

VEGETABLES FOR KIDS WITH NEW FLAVORS AND VARIETY



Making vegetables kid-friendly also takes a bit of imagination, so incorporate them into sauces, soups and smoothies.

Experiment with which vegetables you serve and how you serve them. If your little eater initially rejects a vegetable, don't give up: Re-introduce it again the next week, perhaps in a different way. Start with recognizable vegetables for kids like carrots, celery and peas. Then, continue to think outside the box with a few new vegetables like jicama and zucchini.

- **Smoothies** are always a hit with kids... adding chia seeds adds extra fiber and nutrients. Spinach or kale with blueberries sweetened with a bit of vanilla coffee creamer masks the healthy vegetables. Cinnamon is also a nice touch! See all the great recipes we have included in this material to make a healthy smoothie kids will love!!!
- **Sweet Bell Peppers**—There's no doubt that kids love sweets. Use their preference for sweetness by introducing them to kid-friendly sweet bell peppers. Red, orange and yellow bell peppers can be served cut into strips as a snack—just pair with hummus or another protein-packed dip. They're also a great addition to brighten up a stir-fry and are delicious when sauteed with mild seasoning in Mexican-style fajita veggies, making them one of the most versatile vegetables for kids.
- **Sweet potatoes and squash** get even sweeter when they're roasted, steamed and sauteed. Steamed butternut squash can easily be pureed and incorporated into a cheese-like sauce or a warming soup served with a dollop of Greek yogurt. Don't forget baked sweet potato fries—they're a finger-friendly side that can encourage even the pickiest of eaters to take a bite.
- **Grape tomatoes**—small and round are super easy to incorporate at snack time—simply rinse and enjoy! For little eaters, it may be best to cut them in half. You can also pair them with a black bean dip, which will add fiber and protein. Because grape tomatoes are acidic and slightly sweet, they appeal to a variety of palates.
- **Corn**—starchy and sweet has a bright yellow color that tends to be less daunting than greens, making it one of the most approachable vegetables for kids and picky eaters. Corn on the cob can be grilled, dried kernels can be air-popped to make popcorn and frozen corn can be steamed and added to rice for a simple side.
- **Spinach** as an undercover veggie, incorporating it into sweet treats like smoothies and popsicles. (Its green color won't be visible when mixed with fruits like blueberries and blackberries.) Once your child becomes more comfortable with the dark green color and mild taste, start adding spinach to sandwiches, side salads and veggie sautés. Don't forget you can easily hide finely chopped up spinach in ground beef and your child will never know its there. If they ask what is this green stuff in here, simply say seasoning to give it the Italian or Mexican flavor.
- **Peas** are a starchy, sweet and kid-friendly vegetable. The addition of steamed peas to fried rice or macaroni and cheese is a great way to get some color on the plate in a way that's accepted by picky eaters.
- **Jicama**—If your child enjoys vegetables with a crunchy texture and mild flavor, it's time to introduce them to jicama. Jicama is essentially a cross between a potato and an apple in texture, with a mild flavor and high water content. Jicama sticks can be dipped in nut butter, guacamole or salsa, bean dips, hummus and more. For a sweeter approach, chop up jicama and add it to a fruit salad with melon cubes, grapes and strawberries.
- **Carrots** might be the gold standard for vegetable dipping with their bright color and bold texture. Pair with a Greek yogurt-based ranch dressing or classic hummus for a healthy kid-friendly snack. Roasting brings out the inherent sweetness in carrots—but add a little maple syrup and butter and you have a caramelized vegetable your kids (and you!) will actually want to eat seconds.
- **Cauliflower**—Its neutral color, mild flavor and flexibility as an ingredient make cauliflower an appealing kid-friendly vegetable. Adding pureed cauliflower to an alfredo sauce or even a berry smoothie won't dramatically change the flavor, and it provides an extra boost of fiber and vitamin C. Add cooked pureed cauliflower to mac & cheese sauce. Once your picky eater is comfortable with cauliflower in sauces, try serving it roasted with a drizzle of olive oil and salt or balsamic vinegar.
- **Zucchini and summer squash**—try including them in a pasta sauce: Dice zucchini in the food processor and add to a red sauce just before mixing with the pasta. Once your kid has become comfortable with zucchini in their sauce, you can take their pasta to the next level with zoodles! (Adding a carrot or two to the red sauce will sweeten it up a bit).
- **Sugar snap peas** add a great crunch to any snack time. If they're a bit too fibrous for your child to chew raw, try quickly steaming them to mellow the crunch. A quick sauté with garlic makes snap peas a perfect dinnertime side dish. Or, throw them in with the sweet bell peppers to complete a simple stir-fry!
- **Whole mushrooms** can be daunting for picky eaters due to their texture, but even picky eaters can learn to appreciate their umami flavor. Pair finely chopped mushrooms with other vegetables and add them to a marinara sauce for a hearty, veggie-driven pasta. Mushrooms are a good way to add more vitamin D into your child's diet, too.

- **Celery**—Snack time can be fun when you make ants on a log with your kids. With nut butter, dried fruit and celery sticks, your kids can make their own fun snack. Celery can also be dipped in hummus and Greek yogurt dips alongside carrots and cucumbers. Nevertheless, celery is a good source of vitamin K, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, folate, potassium and calcium. Celery is rich in useful antioxidants.
- **Steamed broccoli**—can be a hit with kids, but for picky eaters, you may need to get a bit more creative. Chop them up! Take small broccoli florets and finely chop by hand or in the food processor. Then, start incorporating the broccoli into tomato and cheese sauces, on top of pizza or into mini egg bites. Combine it with chicken fettuccini alfredo.
- **Cucumbers** have a very high water content, making their flavor more mild and palatable for kids. Whether cut into spears or coins, eaten plain or dipped in hummus, cucumbers can be served up in a variety of ways. Leave the skin on for extra crunch and fiber in your little one's snack.
- **Pancakes or Waffles**— Add instant oatmeal to the mix and let them sit for a bit to soften up, this will add fiber to their meal. Adding apple sauce and cinnamon will bring added flavor and fruit to their diet. (The vitamins, minerals, and plant compounds in cinnamon can provide important health benefits. Cinnamon contains potassium, magnesium, and calcium. Potassium helps to counteract sodium's effect on blood pressure and regulates the heart rate. Potassium is also involved in nerve function. A daily intake of ½ to 1 teaspoon of cinnamon per day is the limit, per some experts).
- **Flaxseed**— Is one of the world's oldest crops. There are two types, brown and golden, both of which are equally nutritious. A good source of many nutrients, including protein, fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, thiamine, and copper. Mixed with stir-fry's, hamburger dishes or in smoothies is a good way to disguise this nutrient for the entire family in taking the steps to keeping everyone healthy.



EASY FOODS TO MAKE FOR PICKY EATERS



CHEESE BURGER CUPS

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon prepared mustard
- 1-1/2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tube (12 ounces) refrigerated buttermilk biscuits
- 1/2 cup cubed Velveeta Cheese



Directions

In a large skillet, cook beef over medium heat until no longer pink, breaking it into crumbles; drain. Stir in the ketchup, brown sugar, mustard and Worcestershire sauce. Remove from the heat; set aside.

Press each biscuit onto the bottom and up the sides of a greased muffin cup. Spoon beef mixture into cups; top with cheese cubes. Bake at 400° for 14-16 minutes or until cups are golden brown. (Freeze cooled pastries in a freezer container, separating layers with waxed paper. To use, thaw pastries in the refrigerator for 8 hours. Reheat on a baking sheet in a preheated 375° oven until heated through).

MUFFIN CUP CHEDDAR PIES

- 2 loaves (1 pound each) frozen bread dough
 - 2 pounds ground beef
 - 1 can (8 ounces) mushroom stems and pieces, drained
 - 1-1/4 cups shredded cheddar cheese
 - 1-1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
 - 1 teaspoon garlic powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Spaghetti sauce, warmed



Directions

Let dough stand at room temperature until softened, about 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°. Meanwhile, in a Dutch oven, cook beef over medium heat until no longer pink, crumbling the meat, 12-15 minutes; drain. Stir in mushrooms, cheese and seasonings. Divide each loaf of dough into 10 portions; roll each portion into a 4-in. circle. Top each circle with 1/4 cup filling; bring edges of dough up over filling and pinch to seal.

Place meat pies in greased muffin cups, seam side down. Bake until golden brown, 20-25 minutes. Serve with spaghetti sauce.

FAST AND EASY AFTER SCHOOL SNACK

BANANAS DIPPED IN YOGHURT

Step 1:

Cut peeled bananas in half crosswise, insert a Popsicle stick into the flat end of each banana, and dip in your favorite yogurt

Step 2:

Roll the bananas in cereal or toppings and freeze until firm (about 2 hours).



TASTY BURRITO

- 1 pound ground beef
 - 1 envelope taco seasoning
 - 1 can (16 ounces) refried beans
 - 6 flour tortillas (12 inches), warmed
 - 1 cup shredded Colby-Monterey Jack cheese
 - 4 teaspoons canola oil
- Sour cream and salsa



Directions

In a large cast-iron or other heavy skillet, cook beef over medium heat until no longer pink; drain. Stir in taco seasoning; remove from skillet and set aside. Wipe skillet clean.

In a small saucepan, cook refried beans over medium-low heat until heated through, 2-3 minutes.

Spoon about 1/3 cup of beans off-center on each tortilla; top with 1/4 cup beef mixture. Sprinkle with cheese. Fold sides and ends of tortillas over filling and roll up.

PIZZA MEAT LOAF CUPS

- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup pizza sauce
- 1/4 cup seasoned bread crumbs
- 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1-1/2 pounds ground beef
- 1-1/2 cups shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

Optional: Additional pizza sauce and basil leaves



Directions

Preheat oven to 375°. In a large bowl, mix first 4 ingredients. Add beef; mix lightly but thoroughly. Divide into 12 portions; press each onto the bottom and up sides of a greased muffin cup. Add cheese to centers.

Bake until meat is cooked through, 15-18 minutes. If desired, top with additional sauce and basil before serving.

CHIA SEED PUDDING—Chia seeds have an impressive amount of fiber and protein and are considered a superfood! Adding chia seeds to your day provides numerous benefits, including brain-boosting omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals. **Healthy, kid-friendly pudding.** Kids will gobble this pudding up, especially if you add in some of their favorites, like cocoa powder, fruit jam, Nutella, or peanut butter. It's so creamy and takes on flavors easily for a satisfy snack or dessert.

- **Can be eaten for breakfast, as a snack, or a dessert.** The possibilities are endless when you have a simple base recipe for chia pudding. Keep it healthy for a quick morning pick me up with fresh fruit and nuts; as a grab-and-go snack with shredded coconut and chocolate chips; and as a dessert with a spoonful of nut butter or cocoa powder, nuts, and bananas (or as decadent as you'd like!).
- **Easy overnight chia pudding recipe.** Whip up a healthy breakfast to enjoy all week long! Make a few servings to store in the fridge and grab in the morning as it lasts up to a week. Alternatively, prep in the morning for a tasty dessert after dinner.
- **Made with almond milk & honey.** This recipe hits all the marks for a delicious diet-friendly recipe. Made with nut milk and honey, this chia pudding is gluten-free, dairy-free, low-carb, and paleo. Swap out the honey for maple syrup for a vegan-friendly recipe.

Chia seed pudding resembles tapioca, with its creaminess and little pops of tender, slightly chewy seeds throughout, but it is a healthier option. When the chia seeds settle in the fridge with the almond milk, it naturally thickens, giving it a pudding-like texture and amazing flavor, lending itself to endless topping possibilities. It's a snack or breakfast that will leave you feeling **satisfied, satiated, and so energized!**

3 INGREDIENTS TO MAKE CHIA SEED PUDDING

- **Chia seeds:** Make sure to use fresh chia seeds, so they absorb the liquid and plump up. You can use black or white chia seeds to make overnight pudding.
- **Milk:** To keep this simple chia pudding dairy-free, use unsweetened almond milk. Other plant-based milk and dairy milk will also work.
- **Honey:** Honey adds a touch of sweetness (Orange blossom honey is a great additive flavor). You can use any sweetener you'd like, such as maple syrup, stevia, agave nectar, and sugar and/ or cinnamon. If you add in fruit preserves, you might even skip it completely to control the sweetness.



GRILLED PINEAPPLE

2 Tbsp Butter

2 Tbsp Sugar

1 Pineapple Fresh, peeled, cored and cut into 8 slices

1/4 Cup Poppyseed Dressing or Vanilla or other flavored Yoghurt (Chia Seeds can be added for more nutrients)

Preheat grill to medium heat.

Melt butter in sauce pan on low heat. Add sugar; stir until well blended. Brush butter mixture evenly onto the pineapple, then place on grill. Cook 10 minutes or until pineapple is golden brown on both sides, turning frequently. Place grilled pineapple on serving tray and top with 2-T. dressing.



HEALTHY SMOOTHIES -Enjoying a smoothie every day is totally fine if you make sure it has a good balance of nutrients. And if you're aiming to make your smoothie a meal, try to include at least 25 grams of protein; if it's a snack, go for at least 10 grams of protein.

These delicious, healthy smoothies make it easier to eat right with nutrient-rich fruit and veggies, creamy milk, protein, probiotic-rich yogurt, and other nutritious ingredients. Just a note: Some of these recipes contain fruit juice or honey to up the sweetness, but if you're looking to cut added sugar from your diet, you can substitute those ingredients with something else.

CREAMY KALE SMOOTHIE

In a blender, combine 1 cup coarsely chopped kale, 1 1/2 cup frozen pineapple chunks, 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt, 1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk, and 1 tsp honey. Blend until the mixture is smooth and frothy. Ice can be added for a colder smoothie.

BANANA-BLUEBERRY-SOY SMOOTHIE

Simply combine 1 1/4 cups light soy milk with 1/2 cup frozen blueberries, 1/2 frozen banana, and one teaspoon of pure vanilla extract. Blend for about 20 to 30 seconds, or until smooth. You can add up to 1/4 cup more milk if you prefer to have the mixture thinner.

PEACHES AND CREAM OATMEAL SMOOTHIE

Blend 1/2 cup whole milk, 1/2 cup Greek yogurt, 1/2 cup rolled oats, 1 cup frozen peaches, 1/2 frozen banana, 1 carrot and 1/2 cup ice until smooth.

MILK AND HONEY SMOOTHIE

In a blender, combine 1 1/2 cups unsweetened almond milk, 1 medium Kirby cucumber (peeled and sliced), 1 cup seedless green grapes, 2 medium stalks celery (peeled and sliced), and 1 Tbsp honey. Blend until the mixture is smooth, serves 2.

CARROT AND APRICOT SMOOTHIE

In a blender, combine 1/2 cup ice cubes, 1/2 cup whole milk Greek yogurt, 1/4 cup grated carrot, 1 tsp honey, 1/2 tsp cinnamon, 2 chopped dried apricots, and 1 fresh apricot (pitted and coarsely chopped). Blend until smooth.

APPLE BLUEBERRY KALE SMOOTHIE

In a blender, combine 1 cup chilled almond or vanilla soy milk, 1 apple (about 1/2 cup), 1/4 cup blueberries, a handful of kale, and 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon, dash of ginger, 1 cup ice. Blend until smooth.

CHOCOLATE STRAWBERRY SMOOTHIE

In a blender, 1 cup frozen strawberries, 1 banana (room temperature), 1/2 cup Old Fashioned oats (optional), 1/4 cup cocoa powder, 1 tablespoon almond butter, 3/4 cup milk of choice (dairy, oat milk or almond milk), 2 tablespoons maple syrup, agave or honey, 1 cup ice. Blend until smooth. (Raspberries can be used in place of strawberries).

WAYS TO ADD OTHER PROTEIN OR NUTRIENTS

- **Chia seeds**—You can add plant-based protein and fiber with chia seeds: 2 tablespoons chia seeds adds 4 grams protein and 11 grams fiber.
- **Almond butter**—Add 1 tablespoon nut butter to add an additional 4 grams protein.
- **Vanilla or chocolate protein powder:** Protein powder works well, protein powder that has natural ingredients and a flavor that's not too artificial.
- **Cacao Nibs**— These rich, chocolatey nibs are loaded with nutrients and powerful plant compounds that have been shown to benefit health in many ways. They're amongst the least processed cocoa products on the market and substantially lower in sugar than other chocolate products, making them a healthier alternative for chocolate lovers.
- Adding an avocado and lime will make a thicker creamier smoothie. Avocados are rich in many nutrients, including fiber, healthy fats, vitamin C, vitamin E, vitamin B6, potassium, magnesium, and folate, low sodium levels and avocados contain no cholesterol.
- Substitute kale with spinach

Serve smoothies immediately or store in a covered thermal container in the refrigerator for 2 days.



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