

## Go "Orange"

When you choose an orange-fleshed fruit or veggie you can be guaranteed a healthy dose of Beta Carotene (a form of Vitamin A). Brightly colored fruits and veggies are packed with this important nutrient which is beneficial for eyesight, helps maintain the health of the cornea, and tissue growth and healing. Beta Carotene promotes healthy skin and helps in the prevention of infection. Since too much vitamin A can cause toxicity, it's best to get it in its natural form of whole foods rather than a supplement. Beta Carotene is not limited to just orange fruits & veggies, you also find it in dark leafy greens, broccoli, peppers, tomatoes, and yellow produce. But, a major indicator of beta carotene being present in produce is the color orange, you're sure to get a whopping dose if you remember that simple tip.

This time of year, orange produce is not hard to find. There's juicy oranges & mandarins, a variety of brightly colored & shaped squashes, a wide array of sweet potatoes and yams, as well as nutrient dense and exotic persimmons. To make the most of the season's bounty try some of these fruits and veggies.

- **Oranges:** Squeeze a fresh orange daily. You'll also be getting a healthy dose of vitamin C. Those little mandarins are a great snack mid-day and easily fit into a lunch bag.

Use fresh squeezed OJ in squash soup for a double dose of beta carotene, in vinaigrettes, and smoothies to add natural sweetness. Peeled, segmented, and added to sliced fennel with some of the fresh juice squeezed on top makes for a beautiful, simple and delicious salad.

- **Squash:** Pumpkin, butter nut, spaghetti, acorn and many more organic and heirloom varieties provide a diverse selection to experiment with.

Use roasted, steamed or baked squash in soup recipes, for sweet desserts and custards, or to stuff for a stunning vegetarian entrée at holidays and gatherings, or as a filling side dish at dinner.

**Sweet potatoes and yams:** Cut into chunks and roast with olive oil, garlic and rosemary for a mouth-watering side dish. A fun alternative is to also cut into French-fries, coat with olive oil and bake @ 400 degrees then sprinkle with some chili powder for a healthier fry.

Mash and drizzle with maple syrup, agave nectar or honey to enjoy as a low fat, nutrient-dense dessert.

Puree and use in soups or bake as you would a regular potato, using your favorite toppings.

Please enjoy the following vitamin A packed recipes. Two of our own yogi's, Carole Cecil (student) and Michelle Ringgold (instructor) are featured this time. I have personally tried both of these recipes and can vouch for the mouth-watering factor of both.

### **Curried Squash & Mushroom Soup**

submitted by Michelle Ringgold as printed in Moosewood Kitchen cookbook

- 2 medium acorn or butternut squash
- 2 1/2 cups water or stock
- 1 cup orange juice
- 2 tbs. butter or oil
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 or 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 6 oz. sliced mushrooms, any variety..wild are exceptional
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin, coriander and cinnamon
- 3/4 tsp ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp dry mustard
- 1 1/4 tsp salt

A few dashes of cayenne (be careful) and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice (opt) Cook squash until soft. Cool and scoop out inside. You'll need about 3 cups. Put in blender with water or sock and puree until smooth. Combine in stock pot with orange juice..

Heat butter or oil in skillet adding onion, salt and spice. Sautee until onions start to soften then add garlic (add a little water or stock if sticking). Add mushrooms, cover and cook about 8-10 minutes.

Add the sauté to the squash, scraping the good stuff at the bottom of pan or using more stock or water to deglaze the pan. Heat everything together very gently. Taste to correct seasoning and add more to taste. Adding fresh squeezed lemon juice spruces it up nicely.

Serve topped with non-fat yogurt and pumpkin seeds or pepitas to fancy it up. This soup is even better the following day.

### **Pumpkin "Pudding"**

- 1/2 cup pumpkin puree
- 1/2 cup applesauce
- 1/2 cup low fat vanilla or plain yogurt (soy or dairy)

- Dash of cinnamon, pumpkin pie spice, cardamom, or Chinese 5 spice powder for an exotic flavor
- Dried fruit or nuts (opt)

Mix all ingredients and enjoy. For fancier dessert, layer with crushed gingersnaps or vanilla wafers.

### **Smokey Sweet Yam Quesadillas –serves 4**

submitted by Carol Cecil

#### **Ingredients**

- 2 large yams or sweet potatoes (I've used both without any preference); 1 can mashed sweet potato or pumpkin can be used, too.
- 1 teaspoon minced chipotles
- 2 green onions
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 1 cup shredded cheese such as mozzarella or Monterey jack
- 4 (8-inch) flour tortillas
- salt and pepper to taste
- Homemade or bottled salsa (optional)
  - Wash the yam, cut into pieces and boil until fork tender, about 20 minutes.
  - If you have time, bake the yam in a 400F oven 1 hour or until a fork pierces skin easily. Make sure you pierce the skin before baking. The natural sugars caramelize and increase the flavor.
  - You can microwave the yam until it's soft and tender or use canned.
  - The yam can be prepared ahead of time and used when needed
  - Finely chop the chipotle peppers.
  - Thinly slice the green onions and chop the cilantro.
  - Mash the cooked potato with the chipotle peppers until smooth. Season with salt & pepper to taste.
  - Place tortilla on flat surface. Spread half of the tortilla with the yam mixture. Sprinkle with grated cheese, green onions and cilantro. Fold over to form a half moon, enclosing the fillings.
  - Remember to divide the fillings evenly among the tortillas.
  - Heat a non-stick skillet over medium heat. Pan fry two tortillas at a time. Cook for 3 minutes on each side or until lightly brown and crisp and the cheese has melted.
  - Serve with salsa, sour cream or non-fat yogurt.

Don't miss out on all the goodness that's in nature's bounty.....pure, whole, simple and healing.

NAMASTE