

Cooperative Extension

Promoting Healthy Families, Schools and Communities: Making a Difference

Root-to-Fruit Cooking:

Save Money and Reduce Waste!



Jennifer Taylor, RDN, CHES, FCHS Educator, Passaic County

Have you noticed that increasing food costs are affecting everyone? The cost of food for home purchase rose 11.4% in 2022 and there was a 5.8% increase in May of this year compared to last year. The US Department of Agriculture expects prices to continue this trend through the rest of the year.

How can you make the most of your food budget? Try Root-to-Fruit cooking, the plant-based version of the Nose-to-Tail movement. This method encourages using all edible parts of plants, some commonly thought of as scraps, to ensure your produce purchase goes further. Following Root-to-Fruit principles will also reduce food waste by minimizing what you throw away.

Not all parts of plants, however, are safe to eat! For example, tomato and potato leaves, stems, and sprouts are toxic. While rhubarb stems are edible, the leaves are poisonous. Be cautious when starting out with Root-to-Fruit cooking and confirm what you are using is safe to eat.

Here are some simple ways to get started with Root-to-Fruit cooking.

First, always remember to wash all your produce well!

- ✓ **Make your own vegetable stock:** Keep a zip top bag in the freezer and add your scraps to it when cooking. Once you have enough, put the bag contents into a pot (add a bay leaf too) and cover with water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes then strain well. Some items that work well for stock include onions and garlic skins; carrot skins, roots, and tops; any parts of celery or tomatoes; mushroom stems; delicate herb stems like parsley and thyme; and the greens and root ends of leeks. *Do not use cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower or strong flavored items like peppers.*
- ✓ **Double your cauliflower:** Cut up the core and stalks of cauliflower along with the florets. The stalk and core should be cut smaller than the florets as they will take longer to cook.
- ✓ **Use your stalks:** Just like cauliflower, broccoli stalks are edible and often wasted. Trim off tough parts and peel if woody, then chop into 1-inch pieces. Add to a food processor and pulse until about the size of rice. You can then sauté and use it as a base for a burrito bowl, fried rice, rice salad, or a simple side dish.

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Foods to Avoid on a Heart Healthy Diet

Karen Ensle EdD, RDN, FAND, CFCS, FCHS Educator, Union County



Foods to avoid for your heart health? are those packed with harmful fats, sodium, and added sugar. No single food can destroy a balanced eating plan, but a steady diet of these foods/beverages which are poor choices, can harm your heart health over time.

Processed meats: Cold cuts such as salami, pepperoni, smoked sausages, breakfast meats such as bacon and sausage along with an American favorite at ball games, hot dogs, are among the processed meats to avoid. Many processed meats -- which are

produced by curing, salting, and smoking supply sodium, and saturated fat. Excess salt consumption raises blood pressure, and high intakes of saturated fat increase the concentration of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, that create clogged arteries. Limit cold cuts such as bologna, salami and those mentioned above to less than once a week, or rarely.

◆ **Fried foods:** fried fish and chicken, mozzarella sticks, French fries, and doughnuts are often prepared in partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs), which are major sources of trans fat. PHOs are banned in U.S. packaged products but may still be found in restaurant and bakery foods. Trans fat boosts levels of LDL cholesterol and reduces beneficial high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL) in your blood, setting the stage for plaque buildup in arteries. Make healthier baked or pan-fried versions of your favorite restaurant fare at home.

◆ **Snack chips:** Snack chips are ultra-processed foods. For the most part, they have been stripped of nutrients essential to heart health, including fiber, vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients. Research links ultra-processed foods like snack chips with weight gain, high blood pressure, and heart disease risk. Chips also contain sodium and saturated fat and other ultra-processed foods like cookies, candy, and granola bars we often overeat. Instead, snack on ¼ cup of unsalted or lightly salted nuts instead of chips. Nuts supply heart-healthy fat, protein, fiber, and other nutrients for a healthy heart.

◆ **Coconut oil:** has a negative effect on your arteries and heart health. A review of research studies from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health shows that using coconut oil results in much higher LDL cholesterol, as compared to oils with less saturated fat, such as canola. Although all oils have saturated fat in them, coconut oil has the highest level and "takes the cake." A tablespoon of coconut oil contains 11 grams of saturated fat -- half of the suggested daily amount on a 2,000-calorie eating plan, while the same amount of canola oil supplies about 1 gram of saturated fat. Use canola, corn, olive, safflower, and sunflower oils for cooking and dressings.

◆ **Canned soup:** A single serving of many canned soups adds is almost half of the suggested daily sodium intake for adults which is 2,300 milligrams on a regular diet. Excess sodium in the bloodstream increases pressure on blood vessels, often encouraging artery clogging. Choose canned soups that supply no more than 480 milligrams of sodium per serving or less. In addition to sodium, creamy soups such as chowders and bisques can contain between 25% to 50% of your daily saturated fat intake. Select lower-sodium soups with less than 3 grams of saturated fat per serving.

◆ **Sugary drinks:** Sugary beverages, such as soda, coffee drinks, and energy drinks, are the number one source of added sugar in the American diet. Large amounts of added sugar spell trouble for heart health, especially when paired with saturated fat or trans-

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Waste Not, Want Not: Ensuring Summer

Produce Goes to Good Use

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As much as 40%
of our food supply
goes to waste.



Farewell, Summer!

It's the most wonderful time of year for fresh produce enthusiasts! Summer is winding down, which means that an abundance of produce may be filling your kitchen. After all, even the biggest veggie-lovers often end up with more than they can handle, whether you have an excess of garden tomatoes or other vegetables from your CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) box you

don't know how to use. Here are some tips for using all your fresh produce so nothing goes to waste.

Currently we throw away between 30-40% of the food that is produced in the US every year. This is problematic for the environment since food waste is a major producer of greenhouse gases. Wasting food also wastes the resources that went into growing that food and getting it to the consumer. That includes land, water, energy, and labor. Food waste is also an expensive problem, as we waste \$218 billion of food annually, which breaks down to an average of about \$2300 per year for a family of four. To learn more about food waste and its environmental and economic impacts, read this Rutgers fact sheet njaes.rutgers.edu/fs1331/.

Although this is a major global issue, each of us can do our part to reduce food waste. Use the ideas in this article to prevent food waste from your summer produce this year.

Home Food Preservation

Ensure that your produce lasts by canning, freezing, dehydrating, pickling. These methods require some know-how but are relatively easy to do once you learn the steps; plus, they result in delicious foods you can enjoy year-round. Rutgers Department of Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS) can help you learn to preserve food in the webinar series *RU Ready to Preserve Food at Home?* sebsnjaesnews.rutgers.edu/2021/04/fchs-asks-ru-ready-to-preserve-food-at-home/. Also refer to the National Center for Home Food Preservation for other expert resources at <https://nchfp.uga.edu/#gsc.tab=0>.

Try A New Recipe

In a recipe rut? Use your produce as inspiration to try something new and search for recipe ideas that feature the produce you have on hand. Consider making recipes that will allow vegetables to stay edible longer such as soups, chili, stews, or casseroles, which can be refrigerated or frozen to save for later. Got herbs? Use them to add flavor to a variety of dishes! Find nutritious, veggie-heavy recipes on Rutgers' FCHS webpage, njaes.rutgers.edu/fchs/recipes/.

Keep it Simple!

Sometimes the simplest approach is the best! Fresh, raw veggies can be used to create delicious platters – make one for yourself, to share at an event, or as a quick and easy side dish at dinnertime. Tired of all those veggies? Fruit salads or platters are always a crowd-pleaser, even for the pickiest eaters. Slicing up fruit allows you to cut off any bruises or bad spots without wasting the good parts.

Donating

Food pantries and soup kitchens consistently lack donations of fresh produce. Have you already given your friends and neighbors all the garden cucumbers they can handle? Summer in New Jersey may be the ideal time to use that bounty to help alleviate food insecurity close to home. Call your local food pantry or soup kitchen to ask if they accept donations of whatever produce you have. If you need help finding your closest one, the website [AmpleHarvest.org](https://www.ampleharvest.org) allows you to search by location and matches you with a local organization that accepts donations of fresh produce.

Composting

Uneaten fruit and vegetables, scraps, peels, and cores can be used for composting. Composting is a natural process that allows microbes to break down certain materials into their mineral components. The finished product can be added to

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The Mediterranean Diet: A Pathway to Health and Well-being

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At the heart of the Mediterranean diet lies a philosophy of simplicity, balance, and sheer enjoyment of food. Inspired by the traditional eating habits of Mediterranean countries such as Egypt, Greece, Italy, and Spain, this style of eating has gained worldwide recognition for its ability to reduce the risk of chronic diseases while providing a variety of nutritional benefits.

The Mediterranean diet is characterized by a high consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and olive oil. It also includes moderate portions of fish, poultry, dairy products, and red wine, while limiting the intake of red meat and processed foods. From ripe tomatoes and luscious berries to leafy greens and succulent olives, the Mediterranean diet encourages you to savor the bounty of nature.

Let's look at the many advantages the Mediterranean diet offers:

- 1. Heart Health:** Studies consistently show that the Mediterranean diet is associated with a reduced risk of heart disease. It promotes a lower intake of saturated and trans fats while emphasizing healthy monounsaturated fats found in olive oil. The diet's abundance of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains provide essential nutrients and fiber that support cardiovascular health.
- 2. Reduced Risk of Chronic Diseases:** Following the Mediterranean diet is associated with decreased risk of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, and neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. Its emphasis on whole foods, antioxidants, and anti-inflammatory components helps protect cells from damage and supports overall well-being.
- 3. Weight Management:** The Mediterranean diet is not only healthy but also sustainable for weight management. Its emphasis on whole, nutrient-dense foods helps control appetite, prevent overeating, and promote a balanced caloric intake. The inclusion of healthy fats and protein sources, along with fiber-rich foods, aids in satiety and long-term weight control.
- 4. Enhanced Mood and Mental Health:** Research shows that adhering to the Mediterranean diet is associated with a reduced risk of depression and improved mental well-being. The consumption of nutrient-dense foods and healthy fats supports brain health and the production of feel-good neurotransmitters.

Some general tips to make healthier foods choices:

- ✓ **Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables** in a variety of colors every day such as carrots, leafy greens, eggplants, and peppers.
- ✓ **When buying whole grains** - check the food label to ensure the first ingredient listed contains the word "whole". This confirms the product is made from 100% of the grain.
- ✓ **Get your primary sources of protein** from seafood, beans, peas, lentils, soybeans, seeds, and nuts.
- ✓ **Focus on heart-healthy fats** such as avocados, olives, peanut oil, canola oil, sesame oil, and olive oil.
- ✓ **Avoid** added sugar, excess sodium, and saturated fats.

Not yet following a Mediterranean diet? Small changes can make a big difference. Start by incorporating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats into your meals. Experiment with Mediterranean-inspired recipes and savor the flavors of this wholesome diet. Your body, mind, and taste buds will thank you! For more information on the Mediterranean diet and meal plans, visit these links:

- ◆ <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/take-your-diet-to-the-mediterranean>
- ◆ <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/mediterranean-diet>
- ◆ <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-weight/diet-reviews/mediterranean-diet/>

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Here's a recipe that embodies the essence of the Mediterranean diet:

Mediterranean Quinoa Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 cup Quinoa, dry
- 2 cups Low-sodium chicken broth or water
- 2 Tbsp Lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp Red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp Fresh garlic, minced
- 1 ½ Tbsp Extra virgin olive oil
- ½ tsp Salt
- ¼ tsp Ground pepper
- ¼ cup Fresh red bell peppers, seeded, diced
- 2 Tbsp Fresh green onions, diced
- 2 Tbsp Fresh red onions, peeled, diced
- ½ cup Fresh cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 Tbsp Black olives, sliced
- 2 Tbsp Feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 Tbsp Fresh parsley, chopped

Nutritional Information for one serving

- Calories: 166
- Carbohydrates: 23 g
- Total Fat: 6 g
- Cholesterol: 3 mg
- Saturated Fat: 1 g
- Dietary Fiber: 3 g
- Sodium: 278 mg
- Protein: 7 g



Directions:

1. Rinse quinoa in a fine mesh strainer until water runs clear, not cloudy. Combine quinoa and chicken broth in a small pot. Cover and bring to a boil. Turn heat down to low and simmer until broth is completely absorbed, about 10-15 minutes. When done, quinoa will be soft and a white ring will pop out of the kernel. The white ring will appear only when it is fully cooked. Fluff with a fork. Cover and refrigerate.
2. In a small mixing bowl, combine lemon juice, vinegar, garlic, olive oil, salt, and pepper to make dressing.
3. Combine red peppers, green onion, red onion, tomato, and olives in a large mixing bowl. Mix well.
4. Add dressing to vegetable mixture. Mix in cooled quinoa. Fold in feta cheese and parsley. Cover and refrigerate for about 2 hours. Serve chilled.

Recipe Source: *Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbook for Homes* www.teamnutrition.usda.gov

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Women and Money:

Financial Challenges and Action Steps

Barbara O'Neill, Ph.D., CFP®, Distinguished Professor and Extension Specialist Emeritus,
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No matter how much women prefer to lean, to be protected and supported, nor how much men prefer to have them do so, they must make the voyage of life alone, and for safety in an emergency, they must know something of the laws of navigation.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1892



These words were uttered by one of America's most prominent women's rights leaders 130 years ago. Yet they are as appropriate in 2022 as they were during the late 19th century. For a variety of reasons, many women have not had experience making "voyages" that involve financial and/or investment decisions. For men and women alike, financial knowledge and economic self-sufficiency are important life skills to develop.

Lack of financial savvy can put women (and men) at a substantial disadvantage. Statistics tell us that it is only a matter of time before most women (estimates say 85% to 90%) will be on their own financially. Some will never marry, some will see their marriages end in divorce, and many will outlive their husbands.

Women have unique financial planning needs for the following reasons:

Longevity - Women live about five years longer, on average, than men, so their money has to last longer

Income - Women earn less, on average; in 2020, they made 83 cents for every dollar earned by men

Employment Gaps - Women often have work history gaps due to child rearing and/or care of elderly parents

Life Events - Women are impacted more severely than most men are by events like widowhood and divorce

Inexperience - Some women cede financial control to others and lack experience with budgeting, investing, etc.

What to do? Below are 12 suggested financial action steps for women to consider from the Rutgers Cooperative Extension publication *Money Talk: A Financial Guide for Women*:

- ◆ **Start or increase emergency savings** to equal at least three month's expenses in liquid (cash) assets
- ◆ **Track income and expenses** for a month to identify household cash flow and spending patterns
- ◆ **Calculate net worth** (assets minus debts) annually to analyze financial progress over time
- ◆ **Request a free credit report** annually and correct any errors; also check your credit score
- ◆ **Maintain a consumer debt-to-income ratio** (monthly debt payments divided by net income) of 15% or less
- ◆ **Set up a simple, user-friendly financial record-keeping system** (e.g., file folders and digital documents)
- ◆ **Review current insurance policies** for coverage limits, exclusions, discounts, premiums, and other features
- ◆ **Identify investment risk tolerance** and invest automatically with payroll deductions/automated deposits
- ◆ **Determine/maintain an asset allocation strategy** (% of portfolio in stocks, bonds, cash, and other assets)
- ◆ **Use at least three online retirement savings calculators** to determine a target amount to save for later life
- ◆ **Prepare/review three key estate planning documents:** will, living will, and durable power of attorney
- ◆ **Learn something new every day** about personal finance (e.g., media, blogs, podcasts, websites, etc.)

A more contemporary twist on Ms. Stanton's quote is "If it is to be, it is up to me." Today is the first day of the rest of your financial life. Make the most of it!

Health Benefits of Coenzyme Q10 Consumption

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What is Coenzyme Q10?

Also known as CoQ10, this is an essential nutrient that works similarly to an antioxidant. When CoQ10 is in its active form it is called ubiquinone or ubiquinol. This levels of CoQ10 decreases as we age and needs to be replenished through consumption through foods or supplements. CoQ10 is essential for cell growth and maintenance.

What are some benefits of Coenzyme Q10?

Provides natural energy and improved exercise performance-- CoQ10 is needed for mitochondrial ATP synthesis, which is the crucial process in which macronutrients from foods are converted into a form of energy that our cells can use (ATP). Studies show that adequate intake and serum levels of CoQ10 in the body resulted in reduced fatigue.

Protects Brain Health - CoQ10 prevents lipid peroxidation. Since CoQ10 is so similar to an antioxidant it serves similar functions in removing free radicals from the body. Therefore, reducing the risk of diseases associated with oxidative stress such as ALS, Alzheimer's, MS, Parkinsons, depression, memory loss, etc.

Protects Heart Health - Research shows that when blood levels of CoQ10 reduce levels of "good" cholesterol (HDL). There may also be benefits in improved circulation and blood pressure.

Improves Body pH levels - CoQ10 assists in protein transport across the cell membrane resulting in improved pH levels in those with adequate CoQ10 intake.

Improved Fertility - Due to its prevention in oxidative damage, adequate levels of CoQ10 may improve sperm count, sperm quality, and reverse age-related decline in egg quality and quantity.

Improved glucose control - Adequate intake of CoQ10 is associated with improved insulin sensitivity, reduced fasting blood sugar, reduced HbA1c, and ultimately regulating blood glucose levels.

It is suggested that CoQ10 intake can play a role in cancer prevention, but further research needs to be conducted in this area. There are many other health benefits associated with CoQ10 that are related to the reduction in damage from aging caused by free radicals and environmental damage to the body.

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What foods contain high levels of CoQ10?

CoQ10 is primarily found in meats, but there are vegetarian options for those who choose to follow a vegetarian lifestyle. CoQ10 is lipid soluble and therefore is best absorbed and consumed with lipid soluble vitamins such as A, D, E, & K.



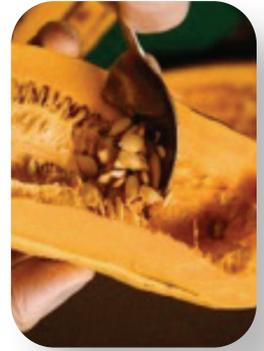
Good Sources of CoQ10 are:

- ✓ **Organ meats:** kidney, liver.
- ✓ **Fatty fish:** sardines, salmon, trout, mackerel, herring
- ✓ **Meats:** chicken, beef, pork.
- ✓ **Eggs**
- ✓ **Vegetables:** spinach, broccoli, cauliflower.
- ✓ **Fruits:** strawberries, oranges.
- ✓ **Oils:** soybean and canola oils.
- ✓ **Legumes:** soybeans, lentils, peanuts.
- ✓ **Nuts and seeds:** pistachio, sesame seeds.

Root-to-Fruit Cooking: Save Money and Reduce Waste!

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- ✓ **Cook leaves and stems:** Swiss chard, beet, and kale stems are edible which can be sauteed with the leaves. Chop them up and add to the pan before the leaves, as they take longer to cook.
- ✓ **Eat the peels:** Vegetable skins are highly nutritious and full of fiber! If you are not using the carrot or potato peels, toss them with some oil and seasonings and place in a 425°F oven on a lined baking sheet. Keep watch and take them out when crispy, after about 15-20 minutes.
- ✓ **Save the zest:** If a recipe calls for citrus juice, zest it first. This can be kept in an airtight container in the freezer to add flavor to other dishes like pastas, pesto, baked goods, or served on sauteed vegetables or fish.
- ✓ **Seed snack:** Save the seeds when cooking winter squash. Rinse seeds off (some pulp is OK), pat dry, and mix with oil, salt and pepper. Roast in a 325°F oven for 20-25 minutes, stirring a few times. Oven times will vary based on seed size. Roasted seeds make a great snack or salad topper.



Foods to Avoid on a Heart Healthy Diet

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fat in beverages and pastries. Too much added sugar also increases your odds of chronic inflammation, type 2 diabetes, and fatty liver disease, all of which raise the risk for heart disease. Experts suggest you get no more than 10% of your total calories from added sugar, which amounts to about 50 grams or 12 teaspoons of table sugar daily on a 2,000-calorie eating plan. Reduce added sugar by cutting back on flavored syrups in coffee drinks and sipping on club soda mixed with a splash of fruit juice instead of sugary soda.



Waste Not, Want Not:

Ensuring Summer Produce Goes to Good Use - continued from page 3

soil to improve growing conditions for plants in the garden or landscape. More information about home composting can be found in this Rutgers fact sheet njaes.rutgers.edu/fs811/.

Learn More

Rutgers FCHS has a webinar, Reducing Food Waste at Home, that offers more tips for using up your summer produce: njaes.rutgers.edu/wellness-wednesdays/archive.php?2020-05-preventing-food-waste-at-home. The Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources has a webinar on the Environmental Impacts of Food Waste: envirostewards.rutgers.edu/earth-day-every-day/.

