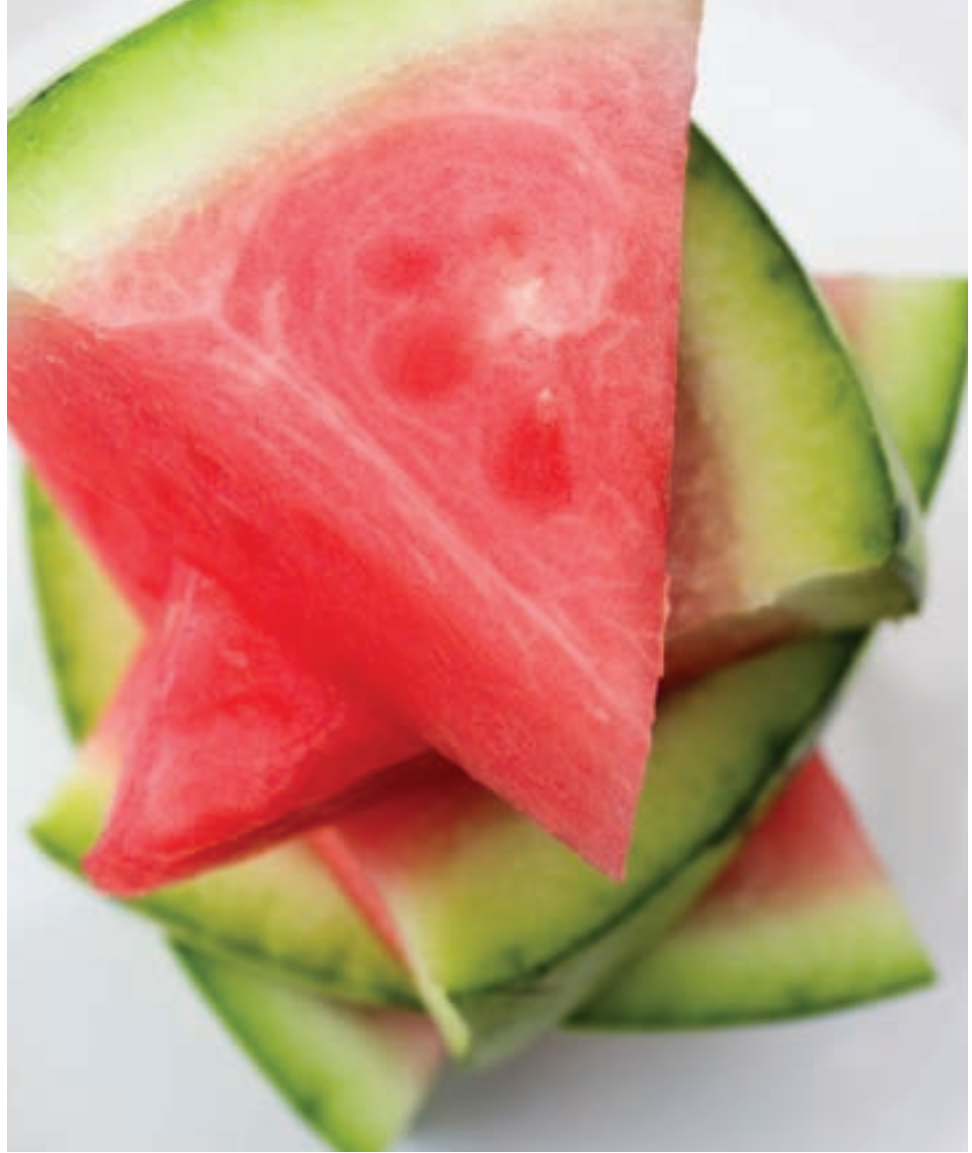


# SUMMER PRODUCE



## FUN WITH SUMMER PRODUCE

Living in the tri-state area, we are so lucky to have access to amazing produce that is grown right in our own backyards (literally)! When the weather is warm, we are often more open to eating healthier – especially since we can barbecue and eat outdoors. In addition to enjoying what is fresh and in season at the moment, I often encourage my clients to buy produce in bulk when the prices drop.

Fruits and vegetables not only add flavor to your meals, but they also create a rainbow of colors which

make mealtime visually as well as gastronomically pleasing. Research shows that people who eat more fruits and vegetables have a decreased risk for certain cancers (like colon cancer). For people who are watching their weight, fruits and vegetables are a great way to pack in nutrient-dense foods, that are also lower in calories (assuming you are not drowning it with fat)! Fruits, and some vegetables, have lots of water, which is what we need more of during the summer months to keep our bodies well-hydrated! Produce also contains fiber – which fills you



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up, helps to lower cholesterol, and helps to keep your gastrointestinal tract in shape!

A fun way to cook your veggies is to marinate them and throw them on the barbecue grill! Another easy way to cook summer foods would be to wrap your veggies and meat/poultry/fish in aluminum foil pouches – which is a great way to cook your food by keeping the flavors “locked” together while preventing charring.

## Blueberries

Loaded with antioxidants, this versatile summer fruit can be thrown in salads, yogurt, cereal, pancakes, muffins,

cookies, on top of ice cream, pies, over angel food cake... get the idea? Blueberries contain Vitamin B6, Vitamin C, Vitamin K and fiber! Blueberries have antioxidants in the pigments – referred to as phytochemicals – which may have anti-cancer and heart-healthy properties like polyphenols and resveratrol.

## Tomatoes

I won't lie – I'm a Jersey Girl – and I'm partial to our tomatoes... but many of you may enjoy growing tomatoes of your own. Technically, tomatoes are a fruit – even though they aren't sweet like berries! Tomatoes are best known for lycopene

– they also contain vitamins A and C. I am a particular fan of the heirloom varieties in the summer because of the different colors and flavors. Tomatoes are such a versatile food – used in salads, stews, gravy, omelets, soups, salsa, on sandwiches or alone. I always purchase large quantities of tomatoes and make tomato sauce and freeze it (or can it). One fun way to make marinara is to make “sunshine sauce” use all yellow: tomatoes, peppers, onions... add garlic and parsley, oregano, basil, salt and white pepper. You can use ground flax seed in lieu of tomato paste to thicken the sauce! This is great over warm pasta or even mozzarella!



## Blueberry Breakfast Parfait

- 4 oz Greek Vanilla Yogurt (0% fat)
- 1/3 cup Kellogg's All Bran Fiber Buds
- 1/2 cup of fresh blueberries

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Here is a recipe for a wonderful spread to complement fresh tomatoes: In a food processor combine: 1 cup tightly packed basil, 1/2 cup fat-free ricotta, 3 oz of feta cheese (low fat or fat free if available). Add a dollop to sliced tomatoes.

This bruschetta recipe is great as a salsa-type dip, on bread/crostini, served chilled atop grilled chicken or fish (like swordfish). You can use any tomatoes that suit your fancy... chop them up, add some fresh diced garlic, fresh chopped basil, olive oil, salt & pepper to taste.

## Corn

We all know there is nothing that tastes as good as local corn in August and September.

I actually buy it when it's in season and freeze it. My grandmother taught me how to truly appreciate the flavors of foods. As I was about to rub an ear of corn with butter and salt, my Grandma Jeannette stopped me and said, "Felicia, do you have any idea what that corn really tastes like? It has flavor that is really unique – so that it doesn't just taste like butter and salt." From that moment on, I learned to appreciate the sweet flavor of fresh corn, that I am willing to forgo eating when it's not in season, because once you've had the best, you don't want the rest.

While many people think of corn as a "starch" – it is really a vegetable! It is also a vegetable with a lot of insoluble

fiber... so as I tell my clients, you burn a lot of calories moving the corn from your mouth through your digestive tract and out of your body! Corn contains vitamin C and one medium ear of corn has only 75 calories. It also is loaded with lutein and zeaxanthin which antioxidant cousins to betacarotene (Vitamin A).

One of my favorite ways to make corn on the cob is simply to steam it with water and a splash of skim milk... cook on high heat for 7-8 minutes... the lactose in the milk enhances the sweet taste. I always make enough for dinner and then some extra to eat cold the next day (we can be seen at the beach with ears of cold corn in our hands)!





## Melons

Whether it be watermelon, honeydew or cantaloupe – melons are truly nature's candy! These summer fruits are packed with flavor and water! You can create a rainbow fruit salad using different colored melons (and adding those summer berries in)!

The way I keep melons ready to eat for my family is to take a melon baller and scoop the moist flesh out of the melon and keep in a container. How often do we look at the melon and are not in the mood to cut it up? This is a great way to make melon a grab 'n go fruit! You can also put the melon balls in the freezer and use it in a smoothie (or to chill a summer cocktail). Melons can also be nice for making fruited waters for yourself and guests.

Some people enjoy melon and prosciutto. You can also use melon when you kabob veggies and meat, poultry or fish on the grill.

Enjoy the rich flavors of the summer and know that you are treating your body to a rainbow of vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients! Who says foods that taste good aren't good for you?

## MELON SALSA

### Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups of diced melon
- ½ cup of diced pineapple
- ¼ cup of finely diced red onion
- 2 Tablespoons of minced fresh cilantro
- 2 Tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon of raspberry vinegar
- 1 Tablespoon of lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon of cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon of finely minced garlic
- ½ teaspoon of honey
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

### Directions

In a suitably sized bowl, combine the diced melon, diced pineapple and red onion. In another bowl, whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, cayenne pepper, garlic and honey; then season with salt and pepper. Before serving, combine the two mixtures and gently toss with the cilantro.

