



CHEAT SHEET

Eat Your Veggies

Everybody and their brother knows you're supposed to eat lots of vegetables. Veggies are nutrient powerhouses of vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and antioxidants – all crucial to health and vibrancy. Eating lots of them (at least 5 cups a day) dramatically reduces your risk of chronic disease. People who chow down on plenty of vegetables every day have a reduced risk of things like cardiovascular disease, multiple forms of cancer, high blood pressure, imbalanced blood lipids, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke, etc. And if that wasn't enough motivation, filling up on veggies can help you shed fat by making you feel fuller and gradually reducing imbalanced cravings by filling up your micronutrient storage tanks.

Following are some basic prep ideas to inspire you to up your daily veg intake.

Eat 'em raw!

Try them in salads, as veggie sticks like celery, baby carrots, or bell peppers, or throw some into a smoothie. A big handful of baby spinach goes right in and you don't even taste it (though your shake will turn the color of Kermit the Frog ~ a small price to pay :-). Stemmed kale, baked sweet potato, cooked or canned pumpkin, cucumber, celery and avocado can all go into a smoothie as well.

Steam 'em!

Use a steamer pot if you have one or just place them into a small amount of boiling water and cover with a lid. Different veggies need different amounts of time to steam, but it speeds things up to cut them into bite-sized pieces, especially harder veggies like carrots or beets. Many vegetables, like summer squash, green beans, bok choy, fresh peas, or broccolini, take less than 5 minutes to steam. Season with salt and pepper and any herbs or spices you enjoy, or dress lightly with a little oil or a tasty vinaigrette for a super-simple mealtime side.

Grill 'em!

Cut them into 1-1 ½-inch chunks, thread them on skewers, coat them lightly with olive oil and grill them for 5-10 minutes, turning frequently until soft. Try cremini mushrooms, yellow squash, bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, sweet onion, etc.

TIP: For more consistent grilling times, group veggies on kebabs by their relative firmness. Thread soft veg, like tomatoes and zucchini, on one skewer, and firmer veggies, like mushrooms, onions and peppers, on another.

With larger, soft veggies, you can also make slightly thicker slices (1/3-inch), lightly oil them, and lay them right on the grill. Try zucchini, eggplant, or Portobello mushroom caps.

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Eat Your Veggies!, continued.

Soup 'em!

Chop them into 1-inch pieces and toss them in with some prepared veggie or chicken broth. Simmer them until soft, add a little red or white wine, salt, pepper, maybe a dash of hot sauce, and any herbs or spices you like and voila – simple veggie soup! Try diced canned tomatoes, green beans, carrot coins, bell peppers, onions, sugar snap peas, etc.

Roast 'em!

Roasting works really well with sweet root vegetables, like carrots, parsnips and winter squashes, and hardy greens, like Brussels sprouts, kale, green beans and asparagus. Dice harder root vegetables into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pieces. Green vegetables can be lightly chopped. Coat veggies very lightly with olive or coconut oil and roast them at 375 degrees F. Sweet potatoes take about 30 minutes, winter squash takes about 35 minutes, beets take about 40 minutes, Brussels sprouts take about 30 minutes, and kale takes about 20 minutes. See [What to Do with Winter Squash](#) for more cooking techniques.

Bed 'em down!

Are you having a piece of meat or fish for dinner? Try sautéing a mess of tender green leafies in a bit of olive oil over medium heat in a skillet or sauté pan and make a bed of greens for your meat. Try spinach, escarole or young collard greens. You can just chop your greens, or, for bigger leaves, roll them up together like a cigar and slice the roll into thin ribbons. If the leaves are tougher, like kale, add a little water to your sauté pan, cover, and steam for a few minutes until soft.

