears can be eaten raw or used in cooked dishes. They can replace apples in many recipes, and keep their shape during cooking. For an autumnal salad, toss together salad greens, dates, prosciutto, mint and nashi pear that has been sliced and cored. Drizzle over a light vinaigrette and serve. For a healthy dessert, cut and core nashi pears. In a bowl, mix ricotta cheese, honey, ground ginger and ground cinnamon. Fill the centre of each pear with the ricotta filling and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Why are nashi pears good for you?

White, tan and brown fruit and vegetables contain varying amounts of phytochemicals. Nashi pears are also a source of folate, essential for producing red blood cells.

Feijoas

Native to South America, feijoas were introduced to New Zealand in the 1920s. The fruit has grown in popularity and can be used in a variety of different dishes such as baking, preserves as well as in savoury dishes. For a salsa, peel and finely chop feijoas and red onion and gently mix. Add freshly chopped coriander, a drizzle of olive oil, a squeeze of lemon juice and season. Make ahead an hour or two for full flavour. Serve with fish, chicken, or potato wedges.

Why are feijoas good for you?

Green fruit and vegetables have varying amounts of lutein that may have health promoting benefits. Fresh feijoas are a good source of vitamin C, which helps the body to absorb iron from food.

Passionfruit

Passionfruit has a seed-filled pulp that can be easily scooped out with a spoon. The sweet-tart tropical flavour combines well with other fruits. It is usually served fresh and can be added to fruit salads, served over yoghurt and is good in drinks.

Why are passionfruit good for you?

Purple fruit and vegetables contain health-promoting phytochemicals that may have antioxidant and anti-aging benefits. Purple passionfruit is high in vitamin C, essential for a healthy immune system, and dietary fibre to aid digestion.

ENDS

Prepared on behalf of 5+ A Day by Bloom PR. For more information, interviews or images please contact Shelley Ashdown on shelley@bloompr.co.nz or 021 912 221.